

## What makes articles cited highly? An analysis of Top 100 Highly Cited Articles on Organizational Citizenship Behavior

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Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) is amongst the main contributors to organizational performance and a significant outcome of various work-related behaviors. This study aims to evaluate the top 100 highly cited articles published on OCB in the Scopus database to assess the reasons why these articles are highly cited. A total of 3,096 articles on OCB, published from 1983-2018, were retrieved from the database, in which 100 highly cited articles were selected for further analysis. The findings revealed that a 40% contribution in the field of OCB research is due to these articles, and this contribution is expected to increase rapidly. Additionally, meta-analytical articles are frequently cited, followed by the review articles and then empirical research articles. Among various reasons, the highly cited articles are either pioneering studies in the field, proposing a new concept, or scale development studies. This study proposes important implications for practitioners and researchers .

**Keywords:** organizational citizenship behavior, scopus database, highly cited

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) is “the behavior that is not an enforceable requirement of the role, does not aim at earning rewards, is not an expressive behavior owing to emotional state, and that in the aggregate promotes the welfare of the individual and organization” (Hazzi, 2018, p.1). Recently OCB has emerged as one strategic behavior that enhances employees' productivity and efficiency (Organ, 2018; Carpinì & Parker, 2017; Ocampo et al., 2018;). Besides, OCB is empirically proven in increasing efficiency and stimulates the effective functioning of an organization (Wagner & Rush, 2000). The advantages may include knowledge sharing, positive organizational functioning, organizational sustainability, organizational effectiveness and enriching employee productivity (Hsu & Lin, 2008; Ishaq et al., 2012; Murphy et al., 2002; Podsakoff et al.,

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### Contribution of Authors

1. Sheeraz and Ungku made contributions by conceiving article, collecting data, designing analysis, and writing paper.
2. Khalil Md Nor made contributions by designing methodology and guided to improve paper writeup.

2009; Podsakoff et al., 2000; Rizwan et al., 2014; Sheeraz et al., 2020; Wagner & Rush, 2000; Wan, 2016) . Therefore, organizations prefer those employees who demonstrate citizenship behavior.

Recent trends in organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) have led to a proliferation of studies that have investigated the role of OCB in the realm of organizations. The field of OCB has been supported by reviews, meta-analyses, and empirical studies, and researchers have been citing quality studies that are related to their research objectives (Mohr et al., 2017). However, there is no consolidated data available that highlight the influence of highly cited articles in the field of OCB. Tang *et al.*, (2016) affirmed that a list of highly influential articles could be helpful to emphasize the advances in a particular field. Fu and Ho (2018) imply that the number of citations confirms the impact of an article in the field and also highlights the acknowledgment of research progression.

Accordingly, the current study assessed the extent to which highly cited articles have influenced the field of OCB. Specifically, the objectives of this article were as follows: (1) identify the highly cited articles in the field of OCB since 1983; (2) analyze OCB as independent, dependent, and mediator variables in the empirical articles. (3) analyze the characteristics of the papers; (4) authorship and citation trends; and (5) highlight the leading journals.

## Method

The research data in this study were drawn from the Scopus database. Scopus is the largest abstract and citation database with 1.4 billion citations and 16 million authors' profiles (Falagas et al., 2008; Franceschini et al., 2016; Scopus, 2020). These features made Scopus the right choice for the citation analysis of the top 100 articles on OCB. Data mining was conducted in the third week of September 2019. The central theme in this study was research articles containing "organizational citizenship behavior" in the title, abstract, or author's keywords. The query string used is displayed in Figure 1 with all details.

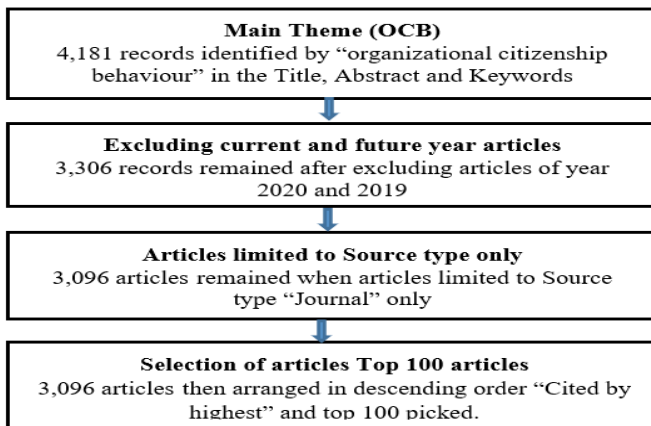


Figure 1 Search String with Article Inclusion & Exclusion Criteria

This query string resulted in 3,096 articles. We ensured that our data would include all articles published in research journals until 2018. In this string, no restriction was imposed related to "language of the article" in order to get all results. We arranged the data in descending order by number of times cited and picked the top 100 articles to meet the study objectives (their citations from 2019 were excluded). It is also pertinent to mention here that we performed our evaluation

based on aggregated citations and not on average annual citations as recommended by researchers in other fields (Eaton, 2014; Garousi & Fernandes, 2016).

**Results and Discussions**

**Publication Output**

The results obtained from the preliminary analysis revealed that the oldest publication was dated 1983, and the latest was in 2013 (Figure 2). These top 100 highly cited articles were all access restricted (as of this date). We endorse Md Khudzari et al., (2018) opinion and we also assume that if these articles had been published with open access, the citations would be much higher. The results also showed that all the articles used in this study were published in the English language as the majority of the researchers were from English-speaking countries.

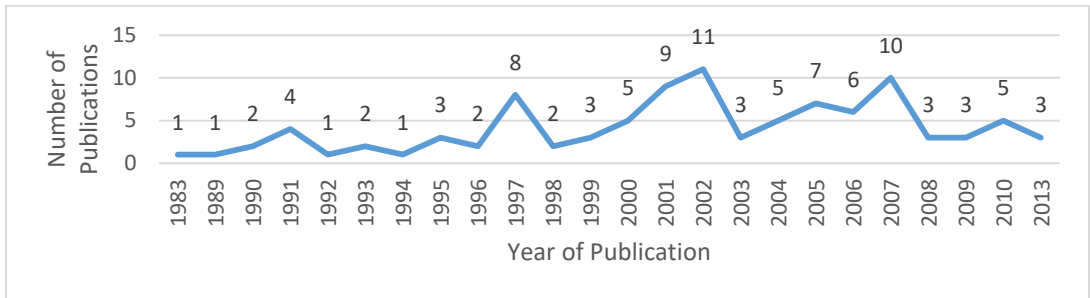


Figure 2 Year-wise Publications trend of top 100 highly cited articles

**Articles Analysis**

The list of these 100 highly cited articles is summarized at Appendix A with source title, and total global citations also. It contains 14 meta-analysis, 20 review articles, whereas 66 empirical studies. We further delved deeper and also studied the position of OCB in the sixty-six empirical articles by reading all 66 empirical studies. Our analysis showed that OCB was used 5 times as an independent variable, 4 times as a mediator, and 57 times as a dependent variable in these articles. This study’s results are supported by the findings of Azmi et al., (2016) that most of the time, OCB is used as a dependent variable.

We further analyzed the citations trend of Scopus search results and also used Excel software. There were 56,831 total citations of these 100 articles. The total citations of the 3,096 articles were 1,42,346. This demonstrated that 40% of the total citations of OCB research were made to these 100 articles, whereas about 12.5% of the articles were never cited. Among the 56,831 citations to the top 100 articles, the citations of review articles were 9,616 (514 average citations per article), meta-analysis citations were 13,053 (932 average citations per article), whereas empirical article citations were 34,162 (507 average citations per article). This analysis clearly shows that the meta-analysis articles received more citations, followed by the empirical, and then the review articles. Our results are in line with Haidich (2010) defined hierarchy of evidence and placed meta-analysis and systematic review articles at position one and two respectively.

**Characteristics of Top 100 Articles**

We read these 100 articles and noticed that the unique features of these articles resulted in their high citations (Yan et al., 2020). Among the 66 empirical articles, 53 percent developed a measurement scale, which was then used and cited by other researchers. For example, (Podsakoff et

al., 1990; Smith et al., 1983; Williams & Anderson, 1991) developed scales for measuring OCB which were extensively used by later researchers. It is also the fact that not all these 53 percent articles developed the scales for OCB; rather some articles also developed scales for other variables. For example, Liao and Rupp (2005) developed the scale for justice climate or Turnley and Feldman (2000) developed the scale for a psychological contract. In these articles, OCB was used as one of the variables.

Yan et al., (2020) explained that the articles' combined content enhances their citations and impact. For example, Podsakoff et al., (1996) studied transformational leadership, satisfaction, commitment, trust, and OCB. Shore and Wayne (1993) investigated commitment and employee behavior. These studies used new combinations of variables and were also pioneer studies, thus influencing their citations count. Another reason is these articles' use of accurate, complete, and consistently applied references (Masic, 2013). They also authenticated their sources and the information to which they referred, and provided further conclusions for readers.

Hamrick et al., (2010) stated that competition articles (such as Grant & Mayer, 2009; Zellars et al., 2002), longer articles (Podsakoff et al., 1996; Tsui et al., 1997) and articles including a larger number of references to previous literature (such as M. Podsakoff et al., 1990) tend to have a higher number of citations. Hamrick et al., (2010) further explained that the time of publication, the field of study, the nature of the work, and the journal in which the work appears are possible determinants of the likelihood of citation and impact. For example, studies published soon after the introduction of OCB received more citations. Articles such as (Farh et al., 1990, 1997; Organ & Konovsky, 1989; Podsakoff et al., 1997) were cited by subsequent authors to explain how their research fits with previous studies in the same or similar fields (Masic, 2013). All 66 empirical studies report original research used quantitative survey methods to collect data. Hamrick et al., (2010) statement about the journal in which the article is published was extended by Wang et al., (2011) who explained that both the articles' inner quality and external features, mainly represented as the reputation of the authors and journals, contribute to the generation of highly-cited articles.

### **Authors Profile**

We used MS Excel software for authorship analysis. Table 1 presents the data of the top ten leading authors of these 100 highly cited articles which contributed 25 percent articles. Among these top 10 authors, seven belong to the USA, and one each from China, Hong Kong, and Australia. We ranked these authors based on their total number of publications. If many publications were equal, we ranked them as per their h-index and further total global citations. These 100 articles have been contributed by 270 authors. If we exclude the doubling of authors, these 100 articles then contributed by 184 authors.

Table 1 also presents data on the authors' overall publications, first publication, and recent publication. It is pertinent to mention here that this data does not only concern OCB because all these authors work in multiple fields. Their subject areas range from 4 to 9. Moreover, the total publications of these authors chosen for this study only include those that fall within the top 100 articles.

**Table 1**  
Top 10 Highly Productive Authors

Rank	Author Name	1 <sup>st</sup> Author	2 <sup>nd</sup> Author	TP <sup>a</sup>	Affiliation	Country	h-index	TGC <sup>b</sup>	Subject Areas	OP <sup>c</sup>	FP <sup>d</sup>	RP <sup>e</sup>
1	Podsakoff P.M.	5	3	8	University of Florida	USA	50	528 71	9	7 7	197 9	20 19
2	MacKenzie S.B.	2	3	6	Indiana University	USA	38	430 59	7	4 4	199 0	20 18
3	Organ D.W.	3	2	5	Indiana University	USA	21	160 06	7	5 5	197 1	20 18
4	Moorman R.H.	4		5	Elon University	USA	15	605 7	6	2 1	199 0	20 19
5	Bolino M.C.	2	1	4	Price College of Business	USA	34	542 4	6	6 0	199 6	20 18
6	Farh J.-L.	2		3	China Europe International Business School	China	33	641 6	7	6 2	198 3	20 19
7	Turnley W.H.	2	1	3	Kansas State University	USA	29	474 5	6	4 4	199 4	20 17
8	Hui C.	2	1	3	The University of Hong Kong	Hong Kong	29	274 1	6	4 8	199 2	20 19
9	Chen Z.X.	1		3	Australian National University	Australia	25	427 1	5	3 1	199 9	20 13
10	Konovsky M.A.	2	1	3	Tulane University	USA	12	334 8	4	1 4	197 9	20 09

<sup>a</sup>TP: Total publications; <sup>b</sup>TGC: Total global citations; <sup>c</sup>OP: Overall Publications; <sup>d</sup>FP: First Publication; <sup>e</sup>RP: Recent Publications

**Preferred Journals**

Researchers argue that articles published in top journals serve as authentic sources of knowledge (Wei, 2019). For example, Svensson and Wood, (2006) identify articles published in top journals as the gateways to the front lines of a field. We manually arranged the list of these top 100 articles in Excel. Our results showed that the top 100 highly cited articles were published in 26 high quality journals (Table 2), ranked in terms of a total number of publications, however, when a number of articles were equivalent, journal ranked via order of CiteScore. Together, top five journals cover 68 percent of the top 100 highly cited articles, whereas the other 21 journals cover the remaining 32 percent of the articles. These journals are published by various bodies such as professional publishers, academic institutes and professional associations.

**Table 2**  
List of Journals Published top 100 Highly Cited Articles

Rank	Source Title	TP <sup>a</sup>	TGC <sup>b</sup>	CS <sup>c</sup>	Publisher	NSA <sup>d</sup>	SCY <sup>e</sup>
1	Journal of Applied Psychology	31	181 46	6.8 6	American Psychological Association	1	1917
2	Academy of Management Journal	12	652 6	10. 36	Academy of Management	4	1989
3	Journal of Management	10	631 2	10. 96	Sage	2	1975
4	Journal of Organizational Behavior	10	367 3	6.5 9	Blackwell Publishing	4	1984

5	Personnel Psychology	5	329 1	7.1	Blackwell Publishing	2	1948
6	Journal of Vocational Behavior	3	317 8	4.8	Elsevier	4	1975
7	Human Performance	3	220 1	1.9	Routledge	3	1988
8	Leadership Quarterly	2	242 0	6.2 3	Elsevier	4	1990
9	Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes	2	193 9	3.8 2	Elsevier	2	1985
10	Academy of Management Review	2	995	9.2	Academy of Management	3	1996
11	Administrative Science Quarterly	2	930	8.4 2	Cornell University	3	1996
12	Journal of Marketing	2	682	9.2 8	American Marketing Association	2	1996
13	Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal	2	521	0.8 1	Springer	2	2000
14	Journal of Business Research	2	479	5.3 2	Elsevier	1	1973
15	Journal of Managerial Psychology	1	108 5	2.0 5	Emerald	4	1986
16	Psychological Bulletin	1	749	17. 88	American Psychological Association	1	1904
17	British Journal of Social Psychology	1	718	2.5 3	Blackwell Publishing	1	1981
18	Research in Organizational Behavior	1	550	5.5 9	Elsevier	3	2008 -18
19	Journal of Management Studies	1	383	5.9 9	Blackwell Publishing	3	1964
20	Human Resource Management Review	1	372	4.9 7	Elsevier	2	1991
21	Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	1	328	8.1 6	Springer	3	1973
22	Organization Science	1	302	4.7 6	Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences	3	1996
23	Journal of Applied Social Psychology	1	281	1.9 9	Blackwell Publishing	1	1971
24	Academy of Management Perspectives	1	273	5.9 2	Academy of Management	3	2006
25	International Journal of Selection and Assessment	1	251	1.0 6	Blackwell Publishing	5	1993
26	Journal of Retailing	1	246	8.1 2	Elsevier	1	1993

<sup>a</sup>TP: Total publications; <sup>b</sup>TGC: Total global citations; <sup>c</sup>CS: CiteScore; <sup>d</sup>NSA: Number of subject areas; <sup>e</sup>SCY: Scopus citation year

### Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to analyze what makes some articles that researchers cite frequently, and frequent citations enlisted these articles among highly cited articles. Therefore, this study advances the research by offering factors that impact the field of OCB. We conclude that these highly cited articles are unique in nature of the work and have an excellent blend of variables, frameworks, methods, and statistical analysis contributed by highly reputed authors and high-quality journals. These articles helped researchers, practitioners, and students of organizational behavior to understand OCB from various perspectives, and these articles' novel work instigates impactful knowledge transfer and provides guidelines for future studies. Not only do these articles enhance the authors' h-index, but they also raise the i-index of the journals in which these articles are published.

### Limitations and Future Recommendations

Like other studies in the field of OCB, this article is also not limitation free. This article judged the work of other authors in the field, and the reader should bear in mind that the article scope was too broad, so study findings cannot be generalized. However, this article provides the preliminary ideas for future studies in terms of the nature of the study, field, methodology, and framework. Future scholars may add antecedents, consequences, or dimensions of OCB in their search frame.

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## Appendix A

### List of Top 100 Highly Cited Articles on OCB

Rank	Authors	Title	Source Title	Volume (Issue)	Pages	TGC <sup>a</sup>
1	Colquitt J.A., Wesson M.J., Porter C.O.L.H., Conlon D.E., Ng K.Y.	Justice at the millennium: A meta-analytic review of 25 years of organizational justice research	Journal of Applied Psychology, 2001	86 (3)	425-445	2368
2	Meyer J.P., Stanley D.J., Herscovitch L., Topolnytsky L.	Affective, continuance, and normative commitment to the organization: A meta-analysis of antecedents, correlates, and consequences	Journal of Vocational Behavior, 2002	61 (1)	20-52	2311
3	Podsakoff P.M., MacKenzie S.B., Moorman R.H., Fetter R.	Transformational leader behaviors and their effects on followers' trust in leader, satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behaviors	The Leadership Quarterly, 1990	1 (2)	107-142	2053
4	Podsakoff P.M., MacKenzie S.B., Paine J.B., Bachrach D.G.	Organizational citizenship behaviors: A critical review of the theoretical and empirical literature and suggestions for future research	Journal of Management, 2000	26 (3)	513-563	2033
5	Cohen-Charash Y., Spector P.E.	The role of justice in organizations: A meta-analysis	Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 2001	86 (2)	278-321	1551
6	Moorman R.H.	Relationship Between Organizational Justice and Organizational Citizenship Behaviors: Do Fairness Perceptions Influence Employee Citizenship?	Journal of Applied Psychology, 1991	76 (6)	845-855	1540
7	Smith C.A., Organ D.W., Near J.P.	Organizational citizenship behavior: Its nature and antecedents	Journal of Applied Psychology, 1983	68 (4)	653-663	1527
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<sup>a</sup>TGC: Total global citations

Note: Full reference of above 100 articles were not mentioned in reference section due to duplication of data.