

“Mapping the Evolution of Organizational Citizenship Behaviour: A Bibliometric and Systematic Review (1995–2026)”

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Abstract

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) represents one of the most enduring and influential constructs in organizational behaviour, reflecting employees’ discretionary contributions that extend beyond prescribed role expectations and enhance organizational effectiveness. Despite the breadth of scholarship in this domain, existing research remains dispersed across diverse theoretical traditions, contextual applications, and methodological choices, limiting a coherent understanding of the field’s intellectual development. To address this gap, the present study undertakes a bibliometric and systematic review of OCB research published between 1995 and 2026. Based on 359 peer-reviewed articles drawn from the Web of Science Core Collection and filtered through the PRISMA protocol, the study systematically examines the field’s publication trajectory, citation structure, leading contributors, thematic patterns, and emerging research directions. Employing Bibliometrix for performance analysis and science mapping, the findings demonstrate that OCB has developed into a theoretically mature and empirically influential research domain, with strong foundations in social exchange theory, perceived organizational support, and leader–member exchange, while increasingly integrating motivational, resource-based, ethical, and contextual perspectives. The knowledge structure of the field is organized around four major clusters: foundational OCB conceptualization and antecedents, attitudinal and performance-related outcomes, leadership and relational mechanisms, and emerging themes linked to sustainability, digitalization, and cross-cultural variation. At the same time, the review identifies a substantial methodological imbalance, with the literature dominated by cross-sectional quantitative survey designs and limited use of longitudinal, experimental, and mixed-method approaches. By combining bibliometric mapping with a TCCM-based synthesis, this study provides a robust account of the evolution of OCB scholarship and proposes a forward-looking agenda for extending OCB research into digitally mediated, hybrid, and sustainability-driven organizational environments.

Keywords: Organizational Citizenship Behaviour; Bibliometric Review; Systematic Review; Intellectual Structure; TCCM Framework; Web of Science.

1. Introduction

In contemporary organizations, competitive advantage increasingly depends not only on formal task performance but also on employees’ willingness to contribute beyond prescribed job roles. Behaviours such as voluntarily helping colleagues, demonstrating conscientiousness, and supporting organizational initiatives often determine whether organizations merely function or truly perform. It is within this broader behavioural domain that Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) has gained enduring relevance, particularly in the context of increasing organizational complexity and evolving work arrangements.

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) refers to discretionary employee actions that extend beyond formal job requirements and contribute to organizational effectiveness (Organ,

1988). Since its conceptualization, OCB has been consistently linked to enhanced individual performance, team effectiveness, and overall organizational productivity (Podsakoff et al., 2000; Organ et al., 2006). Meta-analytic evidence further confirms that OCB significantly contributes to both individual- and organizational-level outcomes, including efficiency, managerial effectiveness, and long-term performance (LePine et al., 2002; Podsakoff et al., 2009). Consequently, OCB has evolved into a foundational construct across organizational behaviour and human resource management research.

The theoretical foundations of OCB are primarily rooted in Social Exchange Theory and Perceived Organizational Support, which explain citizenship behaviour as a reciprocal response to organizational treatment (Blau, 1964; Eisenberger et al., 1986). Complementary frameworks such as the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) model further extend this understanding by emphasizing the role of work resources and engagement in fostering discretionary behaviours (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Over time, OCB research has expanded to include a wide range of antecedents such as leadership, organizational justice, trust, and commitment, along with outcomes including performance, retention, and organizational effectiveness (Meyer et al., 2002; Podsakoff et al., 2000).

Despite its theoretical richness and empirical depth, the OCB literature exhibits several critical limitations. First, the field remains highly fragmented, with studies largely focusing on isolated antecedent–outcome relationships rather than providing an integrated understanding of its intellectual structure. Second, the literature demonstrates a strong methodological concentration, with a predominant reliance on cross-sectional, survey-based quantitative designs, limiting causal inference and contextual insights (Podsakoff et al., 2009). Third, there is limited systematic evidence on the longitudinal evolution of OCB research, including its publication trends, collaboration networks, and thematic development. Finally, emerging organizational contexts—such as digital transformation and hybrid work environments—remain insufficiently integrated into dominant OCB frameworks, indicating a growing gap between theory and practice (Bolino et al., 2013).

These limitations necessitate a structured and comprehensive synthesis of the field. While traditional reviews and meta-analyses provide valuable insights, they are limited in their ability to capture the structural and intellectual evolution of a research domain. Bibliometric analysis offers a robust and objective approach by systematically examining publication trends, citation patterns, and thematic structures (Donthu et al., 2021). Such methods enable the identification of influential contributors, knowledge clusters, and emerging research frontiers (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017).

Rationale for Conducting a Bibliometric Study

A bibliometric analysis of OCB literature is particularly warranted due to the maturity and scale of the field. First, the accumulation of a large body of research necessitates a systematic consolidation of knowledge and identification of dominant intellectual trajectories. Second, the increasing diversity of research themes and publication outlets calls for a structured mapping of the field to reduce fragmentation and enhance coherence. Third, the emergence of new organizational contexts, including digital and hybrid work environments, requires the identification of future research directions through a data-driven approach. Thus, bibliometric analysis provides a comprehensive framework for understanding both the evolution and future trajectory of OCB scholarship.

In addition, the present study adopts the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework to enhance methodological transparency and rigor. PRISMA facilitates a systematic process of identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion of studies, thereby improving the reliability and reproducibility of the review. By integrating bibliometric techniques with a PRISMA-guided approach, this study ensures both analytical depth and methodological robustness.

Accordingly, this study analyzes Organizational Citizenship Behaviour literature from 1995 to 2026 to map its intellectual structure, identify key contributors, examine thematic evolution, and propose future research directions using the TCCM framework.

Research Questions

RQ1: What are the major publication and citation trends in Organizational Citizenship Behaviour research over time?

RQ2: Who are the most influential authors, journals, and institutions contributing to the Organizational Citizenship Behaviour literature?

RQ3: What intellectual structures and collaboration patterns characterize the evolution of the OCB field?

RQ4: What major thematic areas and research clusters have emerged in Organizational Citizenship Behaviour scholarship?

RQ5: What future research directions can be identified using the TCCM framework?

Theoretical Underpinnings of Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) research is grounded in a rich and evolving theoretical foundation that reflects its interdisciplinary nature across organizational behaviour, psychology, and management. The analysis of the Web of Science dataset indicates that OCB scholarship has progressed from a predominantly single-theory perspective to a multi-theoretical paradigm integrating relational, motivational, resource-based, and contextual explanations of employee behaviour .

At its core, OCB is primarily explained through Social Exchange Theory (SET), which posits that employees reciprocate favourable organizational treatment through discretionary behaviours that benefit the organization (Blau, 1964). Closely aligned with this perspective is Perceived Organizational Support (POS) theory, which suggests that when employees perceive that their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being, they are more likely to engage in citizenship behaviours (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Similarly, Leader–Member Exchange (LMX) theory emphasizes the role of high-quality leader–subordinate relationships in fostering trust and mutual obligation, thereby encouraging OCB (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Empirical evidence across the dataset consistently demonstrates that trust, relational quality, and perceived support are significant predictors of OCB, reinforcing the centrality of exchange-based mechanisms.

Beyond exchange-based explanations, OCB has increasingly been examined through motivation-based theories, particularly Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which highlights the role of intrinsic motivation in driving discretionary behaviours (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Contemporary studies extend this perspective by demonstrating that leadership support,

autonomy, and meaningful work enhance OCB through internal motivational processes, especially in emerging domains such as environmental and sustainability-oriented citizenship behaviours. This shift indicates that OCB is not merely a reciprocal response but also a function of employees' internalized values and autonomous motivation.

Another significant theoretical stream is derived from resource-based and stress-related frameworks, including the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory and the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) model. These perspectives conceptualize OCB as contingent upon the availability of psychological and organizational resources (Hobfoll, 1989; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Empirical findings suggest that excessive job demands, burnout, and emotional exhaustion negatively influence OCB, whereas supportive environments and resource availability enhance discretionary behaviours. This highlights that OCB is not uniformly exhibited but varies depending on resource conditions and employee well-being.

In addition, OCB scholarship incorporates identity and cultural frameworks, particularly Social Identity Theory and the individualism–collectivism paradigm, to explain variations in citizenship behaviour across contexts (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Hofstede, 2001). Studies indicate that cultural values and self-construal influence how employees interpret organizational relationships and engage in OCB. For instance, collectivist orientations strengthen relational ties and promote citizenship behaviour, while individualistic orientations shape OCB through exchange-based mechanisms. These findings underscore the contextual and culturally embedded nature of OCB.

Finally, recent research has expanded toward normative and ethical perspectives, including Organizational Justice Theory, Ethical Climate Theory, and the Theory of Normative Conduct (Colquitt et al., 2001; Cialdini et al., 1990). These frameworks emphasize that employee behaviour is guided by perceptions of fairness, ethical standards, and social norms within the organization. Empirical evidence demonstrates that ethical climate and justice perceptions significantly influence OCB by shaping employees' sense of obligation and the appropriateness of discretionary actions.

Overall, the theoretical evolution of OCB reflects a shift from a predominantly exchange-based explanation to a multi-theoretical integration, where social exchange explains relational reciprocity, motivation theories explain internal drivers, resource theories explain situational constraints, and cultural and normative frameworks explain contextual variation. This integrative perspective highlights the increasing complexity of OCB in contemporary organizational settings and provides a comprehensive foundation for future research.

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Data Source and Search Strategy

This study adopts a bibliometric and systematic review approach to examine the evolution of Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) literature. The dataset was extracted from the Web of Science (WoS) Core Collection, which is widely recognized for its high-quality indexing of peer-reviewed journals and its suitability for bibliometric analysis (Mongeon & Paul-Hus, 2016). The selection of WoS ensures the inclusion of rigorously vetted and high-impact academic publications.

The search was conducted using a combination of keywords related to Organizational Citizenship Behaviour, including “organizational citizenship behaviour,” “OCB,” and related constructs. The time frame for the analysis spans from 1995 to 2026, enabling a comprehensive examination of the field’s development across its introduction, growth, and maturity phases. The search was limited to journal articles published in English to ensure consistency and comparability of findings. The final dataset forms the basis for subsequent bibliometric and thematic analyses.

2.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure the relevance, quality, and consistency of the dataset, explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied in line with systematic review protocols (Donthu et al., 2021).

Inclusion Criteria:

- Peer-reviewed journal articles indexed in the Web of Science Core Collection
- Studies explicitly focusing on Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) or closely related constructs
- Publications written in English
- Articles published between 1995 and 2026
- Empirical, conceptual, and review studies contributing to OCB scholarship

Exclusion Criteria:

- Duplicate records across databases or search results
- Conference papers, book chapters, editorials, and non-peer-reviewed sources
- Studies not directly related to OCB or lacking conceptual relevance
- Articles with insufficient bibliographic information
- Non-English publications

The application of these criteria ensured that the final dataset maintained both theoretical relevance and methodological rigor, while minimizing noise and redundancy in the analysis.

2.3 PRISMA Framework

To enhance transparency and replicability, this study follows the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework, which provides a structured approach for identifying, screening, and selecting relevant studies (Page et al., 2021). The PRISMA methodology is widely adopted in systematic reviews to reduce selection bias and ensure methodological clarity.

The study selection process was conducted in four sequential stages:

- Identification: A total of 412 records were retrieved from the Web of Science database using predefined search keywords.
- Screening: After removing 38 duplicate records, an initial screening based on titles and abstracts led to the exclusion of 15 irrelevant studies.
- Eligibility: The remaining 359 articles were assessed for eligibility based on full-text evaluation and predefined inclusion–exclusion criteria.
- Inclusion: A final dataset of 359 studies was retained for bibliometric and systematic analysis.

This structured filtering process ensures that the dataset is both comprehensive and methodologically sound, aligning with best practices in bibliometric research (Donthu et al., 2021; Page et al., 2021).

2.4 Analytical Technique

Following dataset finalization, bibliometric analysis was conducted using the Bibliometrix R-package, a widely used tool for science mapping and quantitative literature analysis (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). The analysis focused on key dimensions such as publication trends, citation patterns, source analysis, and thematic mapping. These techniques enable a systematic understanding of the intellectual structure, evolution, and future directions of OCB research.

Analysis of Publication and Citation Trend (1995–2026)

RQ1: What are the major publication trends in Organisational Citizenship Behaviour Research over time?

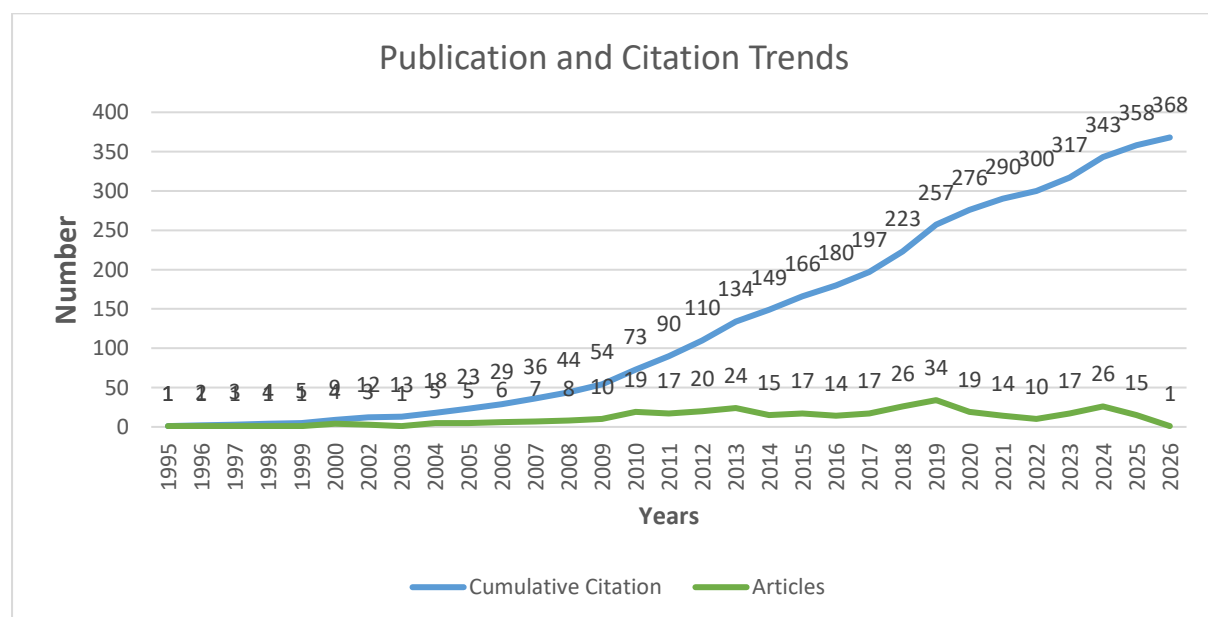
As mentioned in Figure 1, the analysis of annual scientific production reveals a clear life-cycle pattern in Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) research. In its early phase, spanning roughly 1995 to 2005, the field exhibited slow but steady growth, characterized by low annual publication output and limited cumulative citation development. This pattern is typical of an emerging research domain, where foundational concepts are gradually introduced and scholarly attention remains relatively modest (Price, 1963; Small, 1973).

From 2006 to 2017, OCB research entered a period of rapid expansion, marked by a substantial increase in publication volume and a parallel rise in cumulative citations. This phase reflects growing academic engagement, broader theoretical development, and increasing recognition of OCB as a significant construct within organizational behaviour scholarship. The sharp rise in output during this period suggests that the field benefitted from conceptual refinement, empirical diversification, and stronger integration into mainstream management research (Waltman et al., 2010; Bornmann & Leydesdorff, 2014).

The peak in publication activity, culminating around the late 2010s, indicates a period of heightened scholarly interest. Thereafter, the field begins to show signs of stabilization, with annual output fluctuating within a narrower range rather than continuing its earlier steep upward climb. Such a trend is often interpreted as evidence of field maturity, where the core constructs, antecedents, and outcomes have been extensively explored and the literature moves toward consolidation rather than rapid expansion (Podsakoff et al., 2009; Donthu et al., 2021).

Further, the cumulative growth trajectory suggests an S-shaped or logistic pattern, indicating that OCB research has progressed through the classic stages of introduction, growth, and maturity. The relative plateau visible after 2018 supports the interpretation that the field has entered a stage of theoretical consolidation, where additional contributions are more incremental than foundational. At the same time, the continued rise in cumulative citations demonstrates that the domain remains influential and widely referenced, even as publication growth becomes more stable. This combination of citation continuity and publication stabilization highlights the enduring relevance of OCB research within the broader organizational behaviour literature (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Mongeon & Paul-Hus, 2016).

Figure 1 **Publication and Citation Trend**



RQ2: Who are the most influential authors, journals and institutions contributing to the Organisational Citizenship Behaviour literature?

Most Influential Authors and Scholarly Impact in OCB Research

As mentioned in Table 2, the analysis of leading contributors reveals a diverse and globally distributed authorship structure within Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) research. Prominent scholars such as Pascal Paillé (Paillé, 2006), Rolf van Dick (van Dick, 2005), Olivier

Boiral (Boiral, 2012), and Ian Kessler (Kessler, 2000) emerge as highly influential, demonstrating strong citation performance and sustained academic contributions.

Pascal Paillé (h-index = 6) stands out with a total of 698 citations across six publications, reflecting both productivity and consistent scholarly impact since 2006 (Paillé, 2006). Similarly, Rolf van Dick exhibits a high citation intensity (TC/NP = 165.3), indicating that his work has received substantial academic attention despite a moderate publication count (van Dick, 2005). Notably, Ian Kessler records the highest citation per publication ratio (TC/NP = 252.7), highlighting exceptional influence per article and suggesting foundational contributions to the field (Kessler, 2000).

Authors such as Olivier Boiral (Boiral, 2012) (TC/NP = 229.0) and Arnold B. Bakker (Bakker, 2015) (TC/NP = 108.0) further reinforce the importance of high-impact, lower-volume scholarship. Additional contributors including Allan Lee (Lee, 2018), Alison Legood (Legood, 2018), and Cheng-Chen Lin (Lin, 2010) demonstrate moderate productivity with steady citation impact, reflecting growing specialization within the domain.

Emerging scholars from Asia, such as Yuen Onn Choong (Choong, 2019), Lee-Peng Ng (Ng, 2020), Lyu Wang (Wang, 2008), and Ifzal Ahmad (Ahmad, 2018), indicate a recent expansion of OCB research across developing regions. Similarly, Sabine Pohl (Pohl, 2012) and Yui-Tim Wong (Wong, 2002) contribute to the broader internationalization of the field.

Geographically, the dataset reflects strong representation from Canada, the UK, and Europe, with institutions such as Université Laval, University of Oxford, and Goethe University Frankfurt contributing prominently. The increasing presence of Asian researchers suggests a shift toward a more globally inclusive research landscape.

Importantly, while some authors demonstrate higher h-index values, others with relatively lower h-index scores achieve substantial citation impact (e.g., Boiral, 2012; Kessler, 2000), indicating that citation intensity (TC/NP) provides a more nuanced measure of scholarly influence than productivity alone (Bornmann & Daniel, 2007). This aligns with bibliometric evidence emphasizing quality-driven impact in academic research (Donthu et al., 2021).

Overall, the findings suggest that OCB research is shaped by a combination of established foundational scholars and emerging contributors, with increasing global participation and a clear shift toward high-impact, specialized publications.

Table 2

Sr No.	Author	h_index	Country	Affiliations	TC	NP	TC
1	Pascal Paillé	6	Canada	Université Laval, Quebec, Canada	698	6	1
2	Yuen Onn Choong	4	Malaysia	Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, Malaysia	99	4	2
3	I. M. Jawahar	4	USA	Illinois State University	95	4	2
4	Allan Lee	4	UK	University of Exeter Business School, University of Exeter, Exeter, UK	167	4	4
5	Rolf van Dick	4	Germany	Goethe University Frankfurt	661	4	1
6	Arnold B. Bakker	3	Nether Land	Erasmus University Rotterdam	324	3	1
7	Olivier Boiral	3	Canada	Laval University, Quebec	687	3	2
8	Ian Kessler	3	UK	University of Oxford	758	3	2
9	Alison Legood	3	UK	Aston Business School, Aston University, Birmingham, UK	127	3	4
10	Cheng-Chen Lin	3	Taiwan	National Pingtung University of Science and Technology	124	3	4
11	Lee-Peng Ng	3	Malaysia	Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman	72	3	2
12	Sabine Pohl	3	Belgium	University in the City of Brussels, Belgium	42	3	1
13	Lyu Wang	3	China	Shandong University	53	3	1
14	Yui-Tim Wong	3	UK	Arup Group (United Kingdom)	75	3	2
15	Ifzal Ahmad	2	Pakistan	Institute of Business Management	160	2	8

Table 3

Top 15 Journals of OCB Research			
Sources	Articles	ABDC	SCOPUS
JOURNAL OF OCCUPATIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY	28	A	ü

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	27	A	ü
EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF WORK AND ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY	26	A	ü
PERSONNEL REVIEW	20	A	ü
CANADIAN JOURNAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE SCIENCES-REVUE CANADIENNE DES SCIENCES DE L'ADMINISTRATION	13	NA	NA
LEADERSHIP & ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT JOURNAL	12	B	ü
PUBLIC MANAGEMENT REVIEW	8	A	ü
SUSTAINABILITY	8	NA	ü
JOURNAL OF MANAGERIAL PSYCHOLOGY	7	B	ü
MANAGEMENT DECISION	7	B	ü
ECONOMIC AND INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY	6	A	ü
EMPLOYEE RELATIONS	6	B	ü
JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES	6	A*	ü
MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION REVIEW	6	A	ü
WORK AND STRESS	6	NA	ü

Table 4 Cluster-wise Contribution and TCCM Mapping of OCB Bibliographic Coupling Network

Cluster	Estimated Contribution (%)	Core Intellectual Focus	Theory	Context	Characteristics	Methods
Red	35–40	Foundational OCB theory, conceptualization, antecedents (leadership, support, justice), measurement	Social Exchange Theory, POS, LMX	General organizational settings	Discretionary behaviour, OCB dimensions (altruism, civic virtue)	Predominantly quantitative (survey-based, regression, CFA)
Green	25–30	Employee attitudes, engagement, commitment,	Attitudinal & motivational	Traditional workplace settings	Job satisfaction, commitment,	Cross-sectional quantitative designs

Cluster	Estimated Contribution (%)	Core Intellectual Focus	Theory	Context	Characteristics	Methods
		performance outcomes	nal theories		well-being, performance	
Blue	20–25	Leadership, trust, relational dynamics, identity, stress mechanisms	Exchange & relational frameworks (LMX, identity theory)	Team-level and supervisor–subordinate contexts	Trust, reciprocity, leadership quality, interpersonal relations	Quantitative with some multilevel approaches
Yellow	10–15	Sustainability, green OCB, cross-cultural and emerging contexts	Normative conduct, ethical climate, SDT	Environmental, cross-cultural, and sector-specific settings	Environmental citizenship, context-specific behaviours	Empirical (mediation/moderation models, emerging mixed approaches)

According to **Table 3**, the most relevant journals in the Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) literature indicate that the field is firmly grounded in organizational psychology, human resource management, and management studies. Leading outlets such as the *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, the *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, and the *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology* account for a substantial share of OCB publications, suggesting that citizenship behaviour has been predominantly examined as an employee behaviour shaped by psychological processes, workplace attitudes, and HR practices (Organ, 1988; Podsakoff et al., 2000). The strong contribution of journals such as *Personnel Review* further highlights the continued scholarly emphasis on the role of employee attitudes, perceived organizational support, and managerial practices in shaping OCB (Bolino et al., 2002).

The journal distribution also reflects the academic quality and maturity of OCB research. Many of the most productive outlets are Scopus-indexed and highly ranked in recognized journal quality lists, including journals such as the *Journal of Management Studies*, *Public Management Review*, and *Management and Organization Review*. This pattern suggests that OCB has evolved into a well-established research domain with strong theoretical and empirical foundations across mainstream management scholarship (LePine et al., 2002; Podsakoff et al., 2009). Furthermore, the presence of journals such as the *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, and *Management Decision* highlights the close connection of OCB research with leadership, managerial effectiveness, and decision-making processes (Ilies et al., 2009). The inclusion of journals such as *Sustainability*

and *Work & Stress* also indicates that OCB scholarship has expanded into interdisciplinary areas such as employee wellbeing, stress, and sustainable organizational behaviour (Grant & Mayer, 2009; Podsakoff et al., 2014). Overall, the most relevant journals demonstrate that OCB research is both theoretically mature and increasingly diverse in its application across contemporary organizational contexts.

RQ3: What intellectual structures and collaboration patterns characterize the evolution of the OCB field?

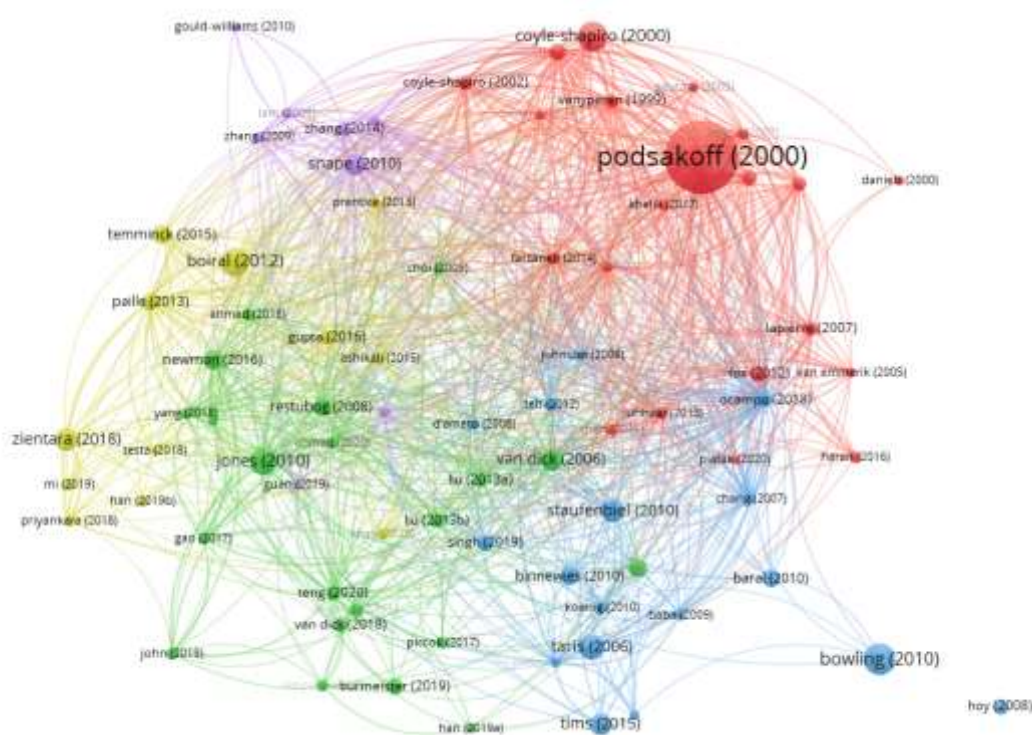
Cluster-wise Contribution and TCCM Mapping of OCB Bibliographic Coupling Network

The bibliographic coupling analysis (**Table 4**) reveals a four-cluster intellectual structure in Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) research, indicating a mature yet evolving knowledge domain. The red cluster, contributing approximately 35–40% of the network, represents the theoretical core of OCB scholarship, anchored in foundational frameworks such as Social Exchange Theory and Perceived Organizational Support (Blau, 1964; Eisenberger et al., 1986; Podsakoff et al., 2000). This cluster demonstrates the highest density and centrality, confirming its role as the intellectual backbone of the field.

The green cluster (25–30%) extends this foundation by linking OCB to employee attitudes and performance outcomes, including job satisfaction, commitment, and engagement (LePine et al., 2002; Meyer et al., 2002). This stream emphasizes the behavioral consequences of OCB and highlights its relevance for organizational effectiveness. Meanwhile, the blue cluster (20–25%) captures relational and leadership-oriented research, focusing on constructs such as trust, leader–member exchange, and identity-based interactions (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Van Dick et al., 2006). This cluster bridges theoretical foundations with interpersonal and team-level dynamics.

The yellow cluster (10–15%) represents emerging research directions, including sustainability, environmental citizenship behaviour, and cross-cultural perspectives (Boiral, 2012; Priyankara et al., 2018). Its relatively dispersed structure indicates an evolving research stream that is expanding the contextual boundaries of OCB scholarship.

From a TCCM perspective, the findings suggest that OCB research is strongly developed in Theory and Characteristics, moderately developed in Context, and comparatively limited in methodological diversity, with a dominant reliance on quantitative survey-based designs (Podsakoff et al., 2009; Donthu et al., 2021). Overall, the cluster structure reflects a transition from theoretical consolidation to contextual diversification, highlighting opportunities for future research in emerging organizational settings and advanced methodological approaches.



Cluster wise Distribution (Bibliographic Coupling)

RQ4: Which thematic areas and research clusters have emerged in Organisational Citizenship Behaviour scholarship?

Thematic Structure of OCB Research

Keyword analysis reveals diverse research streams, including leadership, engagement, and performance outcomes.

OCB has been consistently linked to leadership styles such as transformational leadership, which positively influences discretionary behaviour (Podsakoff et al., 1990). Additionally, meta-analytic studies confirm that OCB is strongly associated with job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance outcomes (LePine et al., 2002).

Recent research trends emphasize the role of OCB in **digital workplaces**, highlighting its importance in knowledge sharing, adaptability, and virtual team performance (Bolino et al., 2013).



and fair treatment with positive attitudes and discretionary behaviours (Blau, 1964; Eisenberger et al., 1986). Constructs such as organizational justice, leader–member exchange (LMX), and organizational identification highlight the importance of high-quality relationships in shaping employee behaviour (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

Procedural justice and fairness perceptions strengthen trust and commitment, thereby encouraging OCB (Colquitt et al., 2001; Greenberg, 1990). Additionally, HRM practices play an indirect role by influencing employee perceptions of support and relational quality. Empirical evidence consistently demonstrates that these relational factors significantly impact outcomes such as commitment, satisfaction, and citizenship behaviour (Podsakoff et al., 2000; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Thus, OCB is conceptualized as a socially embedded outcome driven by reciprocity, fairness, and relational exchange.

Theme 3: Organizational Commitment, Job Attitudes, and Retention Outcomes

Cluster 3 highlights the role of commitment, job satisfaction, and motivation as key antecedents and outcomes of OCB and employee retention. Affective and normative commitment represent critical psychological bonds influencing discretionary behaviour, with affective commitment particularly linked to higher levels of OCB (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer et al., 2002). Job satisfaction and motivation further reinforce these relationships by enhancing employee engagement and willingness to exceed formal job expectations (Judge et al., 2001).

OCB is positioned as both an outcome of positive attitudes and a contributor to organizational effectiveness (Organ, 1988; Podsakoff et al., 2000). Simultaneously, commitment and satisfaction are negatively associated with turnover intentions, highlighting their importance in retention (Tett & Meyer, 1993; Meyer et al., 2002). The presence of meta-analytic evidence reflects the maturity of this research stream, confirming robust relationships among attitudes, performance, OCB, and turnover. Overall, this theme emphasizes the strategic role of employee attitudes in driving both behavioural and retention outcomes.

Theme 4: Leadership, Justice, Support, and Trust as Determinants of OCB and Performance (Contextual Perspective)

Cluster 4 develops a model-driven and context-sensitive understanding of OCB, emphasizing leadership, justice, support, and trust as key determinants of employee behaviour and performance. Leadership shapes employee perceptions of fairness and organizational support, thereby fostering trust and encouraging citizenship behaviours (Podsakoff et al., 2000; Colquitt et al., 2001).

Trust acts as a central mediating mechanism linking justice and support to OCB, consistent with social exchange principles (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Eisenberger et al., 1986). OCB, in turn, enhances organizational performance by improving cooperation and workplace functioning (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997; Podsakoff et al., 2000). The contextual focus on China highlights the influence of cultural factors such as collectivism and relational orientation, where trust and leadership relationships play a stronger role in shaping behaviour (Farh et al., 2007).

Overall, this theme presents OCB as an outcome of relational and contextual dynamics, offering a culturally grounded model linking leadership practices to performance through trust and support.

Distribution of Research Designs and Data Collection Tools in OCB Literature

Category	Type	Description	Percentage (%)
Research Design	Quantitative	Survey-based empirical studies using statistical analysis (e.g., regression, CFA)	70–75
	Qualitative	Interviews, case studies, interpretive approaches	5–8
	Mixed Methods	Combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques	8–10
	Conceptual	Theory-building and model development studies	5–7
	Review	Systematic reviews and meta-analyses	5–8
Data Collection Tools	Survey (Questionnaire)	Structured self-report or multi-source questionnaires	75–80
	Secondary Data	Archival datasets	5–7
	Interview	Semi-structured or in-depth interviews	5–6
	Experiment	Laboratory or field-based experiments	2–4
	Mixed Tools	Combination of survey with interviews/observations	6–8

The methodological profile of Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) research demonstrates a strong dominance of quantitative approaches, with survey-based designs accounting for the majority of empirical studies. Evidence from the dataset indicates that most studies employ cross-sectional survey methods supported by statistical techniques such as regression analysis and confirmatory factor analysis. In contrast, qualitative, conceptual, and review-based studies constitute a relatively smaller proportion, highlighting a methodological imbalance in the literature.

Similarly, the analysis of data collection tools reveals an overwhelming reliance on questionnaire-based surveys, often complemented by multi-source data (e.g., supervisor–subordinate responses) to enhance validity. The limited use of experimental and interview-based approaches suggests that OCB research remains largely positivist and lacks deeper contextual and causal exploration. Overall, the findings indicate a need for greater methodological diversification through mixed-method, longitudinal, and experimental designs to strengthen theoretical development and empirical robustness in OCB research.

4. Discussion

The present study provides strong evidence that Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) has evolved into a theoretically mature and empirically robust research domain, characterized by high citation impact, well-established theoretical foundations, and a structured intellectual landscape. The life-cycle analysis reveals that OCB research has transitioned from an emergent phase (1995–2005) to a rapid growth phase (2006–2017), followed by a stage of theoretical consolidation and maturity post-2018, consistent with scientometric growth models (Price, 1963; Donthu et al., 2021).

A key insight from the findings is the persistent dominance of foundational theories, particularly Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), Perceived Organizational Support (Eisenberger et al., 1986), and Leader–Member Exchange (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). These frameworks continue to anchor contemporary OCB research, indicating strong theoretical continuity. However, the integration of motivation-based (SDT), resource-based (JD–R), and normative frameworks reflects a shift toward multi-theoretical convergence, enhancing explanatory depth (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Deci & Ryan, 2000).

The bibliographic coupling analysis further demonstrates that OCB research is structured into four dominant intellectual clusters, ranging from foundational theory to emerging sustainability and cross-cultural contexts. While the red and green clusters confirm theoretical and empirical maturity, the yellow cluster highlights emerging frontiers such as green OCB, digital work, and sustainability-oriented behaviours, indicating a gradual shift toward contextual diversification.

Despite these advancements, the study identifies three critical limitations in the existing literature:

Methodological rigidity: Over 70% of studies rely on cross-sectional survey designs, limiting causal inference and longitudinal understanding.

Contextual underrepresentation: Emerging work environments (remote, hybrid, AI-driven workplaces) remain insufficiently integrated into mainstream OCB frameworks.

Fragmentation of constructs: Research largely focuses on isolated antecedents (e.g., leadership, justice), lacking integrative, system-level models.

Additionally, the increasing relevance of digital transformation and virtual collaboration challenges traditional assumptions of OCB, which were largely developed in co-located, hierarchical organizational settings (Bolino et al., 2013). This suggests that while OCB theory is mature, its contextual applicability requires significant updating.

Overall, the discussion highlights a paradox: OCB research is theoretically saturated yet contextually evolving, creating a strong need for integrative, future-oriented research.

5. Future Research Directions (TCCM Framework)

Building on the bibliometric findings, future research directions are structured using the TCCM (Theory–Context–Characteristics–Methods) framework, providing a systematic roadmap for advancing OCB scholarship.

5.1 Theory

Future research should move beyond traditional exchange-based explanations and focus on theoretical integration and extension:

- Integration of OCB with AI and digital behaviour theories, particularly human–AI collaboration and algorithmic management.
- Development of dynamic and process-based models capturing how OCB evolves over time rather than static relationships.
- Exploration of the “dark side” of OCB, including citizenship pressure, burnout, and role overload (Bolino et al., 2013).
- Linking OCB with sustainability and ESG frameworks, particularly green and prosocial behaviours.

Research Opportunity: A unified framework integrating SET + JD–R + SDT + digital work theories.

5.2 Context

The contextual scope of OCB research must expand significantly:

- Hybrid and remote work environments: How virtual settings influence discretionary behaviours.
- Platform-based and gig economy work: OCB in non-traditional employment relationships.
- Cross-cultural and emerging economies: Comparative studies across collectivist vs. individualist contexts (Hofstede, 2001).
- Technology-enabled workplaces: Impact of AI, automation, and surveillance on citizenship behaviour.

Research Opportunity: OCB in digitally mediated, boundaryless organizations.

5.3 Characteristics

Future studies should redefine the nature of OCB itself:

- Emergence of digital OCB (knowledge sharing, virtual collaboration, online helping behaviour).
- Focus on employee autonomy, proactivity, and adaptability in uncertain environments.
- Examination of team-level and network-level OCB, beyond individual behaviour.
- Inclusion of sustainability-oriented and ethical citizenship behaviours.

Research Opportunity: Shift from “extra-role behaviour” → “adaptive and value-driven behaviour”.

5.4 Methods

Methodological advancement is critical for the next phase of OCB research:

- Adoption of longitudinal designs to capture behavioural dynamics over time.
- Use of multi-level modeling (individual, team, organizational levels).
- Integration of big data and digital trace data (e.g., communication logs, collaboration tools).
- Increased use of experimental and mixed-method approaches to establish causality and context-rich insights.

Research Opportunity: Combining HR analytics + behavioral experiments + longitudinal datasets.

6. Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive bibliometric and systematic review of Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) literature from 1995 to 2026, offering a holistic understanding of its intellectual evolution, thematic structure, and future trajectory. The findings confirm that OCB is a globally relevant, high-impact, and theoretically mature research domain, supported by strong foundational theories and concentrated scholarly contributions.

The analysis reveals that while OCB research has achieved theoretical consolidation and empirical depth, it faces critical challenges related to contextual relevance, methodological diversity, and conceptual integration. The dominance of traditional frameworks and survey-based methodologies indicates stability but also highlights the need for innovation.

Importantly, the study underscores that the future of OCB research lies in its ability to adapt to contemporary organizational realities, including digital transformation, hybrid work, and sustainability imperatives. By leveraging the TCCM framework, this study provides a structured roadmap for advancing OCB scholarship toward greater theoretical integration, contextual relevance, and methodological rigor.

In conclusion, OCB research stands at a pivotal stage—transitioning from maturity to transformation—where its continued relevance will depend on its ability to evolve alongside changing organizational landscapes.

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