

Receipt of interpersonal citizenship: fostering agentic emotion, cognition, and action in organizations

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Abstract

With an eye to fostering an energized and empowered workforce, we explore the discrete emotion of *self-assurance* (characterized by boldness, pride, and audacity), investigating how receipt of *interpersonal citizenship behavior* (ICB) fuels this agentic emotion. ICB includes acts of everyday concern that may be of a person- or task-focused nature. With two survey samples, we propose and test a model that situates self-assurance as a mechanism linking ICB-receipt to employee thriving and empowerment. Additionally, we find links to citizenship enactment, as reported by coworkers. Notably, person-focused ICB-receipt may be just as beneficial to self-assurance as task-focused ICB-receipt. These results hold equally for working women and men. Our multi-study, multi-source results underscore the role of agentic emotion in cultivating a proactive workforce.

Sometimes you lose confidence. And then you get with this group. And—you're rejuvenated! You're excited again! They value what you do! They think what you do is interesting! They ask you the right questions! They—they're sort of everything! *Junior woman of her professional association* (Gersick, Dutton, & Bartunek, 2000, p. 1026)

Introduction

Interpersonal connections can boost an employee's confidence and energy for work. How we motivate, energize, and give employees a sense of meaning is increasingly the focus of managers and scholars alike (e.g., Fritz, Lam, & Spreitzer, 2011; Grant, 2007; Porath, Spreitzer, Gibson, & Garnett, 2012). This is a departure from the classic conceptualization of work design. The workplace is no longer a static environment in which control by supervisors regulates low-autonomy workers; instead, we see a dynamic knowledge- and service-based environment wherein employees often work in team-based roles and complete tasks that require collaboration, innovation, and flexibility. Scholars have declared a need to reinvent the traditional work design model (e.g., Morgeson & Humphrey, 2008; Parker, Johnson, Collins, & Nguyen, 2013). Fundamental in these changes are a

relational perspective (focusing on social interactions) and a proactive perspective (focusing on factors that stimulate initiative; Grant & Parker, 2009).

Following the call to integrate these perspectives (Grant & Parker, 2009), we explore the discrete emotion of self-assurance (characterized by boldness, pride, and audacity) and investigate how specific relational events (i.e., receipt of interpersonal citizenship) fuel this agentic emotion. We propose and test a model that situates self-assurance as a pivotal link between citizenship-receipt and outcomes including employee empowerment, thriving, and citizenship-enactment. In short, we pinpoint emotional and social experiences that catalyze employee proactivity, increasingly required in contemporary organizations.

While our project has many novel features, three are particularly notable. First, we bring innovative attention to self-assurance, showing how this emotion links with individual thriving and empowerment. Importantly, we also demonstrate how self-assurance and its outcomes predict enactment of citizenship on the job (as reported by coworkers). Second, by focusing on interpersonal citizenship behavior-receipt (ICB-R), we foreground the perspective of employees at the "receiving end" of citizenship. This brings original contributions to the literature which, to date, has mainly addressed the "doers" of citizenship and what motivates them. Third, we demonstrate that receipt of everyday kindness and

courtesies of a personal nature is just as important to self-assurance as helping related to work-tasks. Although personal kindness falls outside of the typical job description, our results demonstrate how it benefits employees and organizations alike. Figure 1 presents a theoretical model of these relationships, explained in the following sections.

Conceptualizing interpersonal citizenship behavior (ICB)

Settoon and Mossholder (2002) noted that most organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) research centers on organization-focused conduct. In contrast, interpersonal citizenship behaviors (ICBs) are “affiliative, cooperative, and directed at other individuals” (Mossholder, Richardson, & Settoon, 2011, p. 33). ICBs more accurately reflect the different kinds of relationships at work, and can be person- or task-focused in nature. These relationships can be informal and personal, wherein the interaction helps, hinders, or is irrelevant to the work task at hand. Termed *person-focused* ICB, this includes being available to listen to colleagues and demonstrating a concern for others through interpersonal outreach, friendliness, and kindness. ICB-Person departs from many conceptualizations of support on the job that are closely tied to organizational performance. Conversely, relationships may be work-dependent and form from interacting and assisting while completing the work task. *Task-focused* ICB revolves around work-related problems and is often instrumental, stemming from one’s work-role. ICB-Task examples include offering advice on work problems, providing support on tasks beyond one’s responsibility, and sharing factual knowledge (Settoon & Mossholder, 2002).

Importantly, ICBs are broader than the traditional “helping” subdomain of organizational citizenship, in that they encompass not only helping conduct, but also actions that convey caring attitudes, respect, and cooperation. ICBs benefit coworkers and “indicate the depth of feeling for and connection with others in an organization” (Mossholder, Settoon, & Henagan, 2005, p. 610). Not limited to interactions between superiors and subordinates, ICBs can be exchanged between workers at any level of the organization.

Most empirical analyses of the enactment of ICB collapse across sub-types (for an exception, see Settoon & Mossholder, 2002). Although the ICB sub-types correlate, they may have different effects for the person receiving the treatment. We disentangle these two facets of ICB-receipt, investigating the unique effects of each. As organizations develop programs and trainings to foster positive social climates (e.g., Civility, Respect, Engagement in the Workforce [CREW], Osatuke, Moore, Ward, Dyrenforth, & Belton, 2009), it is important that we understand which types of social behaviors most benefit the employee and organization, and why.

Self-assurance as a mechanism

In emotion research, positive and negative affect are global, higher-order constructs under which discrete emotions (e.g., fear, joy, self-assurance) fall (Tellegen, Watson, & Clark, 1999; Watson & Clark, 1991). Much past research has taken the global approach to positive affect at work. For example, in a daily diary study, Miner, Glomb, and Hulin (2005) found that positive events with coworkers reliably triggered increases in “pleasant mood” (a construct akin to positive affect). Additionally, doing altruistic behaviors at work relates to later positive mood (Glomb, Bhawe, Miner, & Wall, 2011), and perceiving supervisor support links to positive affect (Cole, Bruch, & Vogel, 2006). In short, everyday positive social encounters boost employees’ global positive affect. An important next step is to identify discrete emotions involved in positive organizational life (e.g., Brief & Weiss, 2002; Gooty, Gavin, & Ashkanasy, 2009).

Researchers have noted the difficulty of applying traditional emotion theories (which focus almost exclusively on negative affect) to the realm of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 1998). In an effort to identify discrete emotional states that more fully capture affective experience, Watson and Clark (1992, 1994) developed a taxonomy of specific emotional states, including five positive discrete emotions. In this development, the intent was to capture a wide range of subjective perceptions of closely related cognitive and physical states within affective response (Watson & Clark, 1992), consistent with theoretical conceptualizations of emotions as states comprised of multiple components (Guerrero, Andersen, & Trost, 1998). The focus was on subjective emotions as they are experienced by the individual, rather than expressive or behavioral aspects (e.g., Izard, 1977; for a more detailed discussion of measurement of emotions, see Watson & Clark, 1997).

Receiving citizenship from coworkers likely fuels many discrete emotions, but we focus on self-assurance as conceptualized by Watson and Clark, for several reasons. Following the proactive perspective of work design (Grant & Parker, 2009), we are interested in agentic emotions—those that enable individuals to take action, pursue personal goals, and give back to the organization. Self-assurance may be one such agentic emotion. More than a sensation of contentment or happiness, self-assurance refers to feelings of strength, boldness, pride, audacity, and fearlessness. Following Ekman’s concept of emotion families (1992), self-assurance is characterized by a collection of related states, revolving around a common theme and variations of that theme. Self-assurance is considered a “basic positive emotion” (Watson & Clark, 1994), i.e., a strong and consistent marker of the higher-order positive affect dimension.

Despite its theoretical importance, self-assurance has been all but overlooked in contemporary empirical scholarship,

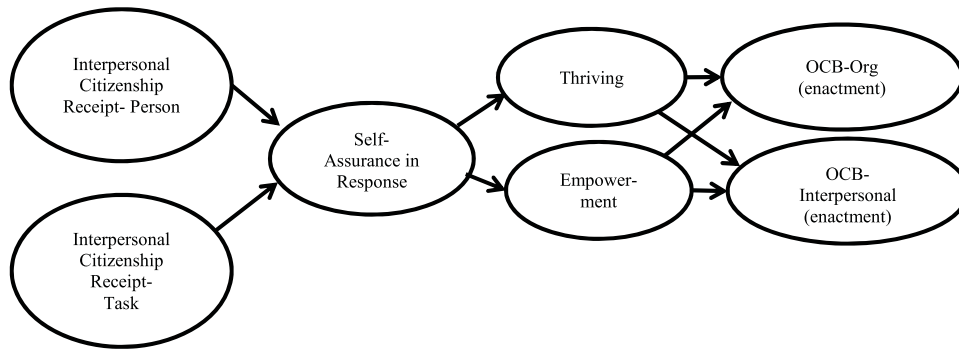


Figure 1 Theoretical model of relationships among interpersonal citizenship-receipt, self-assurance, and outcomes.

with a few notable exceptions. Promising work suggests self-assurance to be a relevant and important discrete emotional response in organizational life, including providing a link between engagement at work to enrichment at home (Clark, Michel, Stevens, Howell, & Scruggs, 2014). Decrements in self-assurance were also reported by individuals who were picked last in a team formation simulation (Bourgeois & Leary, 2001). Although scarce, these studies suggest that self-assurance is a discrete emotion that may be helpful in explaining individual behavior. Clearly, more research is needed.

We therefore seek to advance this burgeoning literature on self-assurance, examining it in the organizational context. Self-assurance may be particularly valuable for employers seeking to harness the power and benefits of a proactive workforce. Consistent with theoretical notions of positive discrete emotions, self-assurance may be associated with broadened novel and creative thoughts and actions (Fredrickson, 1998). The most optimally trained personnel will not perform at their highest levels should self-doubt exist. Employees who approach difficult and complex tasks with self-assurance will be better able to capitalize on their capabilities and enhance their agency. We propose that interpersonal connections and caring (ICB-R) will boost self-assurance; however, these linkages may vary based on the nature of the interactions within those relationships.

Recall that person-focused ICB-R indicates personal support, friendship, and kindness, and is not necessarily tied to the work task. As previously reviewed, positive social interactions at work relate to positive affect; what remains to be seen is how the receipt of ICB-Person links to discrete emotions. We suggest that acts of care of a personal nature are likely to increase self-assurance. ICB-R-Person, in particular, should develop strong social bonds that satisfy fundamental human needs such as belongingness, social contact, and affection (e.g., Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Deci & Ryan, 2000). Additionally, ICB-R-Person is an indicator of integration into a social network, which is likely to increase an

individual's sense of self-worth (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Accordingly, we propose that these experiences of support and friendship will bolster feelings of pride, determination, and strength—that is to say, self-assurance.

Task-focused ICB-R refers to actions that aid in the completion of the work task, such as helping when someone is overloaded or assisting a co-worker returning from leave. For the recipient, offers of this type of help may feel qualitatively different than connections of a personal nature. ICB-R-Task is likely to foster a sense of cooperative goals in which employees are working together to achieve a common objective (Deutsch, 1949). People working toward cooperative goals want each other to achieve, as it is a “win-win” situation. Individually, this cooperative environment may trigger increased self-assurance stemming from a collective concern for the success of the task. At the same time, however, task-related help and advice might sometimes be interpreted as doubt in one's ability and performance, leading some recipients to question their own capability. Such self-doubt in reaction to ICB-R would undermine the key psychological need of competence. Additionally, this extension of help may reduce some recipients' sense of autonomy and personal decision making (La Gaipa, 1990). Consistent with this line of reasoning, Beehr, Bowling, and Bennett (2010) found that employees receiving unwanted help which indicated their inadequacy or incompetence experienced worsened psychological and physical health. Likewise, in an experimental study, participants who received unwanted instrumental help reported higher levels of negative affect and decreased self-esteem, compared to individuals who received no support (Deelstra et al., 2003). Building on this work, we propose that ICB-R-Task might boost self-assurance, but to a lesser extent than ICB-R-Person, due to its potential to convey messages of inadequacy. Based on this theory and reasoning, we propose:

Hypothesis 1. Greater ICB-Receipt is associated with greater self-assurance in response (H1a); this relationship is stronger for ICB-R-Person than ICB-R-Task (H1b).

Outcomes of ICB-R

Little research has examined ICB-R or its outcomes. One exception is Regts and Molleman (2013), who studied job withdrawal; they found ICB-R (operationalized with a single item: “extent of help, beyond that required by the job,” that one receives from coworkers) to link to reduced turnover intentions through increased job satisfaction. This early work points the field to the possible benefits of ICB-R, opening up new questions for research. In particular, which kinds of ICB-Rs matter in terms of outcomes? And why do they matter—what are key mechanisms? To address these questions, we assess ICB-R with greater depth, carve out its facets, and investigate how those facets translate into outcomes via self-assurance. The outcomes of interest in our study are those that signal proactivity: psychological empowerment, thriving, and OCB-enactment.

Empowerment

Psychological empowerment refers to “a set of psychological states that are necessary for individuals to feel a sense of control in relation to their work” (Spreitzer, 2008, p. 56). Spreitzer (1995) further refined this construct by establishing four dimensions: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. Meaning refers to the congruence between one’s beliefs, values, behaviors, and work role. Competence represents a perception of self-efficacy regarding work or beliefs about one’s ability to complete work activities with proficiency (Gist, 1987). Self-determination refers to a sense of choice over initiating and regulating one’s actions (Deci, Connell, & Ryan, 1989). Lastly, impact denotes the degree to which employees can influence the system in which they are embedded. According to Spreitzer, all four dimensions are important to psychological empowerment in organizations.

Thomas and Velthouse (1990) theorized the manner with which environments create a sense of empowerment, citing the importance of giving power to employees to energize their motivation. More specifically, Conger and Kanungo (1988) proposed that encouragement and verbal feedback from coworkers can foster empowerment. Empirical research has begun to test these notions, finding employees who have better relationships with leaders, team members, and customers report greater empowerment (e.g., Chen, Kirkman, Kanfer, Allen, & Rosen, 2007; Corsun & Enz, 1999).

The current project extends this work to consider how individuals come to a sense of empowerment. In other words, the social environment and interactions with coworkers can empower employees by providing psychological and social resources (Spreitzer, 1996). For example, support from colleagues indicates to employees that they are valued members of the organization and therefore they may feel empowered to determine their own goals and strategies at

work (Seibert, Wang, & Courtright, 2011). We propose that self-assurance, as an emotion comprised of feelings including strength, boldness, and pride, acts as a discrete emotional state that enhances one’s sense of meaning, competence, self-determination and impact. In short, we theorize that feelings of self-assurance should promote empowerment:

Hypothesis 2. Feelings of self-assurance in response to ICB-R are associated with a greater sense of empowerment

Thriving

Thriving is defined as the joint experience of learning and vitality (Spreitzer, Sutcliffe, Dutton, Sonenshein, & Grant, 2005). Learning occurs when one acquires and applies knowledge and skills (Elliott & Dweck, 1988), and vitality is the sense of being alive and having available energy (Nix, Ryan, Manly, & Deci, 1999). These two components combined result in a desire and ability to pursue personal development and forward progress. Thriving employees feel vigorous and have high levels of psychosocial functioning (Niessen, Sonnentag, & Sach, 2012).

Theory suggests that interpersonal relationships may be one source of thriving on the job. The social embeddedness model of thriving at work positions relational resources as antecedents to individual thriving (Spreitzer et al., 2005). Similarly, Gherardi, Nicolini, and Odella (1998) emphasize the importance of connections developed through social interactions in the learning process (one component of thriving). Engaging in relational activities (e.g., doing something nice for someone at work) energizes employees (Fritz et al., 2011). Further, a civil and respectful work climate is thought to be an enabling context for thriving, because individuals feel able to master challenges (Spreitzer & Porath, 2013; Spreitzer, Porath, & Gibson, 2012). Empirical work has begun to support these assertions, finding that a climate that includes a supportive supervisor enhances thriving across a variety of industries (Paterson, Luthans, & Jeung, 2014).

The social embeddedness model (Spreitzer et al., 2005) also features positive affective resources as drivers of thriving, linking the relational context to individual vitality and learning at work. Positive emotions experienced at work can be utilized as affective resources that foster an expansion of the desire to explore thoughts and experiences (consistent with the learning component of thriving; Spreitzer & Porath, 2013). In this project, we narrow the focus of emotional reaction to the discrete feeling of self-assurance, and examine its role as a mediator between ICB-R and thriving. We hypothesize that self-assurance, as an agentic emotion, may serve as an engine to drive the thriving process following positive interpersonal experiences.

Hypothesis 3. Feelings of self-assurance in response to ICB-R are associated with a greater sense of thriving

Organizational citizenship enactment

We suggest that individuals who feel energized and empowered by citizenship from others might feel motivated to “give back” to the organization in terms of their own citizenship toward others. That is, thriving and empowerment should fuel citizenship enactment (i.e., doing good deeds corresponding to one’s work role, necessarily benefiting organizational function). This proposed linkage is consistent with Affective Events Theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), which suggests that individuals have emotional reactions (i.e., self-assurance) to work events, and these emotions directly link to cognitions related to one’s work (i.e., thriving and empowerment) which then link to judgment-driven behaviors (i.e., OCB). We examine two subtypes of organizational citizenship enactment: that which benefits the organization in general (OCB-O) (e.g., offering ideas to improve organizational functioning) and that which benefits individuals (OCB-I) (e.g., helping a coworker with work duties; Williams & Anderson, 1991).

Spreitzer (2008) proposed that empowered employees are more likely to go beyond their work role on account of their active orientation. Research has shown that all four components of empowerment play a role. Having a sense that one’s work is meaningful stimulates identification with and participation in the organization, which in turn boosts willingness to contribute OCBs (Seibert et al., 2011). Meaning also corresponds to a realization that one’s work has a tangible impact on others. Competence and determination further promote proactivity, as employees feel capable of change and willing to exert extra effort (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Spreitzer, 1995). Further, empowerment contributes to a sense of intrinsic motivation, spurring individuals to contribute in-role and extra-role behaviors (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Consistent with this work, we expect to find links between empowerment and OCB enactment.

Thriving employees may also be more likely to give back to the organization through citizenship. Such employees may be best suited to locate opportunities for OCB on account of their focused intention and desire to increase knowledge (Spreitzer & Porath, 2013). Their increased energy and intrinsic motivation may enable them to go above and beyond expectations on the job. In short, thriving on the job can promote citizenship on the job. We therefore hypothesized a link between thriving and OCB-enactment (as described by a coworker):

Hypothesis 4. Empowerment and thriving are positively associated with OCB-enactment, both toward individuals and the organization as a whole

The present studies

To test the hypotheses depicted in our theoretical model (see Figure 1), we collected self-report data from women working in the Upper Midwest (Study 1), and both self- and coworker-report data for women and men working across the US (Study 2). We utilized both datasets to test hypotheses regarding the mediating role of self-assurance in the link between ICB-R and empowerment. In Study 2, we also tested hypotheses regarding thriving and (coworker-rated) citizenship-enactment.

We recognize there are other reasons employees may feel determined, bold, and proud (i.e., self-assured). In particular, individuals who have been employed longer at a particular organization—and therefore have more experience and skills—may have more feelings of self-assurance. To rule out the possible alternative explanation that tenure within the organization may explain our significant results, we control for this individual difference in our models.

Study 1 was an all-female sample, which could raise questions about whether results are unique to women. Some research, after all, finds women to be more “in tune” than men to the nuances of interpersonal (especially nonverbal) life. Experts trace this gender difference to a range of factors, such as cultural norms, roles, socialization, and the social stratification of society (e.g., Hall & Halberstadt, 1997; LaFrance & Henley, 1997). One might therefore ask whether the benefits of interpersonal citizenship accrue to women *but not men*. We did not hypothesize this to be the case, instead expecting our model to operate similarly regardless of gender. Still, to rule out this possibility empirically, we examined our model for consistency across gender in Study 2.

Study 1 method

Procedure and participants

We invited women working in the Upper Midwest to participate in a short online “snapshot survey,” advertised through a variety of avenues (e.g., local women’s organizations, social media outlets, list-servs of large organizations in the region). A total of 4,776 women completed the snapshot survey, 3,593 of whom indicated interest in the longer primary survey.

From these 3,593 snapshot participants, we sent paper surveys to a random sample of 500 women (oversampling women of color, who are underrepresented in organizational research). We followed Dillman and colleagues’ (2014) recommendations to maximize response rates (e.g., reminder postcards, replacement surveys, \$2 token incentives, ink signatures, professional design of all materials). Participants received \$10 for completion of the primary survey, along with brief survey summary reports. With these procedures, we obtained an 84% response rate.

Table 1 Study 1 Means, Standard Deviations, Scale Reliabilities, and Intercorrelations

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5
1. ICB-R Person	3.38	.85	(.93)				
2. ICB-R Task	2.54	1.01	.66**	(.93)			
3. Self-assurance in response to ICB-R	2.92	1.08	.34**	.31**	(.79)		
4. Empowerment	5.48	.87	.28**	.30**	.26**	(.85)	
5. Organizational Tenure	9.22	8.21	-.08	-.10*	.03	.15**	-

Note. Scale reliabilities (alpha) are along the diagonal.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

The sample ($N = 419$) had an average age of 42.24 years ($SD = 10.34$) and was racially diverse (53.5% White, 19% Black or African American, 15.5% Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander/Hawaiian Native, 6% Spanish/Hispanic/Latina, 3% American Indian/Alaskan Native, 2% other, 1% Middle Eastern/Arab/Arab American). Approximately 50% of the sample had a graduate or professional degree, 39% had a college degree or some graduate school, and 11% had less than a college degree. They averaged 9.22 years of tenure in their current organization ($SD = 8.21$), and worked a mean of 43.71 hours per week ($SD = 9.39$). Respondents worked in a range of industries, from healthcare to software to law enforcement.

Measures

Descriptive statistics, coefficient alphas, and intercorrelations appear in Table 1.

Interpersonal citizenship behavior—receipt

To assess ICB-R, we adapted items from Settoon and Mosholder's (2002) measure of ICB, which has excellent psychometric properties. The original 14-item scale assessed an employee's engagement in citizenship behavior; we modified these items to measure *receipt* of these behaviors, both person-focused (eight items) and task-focused (six items). For example, we changed the item "Takes time to listen to coworkers' problems and worries" to read "taken time to listen to your problems and worries" (ICB-R-Person). Other sample items included "Gone out of their way to make you feel welcome in the workgroup" (Person), "Helped you with work when you had been absent" (Task), and "Assisted you with heavy workloads, even though it is not part of his/her job" (Task). This followed the stem, "During the past year, has anyone associated with your work (e.g., supervisors, coworkers, clients/customer, collaborators at other companies) . . ." Response options ranged from 1 = *never* to 5 = *very often*.

To assess the factor structure of this new ICB-Receipt scale, we divided our sample into two random halves. Following

procedures recommended by Fabrigar, Wegener, MacCallum, and Strahan (1999), we submitted the 14 items from the first half of the sample ($n = 203$ following list-wise deletion) to principal axis factoring (PAF) with oblique (promax) rotation. All items were retained based on their moderate-to-high communalities in the initial PAF solution. The Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant, $\chi^2(91) = 2267.20$, $p < .001$, and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .94. The scree plot (Cattell, 1966) and the Eigenvalues (> 1 ; Kaiser, 1960) both suggested two factors. The factors were interpretable with items loading on their expected factors, all at .58 or above with no cross-loading. We next submitted 14 items of the second half of the sample ($n = 201$ following list-wise deletion) to confirmatory factor analysis using LISREL 8.80. All items loaded significantly onto the two-factor model, and the model fit was acceptable, $\chi^2 = 286.12$, $df = 76$, RMSEA = .12, NNFI = .95, CFI = .96. According to most fit indices this model demonstrated excellent fit to the data. The only exception was the RMSEA of .12 which was a bit higher than desired (possibly a result of the parsimony of this model, as it did not allow for any error correlations). However, given the values of all other indices and the strong theory supporting this model, our proposed model still seemed quite reasonable. Table 2 presents all items and their factor loadings from the confirmatory factor analysis.

When investigating new research domains, it is important to consider alternative models that are theoretically plausible (MacCallum, 1995). We therefore compared our 2-factor ICB-Receipt model to a 1-factor alternative, testing whether ICB-R-Person and ICB-R-Task are better captured by a single global construct. The fit of this single-factor model ($\chi^2 = 680.79$, $df = 77$, RMSEA = .26, NNFI = .87, CFI = .89) was significantly worse than the 2-factor model ($\Delta\chi^2 = 394.67$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p = .00$), so we retained the latter in all further analyses.

Self-assurance in response to ICB-R

Participants who reported at least one incident of ICB-R via the aforementioned ICB-R scale answered additional

Table 2 Study 1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis Loading Matrix (Second Half Sample, $n = 201$)

	Factor Loading	
	1	2
Factor 1: Person-focused ICB-Receipt ^a		
Taken time to listen to your problems and worries	.74	
Taken a personal interest in you	.78	
Gone out of their way to make you feel welcome in the workgroup	.79	
Shown genuine concern and courtesy toward you, even under the most trying business or personal situations	.85	
Complimented you when you succeed at work	.69	
Tried to cheer you up when you are having a bad day	.78	
Made an extra effort to understand the problems you faced	.81	
Listened to you when you have to get something off your chest	.80	
Factor 2: Task-focused ICB-Receipt		
Helped you with work when you had been absent		.71
Helped you with difficult assignments, even when assistance is not directly requested		.83
Assisted you with heavy workloads, even though it is not part of his/her job		.85
Gone out of his/her way to help you with work related problems		.85
Taken on extra responsibilities to help you when things were demanding at work		.89
Helped you when you were running behind in your work activities.		.88

^aThe stem for all items reads: "During the PAST YEAR, has anyone associated with your work (e.g., supervisors, coworkers, clients/customers, collaborators at other companies)." Response options ranged from 1 to 5: *never, once or twice, sometimes, often, very often*.

questions about emotional reactions to that ICB-R. Self-assurance was assessed with three items ("strong," "proud," and "determined") from the Positive and Negative Affectivity Scale (PANAS) (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Responses ranged from 1 = *very slightly or not at all* to 5 = *extremely*.

Empowerment

To assess psychological empowerment at work, we used Spreitzer's 12-item scale (1995). Tapping the four facets of empowerment, sample items include "My job activities are personally meaningful to me" (meaning), "I have mastered the skills necessary for my job" (competence), "I can decide on my own how to go about doing my work" (self-determination), and "I have significant influence over what happens in my department" (impact). Participants responded on a scale from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*.

Control: organizational tenure

Participants provided the number of years they had been employed at their current organization.

Study 1 results

Analyses focused on data from participants who had reported experiences of ICB-R (i.e., participants who responded anything other than "never" to one or more ICB-

R items), yielding an effective sample size of 380. To test hypotheses that ICB-R influences empowerment through feelings of self-assurance, we conducted structural equation modeling (SEM) with maximum likelihood estimation. For constructs with more than three items, we created parcels by randomly assigning items to three manifest indicators per latent construct (Little, Cunningham, Shahar & Widaman, 2002). We fixed one factor loading to the value of one for each of the constructs to identify the models. Tenure was measured using a single item, which we treated as a single indicator. We computed correlation matrices and submitted them to LISREL 8.80.

As recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), we performed a two-stage approach to modeling. First, we estimated a measurement model, to evaluate the extent to which the manifest indicators sufficiently measure their latent constructs. The first factor loading of each indicator was set to 1.0 to aid in model identification. We assessed the overall fit of this model as well as the individual parameter estimates to test the psychometric properties of our measures. Next, we estimated the structural model, to determine how well the model as a whole explains relationships in the data. We examined multiple indices to evaluate "incremental" and "absolute" model fit, as recommended by Hu and Bentler (1999).

We first estimated the parameters of the measurement model, finding good fit ($\chi^2 = 86.48$, $df = 56$, RMSEA = .04, NNFI = .99, CFI = .99). Standardized loadings ranged from

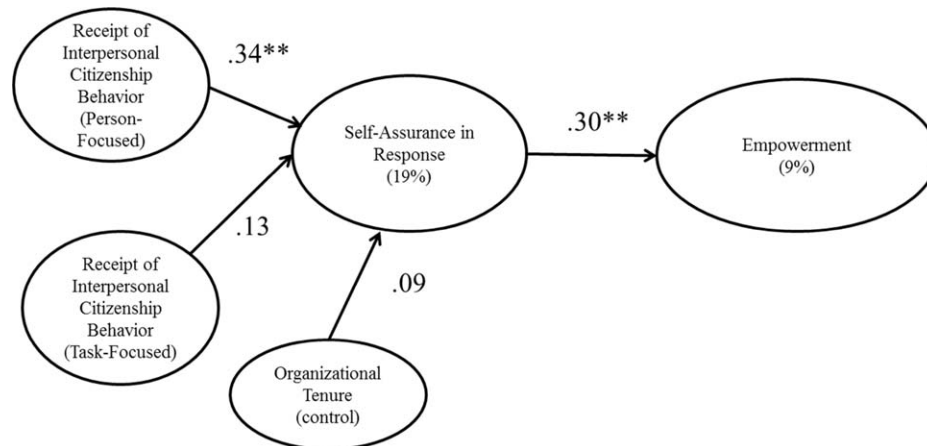


Figure 2 Study 1 structural equation results for self-assurance in response to interpersonal citizenship behavior-receipt. Note. Percentage of variance explained in the endogenous variables given in parentheses. ** $p < .01$

.67 to .95, with a mean of .84. We then tested the structural model, again finding an overall good fit ($\chi^2 = 117.57$, $df = 59$, $RMSEA = .05$, $NNFI = .98$, $CFI = .99$). Figure 2 displays this model, with standardized path coefficients. In partial support of Hypothesis 1a, ICB-R-Person significantly predicted greater feelings of self-assurance ($\beta = .34$, $p < .01$). Additionally, in line with Hypothesis 1b, we found ICB-R-Task to be less strongly related to self-assurance; in fact, this link was not significantly different from zero ($\beta = .13$, ns). To further evaluate the size of the effects of ICB-R-Person and ICB-R-Task on self-assurance, we compared the larger structural model to a model that constrained these two paths to be equal ($\chi^2 = 119.00$, $df = 60$, $RMSEA = .05$, $NNFI = .98$, $CFI = .99$). Finding no significant difference between the constrained and unconstrained models ($\Delta\chi^2 = 1.43$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p = .23$), we are unable to conclude that the effects of ICB-R-Task and ICB-R-Person are significantly different from one another. In support of Hypothesis 2, self-assurance related to a sense of psychological empowerment ($\beta = .30$, $p < .01$). These relationships held when controlling for organizational tenure. In sum, these results provided empirical evidence that interpersonal citizenship experiences of a personal nature, and related self-assurance, benefit individual empowerment. This model accounted for 19% of the variance in self-assurance and 9% of the variance in empowerment.

Our theoretical model situates self-assurance as a mediator between ICB-R (Person and Task) and outcomes (empowerment and thriving). We tested whether there were significant indirect effects between ICB-R types and outcomes using the indirect effects command in LISREL 8.80. Consistent with our hypotheses, ICB-R-Person had a significant indirect effect on empowerment ($\beta = .10$, $p < .01$) through self-assurance, but we found no significant indirect effect from ICB-R-Task to empowerment ($\beta = .04$, ns).

To test whether self-assurance fully or partially mediated these relationships, we compared our structural model to a larger alternative model, adding paths from ICB-R-Person and ICB-R-Task to empowerment. The model including direct paths fit the data significantly better, which may suggest partial mediation: $\Delta\chi^2 = 22.24$, $\Delta df = 2$, $p < .01$. However, the new paths were non-significant (ICB-R-Person to empowerment $\beta = .16$, ns ; ICB-R-Task to empowerment $\beta = .14$, ns).

Study 2 method

Procedure and participants

For this study, we surveyed men and women from a nationwide sample of working adults. To contact participants we used an online social science resource, StudyResponse, which maintains a database of over 50,000 individuals willing to participate in research. StudyResponse contacted prospective participants based on prescreening demographics (at least 18 years old, lives in the United States, works at least 30 hours/week), emailing them a link to the online survey. To ensure data quality, the survey included multiple items assessing attention (e.g., "Please answer strongly disagree"), and we excluded any participant who answered incorrectly. If anyone's data suggested careless responding (e.g., answering "strongly agree" to both positively and negatively valenced items of the same scale), we also excluded the respondent. We obtained usable data from 43.19% of 1,109 invited participants, each of whom was compensated \$10.

The sample ($N = 479$) was 60% female, averaged 41.91 years of age ($SD = 11.43$) and 9.80 years of job tenure ($SD = 7.30$), and had some racial diversity (83% White, 6% Black or African American, 9% Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander/Hawaiian Native, 5% Spanish/Hispanic/Latino;

Table 3 Study 2 Means, Standard Deviations, Scale Reliabilities, and Intercorrelations

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. ICB-R Person	3.22	.90	(.93)								
2. ICB-R Task	2.79	1.08	.72**	(.95)							
3. Self-assurance in response to ICB-R	2.47	.99	.33**	.35**	(.89)						
4. Empowerment	5.66	.88	.39**	.36**	.35**	(.90)					
5. Thriving	5.27	1.24	.44**	.42**	.38**	.65**	(.95)				
6. Coworker-rated OCB-Organization ^a	3.90	.80	.43**	.31**	.32**	.36**	.36**	(.92)			
7. Coworker-rated OCB-Interpersonal ^a	4.02	.81	.41**	.29**	.26**	.28**	.33**	.81**	(.93)		
8. Organizational Tenure	9.80	7.30	.01	-.03	-.01	.14**	.10*	.08	-.01	-	
9. Gender ^b	1.41	.50	-.13**	-.03	.05	.02	-.01	-.12	-.11	.01	-

Note. Scale reliabilities (alpha) are along the diagonal.

^aCorrelations with coworker-rated OCB are based on a smaller sample ($N = 160$).

^bGender coded such that 1 = female, 2 = male.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

participants could identify more than one race/ethnicity). Participants had a range of educational levels, with 23% holding a graduate or professional degree, 47% holding a college degree or some graduate school, and 30% having less than a college degree. They worked in a range of industries such as information technology, real estate, and retail. The average tenure in their current organization was 9.80 years ($SD = 7.30$); most (84%) of the sample worked 40 or more hours/week, and 16% worked between 30 and 39 hours/week.

We also obtained coworker-rated data on a subset of this sample. Specifically, through StudyResponse, we recontacted the 479 respondents who had provided complete and valid data, asking them to participate in a small follow-up study. They were instructed to forward another survey link with an anonymous identifier (to enable us to match dyads) to a coworker. A total of 160 coworkers (51% female) responded with valid, complete data, yielding a response rate of 33%. Twenty-six percent of the co-worker sample had known the primary participant for more than 10 years, and almost all (95%) had known the participant for more than a year.

Measures

This survey included identical measures as in Study 1 to assess ICB-R, empowerment, and organizational tenure. We also added a more detailed assessment of self-assurance as well as measures of thriving and OCB-enactment. To better understand the types of behaviors reported by individuals experiencing ICB-R, we included room for a qualitative description of the most recent event. All scales have established reliability and validity. Descriptive statistics, alphas, and intercorrelations for study variables appear in Table 3.

In Study 2, we again assessed the factor structure of the ICB-R measure and submitted the items to confirmatory factor analysis. All items loaded significantly onto the two-factor model, and the model fit was good, $\chi^2 = 411.82$, $df = 76$, $RMSEA = .10$, $NNFI = .97$, $CFI = .98$. We compared our 2-factor model to a 1-factor alternative, testing whether ICB-R-Person and ICB-R-Task are better captured by a single global construct. Consistent with Study 1, the fit of this single-factor model ($\chi^2 = 1361.61$, $df = 77$, $RMSEA = .26$, $NNFI = .91$, $CFI = .92$) was significantly worse than the 2-factor model ($\Delta\chi^2 = 949.79$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p = .00$).

Self-assurance in response to ICB-R

Mirroring the design of Study 1, participants who reported at least one incident of ICB-R were immediately asked questions about their emotional responses. Self-assurance was measured using the 6-item self-assurance subscale of the Positive and Negative Affect Scale-Extended Form (PANAS-X; Watson & Clark, 1994). Sample items include “strong” and “bold,” and we added “determined”; this follows Ekman’s 1992 concept of emotion families (1992), in which discrete emotions are characterized by a collection of related states, revolving around a common theme and variations of that theme. Responses ranged from 1 = *very slightly or not at all* to 5 = *extremely*.

Thriving

To measure thriving we used Porath, Spreitzer, and colleagues’ scale (2012), which assesses both the learning and vitality aspects of thriving. Sample items include “At work I continue to learn more as time goes by,” “At work I see myself continually improving,” and “At work I have energy

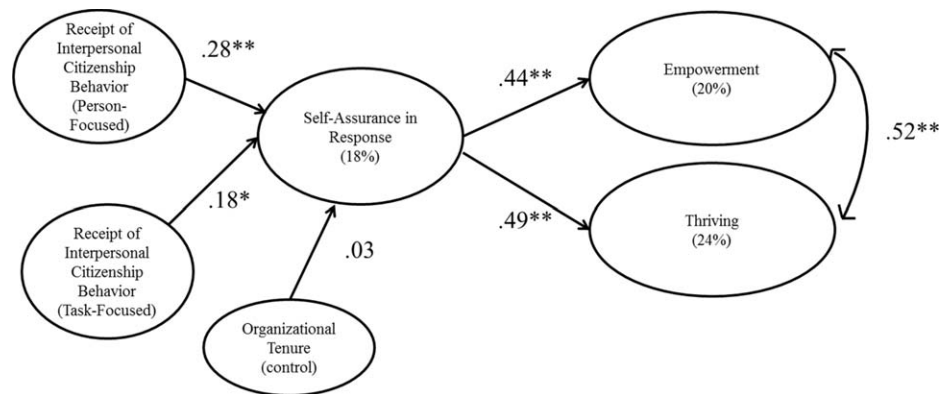


Figure 3 Study 2 structural equation results for self-assurance in response to interpersonal citizenship behavior-receipt. *Note.* Percentage of variance explained in the endogenous variables given in parentheses. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

and spirit.” Participants responded to the ten item scale using a scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*.

OCB-enactment (coworker-rated)

We measured 160 participants’ enactment of OCB-I and OCB-O, using two 8-item scales (Lee & Allen, 2002). Coworkers reported how often the primary survey participant performed specific OCBs in the past year, from 1 = *never* to 5 = *many times*. Sample items read “Offered ideas to improve the functioning of the organization” (OCB-O) and “Willingly gave time to help others who have work-related problems” (OCB-I).

Study 2 results

Multiple-group structural equation modeling

In Study 2 we sought to replicate and extend findings from Study 1, adding thriving as a second proximal outcome and citizenship-enactment (as reported by coworkers) as a distal outcome. To rule out the possibility that our results are unique to women, we analyzed the measurement and structural model for invariance between women’s and men’s data.

Modeling analyses were based on the 351 participants who had experienced ICB-R (i.e., excluding those who responded “never” to all ICB-R items) and provided valid and complete data. We tested whether the measurement model fit women’s and men’s data equally well by constraining factor loadings to be invariant for each group (i.e., we conducted a multi-group factor analysis). We found strong overall fit to the data ($\chi^2 = 382.73$, $df = 190$, $RMSEA = .07$, $NNFI = .97$, $CFI = .98$, $N = 203$ women, 148 men). Standardized loadings ranged from .77 to .98, with a mean of .90. We then compared this constrained model to the unconstrained

measurement model, with factor loadings having the same pattern across groups ($\chi^2 = 373.51$, $df = 180$, $RMSEA = .07$, $NNFI = .97$, $CFI = .98$). A chi-square difference test found that the constrained model fit just as well as the unconstrained, allowing us to conclude that the factor loadings do not vary by gender ($\Delta\chi^2 = 9.22$, $\Delta df = 10$, $p = .51$). In other words, the relationships between observed variables and their latent constructs can be accounted for by one set of factor loadings. Satisfied with evidence of measurement invariance across groups, we proceeded to examine the structural model.

We estimated the multi-group structural model, testing for possible differences by gender. We first estimated our hypothesized structural model with cross-group equality constraints on direct effects and factor structures ($\chi^2 = 457.31$, $df = 207$, $RMSEA = .08$, $NNFI = .97$, $CFI = .97$). We then re-estimated the structural model, freeing the direct effects, but constraining factor structures ($\chi^2 = 450.96$, $df = 202$, $RMSEA = .08$, $NNFI = .97$, $CFI = .97$). Comparing the constrained model to the larger model, we found no evidence of differences between groups ($\Delta\chi^2 = 6.35$, $\Delta df = 5$, $p = .27$), giving us confidence that the women’s and men’s data fit the structural model similarly.

Given the evidence of invariance in both the measurement and structural models, we pooled the men’s and women’s data to test our hypotheses, finding good fit of the model to the data, $\chi^2 = 305.95$, $df = 96$, $RMSEA = .075$, $NNFI = .97$, $CFI = .98$. Figure 3 displays the standardized coefficients for the structural model. In support of H1a, we found that both ICB-R-Person ($\beta = .28$, $p < .01$) and ICB-R-Task ($\beta = .18$, $p < .05$) foster feelings of self-assurance. However, we did not find support for H1b: these two effects were not significantly different from one another, based on a comparison of the structural model to a model that constrains these paths to be invariant ($\chi^2 = 306.10$, $df = 97$, $RMSEA = .075$, $NNFI = .97$, $CFI = .98$; $\Delta\chi^2 = .15$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p = .70$). In support of

Table 4 Study 2 Regression Analysis of Organizational Citizenship-Enactment as Rated by a Coworker, Predicted by Empowerment and Thriving

Variable	Coworker-rated OCB-organization enactment			Coworker-rated OCB-interpersonal enactment		
	ΔR^2	B (β)	SE	ΔR^2	B (β)	SE
Empowerment		.22(.23)*	.09		.11(.11)	.10
Thriving		.14(.20)*	.07		.17(.25)*	.07
	.15			.11		

* $p < .05$.

hypotheses H2 and H3 (respectively), self-assurance in response to ICB-R related to significant boosts in empowerment ($\beta = .44, p < .01$) and thriving ($\beta = .49, p < .01$). This collection of constructs explained 18% of the variance in self-assurance, 20% of the variance in empowerment, and 24% of the variance in thriving.

Implied in our collection of hypotheses is self-assurance serving as a mediator between ICB-R-Person/Task and outcomes (empowerment and thriving). Tests of indirect effects via self-assurance revealed significant indirect effects from ICB-R-Person to empowerment ($\beta = .12, p < .05$) and thriving ($\beta = .13, p < .05$), and also from ICB-R-Task to empowerment ($\beta = .08, p < .05$) and thriving ($\beta = .09, p < .05$).

To test whether self-assurance fully or partially mediated these relationships from ICB-R to outcomes, we compared our structural model to a larger alternative model, adding paths from ICB-R-Person and ICB-R-Task to empowerment and thriving ($\chi^2 = 258.64, df = 92, RMSEA = .07, NNFI = .97, CFI = .98$). The model including those additional four paths fit the data significantly better than the original model ($\Delta\chi^2 = 47.31, \Delta df = 4, p < .01$). Many of the new paths were significant: ICB-R-Person significantly related to empowerment ($\beta = .20, p < .05$) and thriving ($\beta = .16, p < .05$), whereas ICB-R-Task significantly related to thriving ($\beta = .21, p < .01$) but not empowerment ($\beta = .13, ns$). These results suggest that self-assurance partially mediates the effects of ICB-R on outcomes.

Links to citizenship-enactment

We tested Hypothesis 4 regarding citizenship-enactment with matched dyad data, using coworker ratings of 160 participants. This sample size being suboptimal for SEM analyses of our full model, we instead tested two regression models, one predicting organizational OCB enactment, and the other predicting interpersonal OCB enactment. Results appear in Table 4. Both empowerment ($\beta = .23, p = .02$) and thriving ($\beta = .20, p = .04$) were significant predictors of OCB-O enactment, collectively explaining 15% of the variance ($F(2, 158) = 14.20, p = .00$). Thriving ($\beta = .25,$

$p = .01$) but not empowerment ($\beta = .11, p = .27$) predicted OCB-I enactment, explaining 11% of the variance ($F(2, 158) = 9.87, p = .00$). These results provide partial support for Hypothesis 4.

Discussion

Everyday acts of kindness and concern can seem inconsequential in the world of business. Across two studies, however, we found that thoughtful, caring social interactions on the job are important to employees' emotional and professional functioning; in fact, small acts of kindness are just as important as offers of task-related assistance. We also demonstrate the central role of self-assurance in this process. This understudied emotion warrants further investigation on account of its important role in fostering proactive, agentic employees. Further, we show that receipt (not just enactment) of interpersonal citizenship advantages both individual recipients and their organizations. We now review key findings and their implications.

Key findings

Across both studies, receiving gestures of kindness and interpersonal concern (ICB-R-Person) was significantly associated with feelings of self-assurance (e.g., pride, boldness, fearlessness). This was equally true for women and men. However, citizenship related to the work task (ICB-R-Task) did not trigger increases in self-assurance in Study 1, but did do so in Study 2. One reason for these inconsistent findings may be that assistance on work tasks activates worries about incompetence in some people. A quotation by a participant from Study 2 brings this experience to life:

I always have a lot of work on my plate and my manager never does anything to lessen my load. She always indirectly offers me her assistance but she kind of does it in a condescending manner as if I were to ask her for help I would be incompetent at doing my work.

Individuals strive for autonomy and competence (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 2000), and when supervisors and coworkers reach out a hand to assist with one's work duties, it may not always be well-received.

On the surface, ICBs may seem trivial or unlikely to foster a meaningful response; however, we found empirical evidence to the contrary. Boosts in self-assurance connected experiences of ICB-R to increased psychological empowerment in two independent samples. These findings illuminate the power of interpersonal kindness in fostering feelings of audacity, strength, and determination on the job. These emotions of self-assurance then play a significant role in empowerment, a state known to have many positive organizational

outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction, organizational commitment, performance; Seibert et al., 2011).

In Study 2, feelings of self-assurance in response to ICB-R linked to thriving on the job. Thriving can spark innovation and reduce burnout and strain at work, in addition to triggering positive spillover into family and community spheres (Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009; Spreitzer et al., 2012). This project makes an important contribution to the thriving literature, identifying important relational and emotional antecedents. Fostering a caring relational context, with an emphasis on personal connections, is one way to facilitate thriving in an organization.

Interestingly, we found similar pathways for men and women, showing that positive social and emotional experiences benefit employees regardless of gender. Common stereotypes suggest that relationships and emotions are more important to women than men, with men being stoic, unemotional, and less communal (e.g., Brody, 1997). Our findings refute these negative assumptions about men that pervade our culture. We focused on the agentic emotion of self-assurance, which might be seen as more stereotypically masculine (with “agency” encouraged in men but discouraged in women; Heilman & Okimoto, 2007). We found male and female employees to report experiencing this emotion in response to ICB-R at equal rates ($t(348) = -.57, p = .57$). In other words, our results suggest that both men and women display and thrive with agentic emotions on the job.

As a positive emotion capable of instilling agency, self-assurance has the potential to translate positive interpersonal experiences into proactive cognitions and behaviors. More and more, organizations are operating in fast-paced environments where tasks are complex and involve elements of uncertainty (Parker et al., 2013). The changing nature of work corresponds to a need to shift the way we conceptualize work design and motivational mechanisms. Indeed, scholars have called for the development of organizational contexts that release “the power in the workers so they can take initiative, feel trusted, be flexible and do the right thing” (Spreitzer & Doneson, 2008, p. 321).

Further benefits of ICB-R emerged in the form of OCB-enactment (as reported by co-workers). Thriving was a significant predictor of both forms of OCB, directed toward the organization and toward individuals. Empowerment, conversely, was associated with elevated levels of OCB-O, but not OCB-I. This unexpected null finding for OCB-I may be attributed to our operationalization of empowerment, which was specific to one’s work role in the organization. That is, Spreitzer’s (1995, 2008) conceptualization and measure of psychological empowerment focuses exclusively on the organizational context (e.g., sense of being impactful *on the job*, sense of autonomy *at work*). Perhaps these empowering organization-centered cognitions engender organization-centered citizenship but not individual-centered citizenship.

Consistent with this domain-specific theorizing, Huang (2012) found employee empowerment to underpin employee proactivity related to the work role (i.e., seeking feedback from supervisors).

By and large, our results suggest that both empowerment and thriving are important precursors to citizenship-enactment on the job. Our findings also speak to the emerging literature on relational job design. No longer are jobs conceptualized as a collection of tasks that an employee must complete; researchers are now drawing attention to relational architecture that affects how employees interact with one another (Grant, 2007).

Practical implications

Our results have implications for the types of social behavior prescribed (and proscribed) on the job. The sharing of personal stories and inquiries about one’s family may be viewed as detracting from goals and performance; however, these seemingly small gestures of humanity appear to be potent pathways to employee thriving, empowerment, and OCB-enactment (just as potent as offers of assistance related to one’s work, or ICB-R-Task). Thus, even when an individual does not have the right skill-set to assist colleagues with particular tasks, that employee can still “help” his or her coworkers through expressions of kindness and concern.

By fostering these types of relationships within organizations, we can arm employees with emotions, such as self-assurance, that allow them to act with confidence. These feelings then may contribute to a generative process wherein employees drive innovation, capitalize on flexibility, and enhance their performance. Further, employees who connect with one another in a personal way may also in turn be more proactive. Positive social climates that support and empower employees warrant increased attention, as organizations strive to get the most out of their workers without costly external motivators such as pay and rewards. Organizations would be wise to realize the potential of positive relationships between coworkers in precipitating behaviors that directly benefit organizational goals.

Limitations and future directions

Like all research, these studies have both strengths and limitations. We built features into the research design to reduce the risk of common method bias within self-report data, as recommended by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, and Podsakoff (2003) and Podsakoff, MacKenzie, and Podsakoff (2012) (see also Conway & Lance, 2010). First, we emphasized to respondents that surveys were anonymous, reducing social desirability and response consistency pressures and promoting honest and complete responding. Second, we created both proximal and psychological separation between predictor and criterion variables. That is, all measures of

hypothesized outcomes were asked prior to and independently of any assessment of ICB-R, with unrelated scales in between; this reduces the salience of a person's initial responses to later responses, and it decreases chances that memories of ICB would influence respondents' answers to questions about empowerment and thriving. Section headings were also used to reduce perceived relationships between measures. Third, scale formats (e.g., scale type, anchor labels, polarity) varied across criterion and predictor variables, which helps diminish biases stemming from anchor and endpoint effects. Fourth, we selected all outcome measures from the established literature, and each measure had a strong history of construct validity. Perhaps most importantly, we established that the self-report outcomes in our models significantly predict other-reported measures of citizenship. We are therefore confident that our findings are not merely a spurious artifact of common method bias.

We did not measure emotions using physiological or observational methods. However, emotion experts such as Larsen, Diener, and Lucas (2002) argue that individuals are able to recall emotional reactions to memorable interpersonal experiences as they are best able to observe and assess their own feelings. Moreover, because our data came from the field, all interpersonal experiences reported had personal meaning and took place in an organizational context with actual relational ties, adding external validity to this study. Future research in this area should further examine relational ties and group memberships as these features likely complicate reactions to receiving help and support (e.g., Halabi, Nadler, & Dovidio, 2011).

Our hypotheses imply a causal relationship between interpersonal experience, emotional response, and subsequent outcomes. Due to the cross-sectional nature of the data, however, any definitive conclusions of causality would be premature. Future research that takes an experience sampling approach or experimental design could strengthen causal inferences. Further, research that includes longitudinal methods will help increase confidence in the temporal nature of these relationships.

Although we were able to test all hypothesized relationships, we could not test them in one single SEM model on account of the limited sample size of coworker reports of organizational citizenship-enactment. Tests of the complete

model, including both distal and proximal outcomes in a single analysis, must await future research.

To date, self-assurance as a discrete emotion has been all but absent from organizational scholarship. Emotion researchers have long been calling for the identification of discrete emotions involved in positive organizational life (e.g., Brief & Weiss, 2002; Gooty, Gavin, & Ashkanasy, 2009), and our findings underscore the importance of self-assurance in translating receipt of citizenship into proactive cognitions and behaviors. More research should continue to examine self-assurance, as well as other positive discrete emotions; only with this level of analysis can we target specific pathways to optimal employee functioning.

Conclusion

Taken together, these findings suggest that experiences of common kindness on the job fuel employee feelings of determination, pride, and audacity (i.e., self-assurance). These powerful emotions then link to empowerment and thriving, and those employees ultimately "give back" to the organization in the form of citizenship. Thoughtful gestures that focus on the person appear to be just as helpful in sparking these emotions when compared to work-related gestures. Kind and caring behaviors are often not a priority in organizations, but perhaps they should be. By cultivating the interpersonal spheres of the workplace, organizations may reap the benefits of employees who are engaged, strong, and bold; employees who have a sense of empowerment with regard to their work role; and employees who participate fully in organizational life.

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