

# Self-development as a Form of Organizational Citizenship Behavior: Examining the Effects of Job Satisfaction and Task Characteristics

Yutaka Ueda

## Abstract

Self-development has been considered a form of OCB in the OCB literature, and people exhibit a variety of reasons to pursue it. This article examined whether employees' job satisfaction and task characteristics influence self-development. Hierarchical regression analysis of data collected from 2,230 Japanese employees revealed that job satisfaction and task unpredictability had a positive impact on positive attitude toward self-development, hope of increased time for self-development, and experience of self-development. While well-defined task requirements also had a positive effect on two self-development measures, task autonomy had no significant relationship with any measures of self-development.

**Keywords:** organizational citizenship behavior, self-development, job satisfaction, task characteristics

**JEL Classification:** M19

## 1. Introduction

Since the publication of two pioneering articles (Bateman & Organ, 1983; Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983), organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) has received the attention of a large number of organizational behavior researchers throughout the world. OCB is usually defined as, "individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and in the aggregated promotes the effective functioning of the organization" (Organ, 1988, p.4).<sup>1</sup> As shown by this definition, the concept of

---

<sup>1</sup> Organ, Podsakoff, and MacKenzie (2006) slightly altered the phrases from "the effective functioning" to "the efficient and effective functioning" (p.4), although they did not describe why. Further, although Organ (1997) introduced a new definition of OCB by referring to context performance, this traditional definition of OCB is still used widely among OCB researchers.

OCB is not only comprehensive, but also somewhat abstractive, so researchers have needed to consider which forms or dimensions of certain behaviors meet their definition of OCB.

In this regard, Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, and Bachrach (2000) identified nearly thirty different forms of OCB, while Organ et al. (2006) provided seven behavioral categories as the fundamental dimensions of OCB: helping, sportsmanship, organizational loyalty, organizational compliance, individual initiative, civic virtue, and self-development. According to their article, self-development “encompasses the discretionary measures people take to broaden their work-relevant skills and knowledge, including voluntary enrollment in company-sponsored training courses as well as informal study” (Organ et al., 2006, p.25). However, as Organ et al. (2006) admitted, there has been no research to empirically support self-development as a dimension of OCB. Although they did not speculate as to the reason of such a lack of focus on self-development, it perhaps shows that self-development is a more complicated and difficult dimension than the other dimensions of OCB.

It is well known among researchers that the above definition of OCB has a problem concerning the motives of employees who exhibit OCB. The definition includes the phrase, “not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system,” but this does not mean that OCB is limited to behaviors that are unrecognized by management, or that do not bring any tangible return to the individual. Instead, as Organ (1997) emphasized, “the rewards that accrue to OCB are at best indirect and uncertain, as compared to more formal contributions” (Organ, 1997, p.87).

Indeed, self-development is effective in improving employees’ task performance and organizational effectiveness, and, the rewards of these benefits are not often connected to those employees. In this regard, self-development might be regarded as one of many OCB dimensions; however, a significantly more complicated aspect of self-development is that it is not always used to improve employees’ job skills in their current organization. Often, employees educate themselves in order to pursue a better position in a different organization. Clearly, the self-development of employees intending to leave the organization should not be included as a dimension of OCB. Therefore, although we admit that, in part, self-development should be included in the definition of OCB, it should be limited to the behaviors that improve employees’ skills and techniques that are effective only to their current organization. Such skills and techniques may not necessarily contribute to their current job, and instead may contribute to a future job.

Further, one of the most difficult problems facing researchers is that they cannot assess

employees' true motives in developing themselves just from their behavior. Even if employees are learning a skill irrelevant to their current job, it cannot be concluded that they are learning with intention of leaving the organization, as they might be aiming towards a future position that requires such skills in their current organization. A perfect example is a non-managerial employee learning management skills, as they are considering applying for a managerial position at the same company.

Thus, this article adopted other ways of inferring motives for self-development, rather than direct assessment. Here, we particularly focused on the effects of job and task factors. Previous OCB researchers found that these factors have significant effects on numerous OCB dimensions, and we aimed to find similar relationships between these factors and self-development. For example, previous studies found that job satisfaction had a positive impact on OCB (Organ et al., 2006). If job satisfaction also has a similar effect on self-development, we can infer that self-development is facilitated by motives similar to those behind OCB. In contrast, if we find a negative relationship, we can infer that self-development might arise from other motives, such as intending to leave the organization. While this may not be a perfect way to examine the essential characteristics of self-development and how they relate to OCB, given the current situation that no research has addressed this aspect of self-development, we believe it is an effective way to advance toward more rigorous research on self-development as a dimension of OCB.

## **2. Job-related Antecedents of Self-development**

Most OCB researchers have attempted to identify the factors that influence the degree to which employees exhibit OCB. These antecedents have been organized into three levels: individual, leadership, and work environment factors (Organ et al., 2006). In this article, we addressed job satisfaction as an individual factor, while task characteristics were addressed as work environment factors. As these factors are associated with employees' current jobs or tasks, it is important to focus on them because employees are expected to develop themselves in relation to their current or expected job.

Job satisfaction is considered one of the most basic antecedents of OCB. The initial reason researchers came to focus on OCB was related to identifying which of employees' behaviors were more influenced by job satisfaction than more formal behaviors. Although many researchers found a significant effect of job satisfaction on OCB, the relationship

remains inconclusive, as researchers still have yet to examine the different effects of job satisfaction on personal-typed and impersonal-typed OCB. For example, Smith, Organ, and Near (1983) found no direct effect of job satisfaction on an impersonal-typed OCB, compliance, while McNeely and Meglino's (1994) results revealed that the effect of job satisfaction on behaviors directed only at the organization (prosocial organizational behavior) was not significant after perceptions of reward equity and recognition were factored into the equation. However, as Organ and Konovsky (1989) proposed, if OCB is facilitated as conscious behaviors stemming from employees' cognition of the social exchange between their organization and themselves, then more satisfied employees would be more motivated to contribute to their organization, regardless of whether these behaviors are directed at organizational members or the organization as a whole. In fact, a meta-analysis by Organ and Ryan (1995) revealed that the raw average correlation between generalized compliance and job satisfaction was 0.222, and the 95% confidence interval for the mean, uncorrected, was 0.18 to 0.25.

Much of self-development is associated with impersonal-typed contributions to the organization through the improvement of skills and knowledge related to the job. Although it can serve as a means of moving beyond a currently unsatisfying job, it is still not representative of OCB. Therefore, we can consider that if employees engage in self-development as one of OCBs, we can assume there is a positive effect of job satisfaction on self-development. Therefore, the following hypothesis was proposed:

**H1.** Employees have a more positive attitude toward self-development when they have high job satisfaction, than when they do not.

Although many researchers have focused on the effects of individual attitudinal factors on OCB, other researchers have addressed task characteristics as antecedents of OCB (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Bommer, 1996). Organ et al. (2006) addressed the effects of task autonomy, significance, feedback, identity, variety (routinization), task interdependency, goal interdependence, and the intrinsically satisfying nature of the task on OCB. In considering the effects of these task characteristics on OCB, we must also understand the mediating effects of job satisfaction on this relationship. For example, performing an autonomous or significant task could lead to higher job satisfaction, and thus even if these task characteristics are found to influence OCB, the effects might be fully mediated by job satisfaction; thus, if the effect of job satisfaction is controlled, then it is possible that no direct effect of task characteristics on OCB would be found. Interestingly, Organ et al.'s

(2006) Figure 5.2 (p.112) showed the mediating effect of job satisfaction on the relationship between task characteristics and five dimensions of OCB. According this figure, while the effects of task feedback and intrinsic task satisfaction on personal-typed OCB dimensions were partially or fully mediated by job satisfaction, no mediating effect was found in the relationship between task characteristics and impersonal-typed OCB dimensions. Further, task routinization had a negative effect on altruism but a positive effect on civic virtue and conscientiousness.

In this study, task autonomy, task unpredictability (routinization), and well-defined requirements of the task were addressed as antecedents of self-development. First, we conceptualized task autonomy as the degree to which employees are able to control how to perform their task. High task autonomy is expected to increase their responsibility for executing the task, and is regarded as a symbol that the organization is highly confident in their employees' skill and loyalty to the organization. Therefore, in return for this confidence, employees might exhibit more OCB for their organization. Further, autonomous tasks generally require high levels of skill and knowledge, which encourages employees to develop to meet the demands of the task. Based on this inference, the following hypothesis regarding the effect of task autonomy on self-development was proposed:

**H2.** Employees have a stronger positive attitude toward self-development when their task is more autonomous, than when it is less.

As already discussed, task unpredictability (routinization) might have different impacts on OCB depending on the dimension of the OCB. Task unpredictability is the degree to which how difficult it is for employees to foresee problems they might encounter, and how to cope with that problem in advance. An unpredictable task is complicated, and often perceived as more valuable and important than more predictable, routine tasks. Then, a similar inference regarding the effect of task autonomy on self-development is also applicable to the case of unpredictable tasks. Although an unpredictable task might also inhibit employees to engage in self-development by studying at an outside institution, such as a university or vocational school, there are still various other ways for them to engage in self-development, such as on-line learning; there are also fewer time and space constraints for self-development than there used to be. Therefore, we proposed the following hypothesis:

**H3.** Employees have a more positive attitude toward self-development when their task is more unpredictable than when it is less.

Finally, we examined a task characteristic that is expected to have a strong association

with self-development—well-defined task requirements. We defined this characteristic as the degree to which the necessary skill or knowledge to perform the task is unequivocal and well defined. Although no research has addressed this particular task characteristic as an antecedent of OCB as far as we know, if task requirements are well-defined, this might encourage employees' to perform the task, similar to the important role of clear objectives as emphasized in goal setting theory (Lock, 1968, 1996). Therefore, we proposed the following hypothesis:

**H4.** Employees have a more positive attitude toward self-development when their task has well-defined requirements than when it does not.

As already described, it is important to examine whether there is a direct effect of task characteristics on self-development, and whether it is mediated by satisfaction measures. We adopted hierarchical regression analysis to separately assess job satisfaction and task characteristics, and examined whether the effect of the latter remains significant after considering the effects of the former.

### 3. Methods

#### *Sample*

We used data from “The Survey Regarding Work-Life Balance, 2008” for this study. This survey was initially conducted by the Research Institute for Advancement of Living Standards (RIALS) in August 2008, who then offered the data to the Social Science Japan Data Archive, Center for Social Research and Data Archives, Institute of Social Science, The University of Tokyo, in order to provide academic researchers with the opportunity to receive and analyze it.

The sample was comprised of Japanese full-fledged workers at a number of different companies, who originally registered their names as voluntary respondents at an online Japanese company, Macromill Inc. Macromill Inc. determined how many respondents would be needed in the age and company brackets, according to statistical information regarding the Japanese employment structures in 2002, and asked the registered workers to respond to the questionnaire. The total number of respondents was 2,230. Respondent information is summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1. Demographic Information of Respondents**

		freq.	perc.
Gender	Male	907	67.6%
	Female	434	32.4%
Spouse	Yes	736	54.9%
	No	605	45.1%
Educational Background	Junior high/high school	634	28.5%
	Junior college/vocational school	474	21.2%
	University	535	44.7%
	Graduate school	124	5.6%
Job	Management	277	12.4%
	Professional/Technical	644	28.9%
	Clerical	634	28.4%
	Sales	328	14.7%
	Service	77	3.5%
	Transport	38	1.7%
	Production	171	7.7%
	Others	61	2.7%
		means	
Age		39.39	
Number of children		1.86	

### *Measures*

All items that constituted the variables were initially created for the original survey. The specific contents of question items for each of the variables and their Cronbach's alpha values are described in Appendix. All Cronbach's alpha values were over 0.7, showing reasonable internal consistency. All items were written in Japanese (translated by the author).

Job satisfaction was measured using a three-item scale. The three distinctive task characteristics were also measured using multiple item scales. Specifically, task autonomy and task unpredictability were measured with a two-item scale, and well-defined requirements of the task was measured with a three-item scale.

We addressed three distinctive variables for self-development. First, positive (non-negative) attitude toward self-development was defined as the degree to which respondents were active in self-development outside of their job. Unfortunately, the original questionnaire had

only question items regarding negative attitude toward self-development, and it was measured with five four-point scale items ranging from [1] “inapplicable,” to [4] “applicable.” We reversed the scores of each item to represent positive (non-negative) attitude toward self-development as a matter of convenience. Non-negative attitude might not be regarded as the same as positive attitude, but we considered this acceptable, as positivity and negativity can be relatively positioned. Secondly, hope of future self-development was measured using two different items. The first item asked whether a respondent wanted to develop him/herself, and it was measured with a four-point scale ranging from [1] “no plan,” to [4] “do hope.” The second item reflected hope of increased or decreased time that participants have for self-development, as compared with their current allowable time. This was measured using a four-point scale ranging from [1] “hope to decrease,” to [3] “currently perfect,” and [5] “hope to increase.” Finally, the experience of self-development was a simple binary item regarding whether respondents had experienced self-development during the past year ([1] “yes,” [0] “no”).

All items regarding the independent variables and positive attitude toward self-development are described in the appendix. In addition, demographic factors such as gender, and educational background were considered. Original questions about educational background had a six-point scale ranging from “junior high school” to “graduate school.” However, for simplification, we dichotomized respondents into low and high education, as discussed later.

#### 4. Result

##### *Gender, Spouse, Educational Background, and Job Category Differences in Self-development*

Before testing our hypotheses, we initially examined whether there were significant differences in self-development among demographic factors. Table 2 shows the differences in self-development experience according to gender; we found that male employees had significantly more experience of self-development than their female counterparts did.



**Table 2. Gender Differences in Self-development Experience**

		Experience of self-development		total
		yes	no	
Gender	Male (exp. freq.)	650 (620.7)	907 (936.3)	1,557
	Female (exp. freq.)	239 (268.3)	434 (404.7)	673
total		889	1,341	2,230

$$\chi^2 = 7.618, p < .01$$

Table 3 shows the relationship between educational background and self-development experience. The original survey subdivided the educational background of respondents into six categories, ranging from “junior high school” to “graduate school.” However, for simplification, junior high school, high school, junior college, and vocational school (typically a two-year curriculum after graduation from high school) were grouped as “low education,” while university and graduate school were classified as “high education.” According to this table, high education employees had much more experience of self-development than their low education counterparts did.

It might be difficult to identify why male and high education employees have more experience of self-development than female and low education employees do. It likely is due to differences in their position in the organization, rather than differences in personality. Despite the establishment of the Equal Employment Opportunity Act in Japan, female employees are often placed at a disadvantage to male employees. Further, high education employees are usually promoted more often and sooner than low education employees are. Differences in current and expected positions are reflected in these tables.

**Table 3. Educational Background Differences in Self-development Experience**

		Experience of self-development		total
		yes	no	
Educational Background	Low education (exp. freq.)	357 (442.1)	751 (665.9)	1,108
	High education (exp. freq.)	532 (446.9)	588 (673.1)	1,120
total		889	1,339	2,228

$$\chi^2 = 54.228, p < .01$$

Tables 4 and 5 show the results of the t-tests for differences between male and female, and between high and low education employees, respectively, for the three self-development variables. Table 4 shows that the positive attitude toward self-development of female employees was slightly higher than that of males, while hope of future self-development was slightly higher for male employees than for females. Further, hope of increased time for self-development was not significantly different between male and female employees. This is rather different from the results shown in Table 2. It signifies that female employees have stronger attitudes toward self-development, but also have less hope of future self-development. Table 5 shows that high education employees had significantly higher means on all three self-development measures. This is consistent with results of Table 3.

**Table 4. t-Test for Differences between Males and Females in Self-Development Variables**

Self-development	Gender	N	means	std.dev.	std. error of means	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Positive attitude	Male	1,557	2.854	.582	.015	-2.129	.033
	Female	673	2.910	.562	.022		
Hope of future self-development	Male	1,557	2.861	.861	.022	1.779	.075
	Female	673	2.791	.866	.033		
Hope of increased time for self-development	Male	1,557	3.751	.804	.020	.351	.726
	Female	673	3.738	.792	.031		

**Table 5. t-Test for Differences between Low and High Education Employees in Self-Development Variables**

Self-development	Education	N	Means	Std.dev.	Std. error of means	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Positive attitude	Junior college or below	1,108	2.777	.567	.017	- 7.819	<.001
	University or above	1,120	2.965	.571	.017		
Hope of future self-development	Junior college or below	1108	2.655	.87539	.0263	- 10.292	<.001
	University or above	1120	3.023	.81067	.02422		
Hope of increased time for self-development	Junior college or blow	1,108	3.622	.802	.024	- 7.505	<.001
	University or above	1,120	3.873	.778	.023		

*Means, Standard Deviations, and Inter-correlations regarding Variables*

Table 6 shows the means, standard deviations (std. dev.), and inter-correlations regarding all variables. First, all correlations of job satisfaction with the four dependent variables of self-development were significantly positive, as expected. Except for the two correlations of autonomy with positive attitude and hope of increased time for self-development, all the correlations between task characteristics and self-development variables were also significantly positive, as expected. The correlations between any two self-development variables ranged from 0.232 to 0.529, and thus it may be concluded that they addressed distinctive aspects of self-development.

Table 6. Means, Standard Deviations, and Inter-correlations regarding All Variables

Variables	means	std. dev.	N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1 Gender	1.302	.459	2,230									
2 Educational background	1.503	.500	2,228	-.146**								
3 Job satisfaction	2.668	.753	2,230	-.033	.096**							
4 Autonomy	2.936	.787	2,230	.005	-.001	.228**						
5 Unpredictability	2.978	.793	2,230	-.065**	.045*	.116**	-.010					
6 Well-defined	2.257	.749	2,230	-.086**	.083**	.447**	.136**	.071**				
7 Positive attitude	2.871	.576	2,230	.044*	.163**	.239**	.031	.094**	.191**			
8 Hope	2.840	.863	2,230	-.038	.213**	.226**	.054*	.122**	.217**	.459**		
9 Increased time	3.748	.800	2,230	-.007	.157**	.143**	-.006	.106**	.095**	.377**	.529**	
10 Experience	.399	.490	2,230	-.058**	.156**	.178**	.051*	.121**	.185**	.333**	.498**	.232**

\*\* :  $p < .01$ , \* :  $p < .05$

### *Hypotheses Testing*

A hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to verify our hypotheses. First, gender and educational background were entered into the equation to control for these variables. As shown in previous tables, these variables had some impact on self-development, and thus we needed to control for them to fully examine the effects of task characteristics. Job satisfaction was then entered into the equation, as well as variables regarding task characteristics. Previous studies have revealed that to some extent, the effects of task characteristics are mediated by job satisfaction, and we wanted to see if these effects remained significant after job satisfaction had been controlled. Further, logistic regression analysis was used to examine the effect of these factors on respondents' experience of self-development because this was a binary item. Table 7 shows the results of the analysis. All the variance inflation factors (VIFs) were under 1.40, which meant we did not have to consider the possibility of multicollinearity.

First, job satisfaction had a significant positive effect on all four dependent variables ( $\beta = .178, p < .001$  for positive attitude,  $\beta = .137, p < .001$  for increased hope,  $\beta = .112, p < .001$  for increased time, and  $B = .287, p < .001$  for experience) This signifies that highly satisfied employees tend to have a more positive attitude toward self-development, more hope of future self-development, more hope of increased time for self-development, and more experience of self-development. All results support H1.

Second, task autonomy had no significant relationship with the four dependent variables ( $\beta = -.024, n.s.$  for positive attitude,  $\beta = .005, n.s.$  for increased hope,  $\beta = -.036, n.s.$  for increased time, and  $B = .035, n.s.$  for experience). This result was unexpectedly contrary to H2, the reasons for which are considered in the Discussion section.

Third, task unpredictability had a significant positive effect on all four dependent variables ( $\beta = .065, p = .001$  for positive attitude,  $\beta = .090, p < .001$  for increased hope,  $\beta = .085, p < .001$  for increased time, and  $B = .266, p < .001$  for experience), thus supporting H3. We discussed the possibility that task unpredictability inhibited the self-development of employees, due to greater time and place constraints, and employees with highly unpredictable tasks did tend to hope for more time to engage in self-development. However, at the same time, they also had a stronger positive attitude toward self-development, and had more previous experience of self-development. This signifies that their hope for increased time for self-development did not stem from being too busy to engage in it, but rather from a more positive orientation toward it.

Table 7. Results of Hierarchical Regression Analysis with Aspects of Self-Development as Dependent Variables

Model	Positive attitude toward self-development						Hope of future self-development							
	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		t	Sig.	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		t	Sig.	( r <sup>2</sup> adj. r <sup>2</sup> )	
	B	std. error	Beta	Beta			B	std. error	Beta	Beta				
1	(Constant)	2.455	.055			44.557	<.001	2.304	.082			28.130	<.001	
	Gender	.089	.026	.071	.001	3.351	.001	-.011	.039	-.006	.778	-2.82	.778	(.045)***
	Educational background	.200	.024	.174	<.001	8.243	<.001	.366	.036	.212	<.001	10.142	<.001	.045
2	(Constant)	2.023	.066			30.479	<.001	1.710	.099			17.266	<.001	
	Gender	.094	.026	.075	<.001	3.640	<.001	-.004	.038	-.002	.916	-1.05	.916	
	Educational background	.176	.024	.153	<.001	7.410	<.001	.333	.035	.193	<.001	9.392	<.001	(.043)***
	Job satisfaction	.173	.016	.226	<.001	11.068	<.001	.238	.023	.207	<.001	10.187	<.001	.088
3	(Constant)	1.841	.088			21.029	<.001	1.251	.130			9.626	<.001	
	Gender	.108	.026	.086	<.001	4.181	<.001	.022	.038	.012	.560	.582	.560	
	Educational background	.170	.024	.147	<.001	7.188	<.001	.322	.035	.187	<.001	9.181	<.001	
	Job satisfaction	.136	.018	.178	<.001	7.701	<.001	.157	.026	.137	<.001	5.983	<.001	
	Autonomy	-.017	.015	-.024	.253	-1.143	.253	.006	.023	.005	.790	.266	.790	
	Unpredictability	.047	.015	.065	.001	3.188	.001	.098	.022	.090	<.001	4.436	<.001	(.022)***
	Well-defined	.080	.017	.105	<.001	4.614	<.001	.154	.026	.133	<.001	5.938	<.001	0.11

\*\*\*, p < .01, \*\*, p < .05, \*, p < .1, N = 2,230

**Table 7 (continued)**

model	more time for self-development						experience of self-development						-2 Log likelihood / Cox & Snell r <sup>2</sup>
	unstandardized coefficients		standardized coefficients		t	Sig.	( r <sup>2</sup> adj. r <sup>2</sup> )	unstandardized coefficients		Wald	Sig.	Exp(B)	
	B	std. error	Beta					B	std. error				
1	(constant)	3.328	.077		43.368	<.001				31.666	<.001	.320	
	gender	.028	.037	.016	.768	.442	(.025)***	.622	.098	2.940	.086	.846	2939.691 /
	education	.255	.034	.159	7.537	<.001	.024	-.167	.089	49.208	<.001	1.863	0.025
2	(constant)	2.987	.094		31.731	<.001				80.591	<.001	.095	
	gender	.032	.037	.019	.885	.376		-.156	.099	2.479	.115	.856	
	education	.236	.034	.148	7.001	<.001	(.016)***	.574	.090	40.648	<.001	1.775	2878.187 /
	job satisfaction	.136	.022	.128	6.148	<.001	.040	.472	.062	58.709	<.001	1.603	0.052
3	(constant)	2.795	.124		22.454	<.001				102.479	<.001	.027	
	gender	.045	.037	.026	1.241	.215		-.098	.100	.948	.330	.907	
	education	.230	.034	.144	6.833	<.001		.565	.091	38.504	<.001	1.472	
	job satisfaction	.120	.025	.112	4.745	<.001		.287	.070	17.066	<.001	1.163	
	autonomy	-.036	.022	-.036	-1.674	.094		.035	.060	.345	.557	.922	
	unpredictability	.086	.021	.085	4.086	<.001	(.009)***	.266	.059	20.499	<.001	1.163	2828.515 /
well-defined	.035	.025	.033	1.421	.156		.353	.068	27.212	<.001	1.247	0.073	

\*\*\* : p < .01, \*\* : p < .05, \* : p < .1, N = 2,230

Finally, well-defined task requirements had significant positive effects of positive attitude, increased hope, and greater experience, but no effect of increased time ( $\beta = .105$ ,  $p < .001$  for positive attitude,  $\beta = .133$ ,  $p < .001$  for increased hope,  $\beta = .033$ , n.s. for increased time, and  $B = .353$ ,  $p < .001$  for experience). H4 was thus partially supported for three of four dependent variables.

## 6. Discussion and Conclusion

This article examined whether individual and task factors had an impact on self-development. Using data collected from 2,230 Japanese employees, our analysis revealed that job satisfaction, task unpredictability, and well-defined task requirements had significant and positive influences on all or most of the self-development measures, thus supporting H1, H3, and H4. However, we found no significant relationship between task autonomy and self-development. This was unexpected, because task autonomy, by its nature, is accompanied by a large amount of freedom, as well as a large amount of responsibility, which we expected would encourage employees to further develop to meet the demands of this responsibility.

One conceivable reason for this is the possibility of the mediating effects of job satisfaction on task autonomy and self-development, as previously discussed. However, this is not likely, because while there is a positive correlation between task autonomy and job satisfaction, it is still relatively low ( $\gamma = .228$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and could not explain the significant positive effect of task unpredictability on self-development. Another possible reason is that when employees engage in an autonomous task, they might have an opportunity of on-the-job training. We often assume that self-development is achieved through reading books, taking a correspondence course, or participating in specialized schooling. However, these kinds of self-development might not be necessarily appropriate for employees to achieve the level of skills and knowledge necessary to successfully perform an autonomous task. Instead, employees might require the opportunity of on-the-job learning at workplace. Of course, this remains a simple inference, without confirmatory data. Future studies should clarify the true relationship between this particular task characteristic and self-development.

Although this article is the first study that dealt with self-development as a dimension of OCB, the following limitations remain. First, we confess that all of the variables used in this study have a common problem in lacking a close relationship with items from other



OCB studies. Most of the measures used in this study were developed from questionnaire items for other objectives. Although their Cronbach's alpha values were high enough to form composite variables, the combinations are somewhat arbitrary, and therefore it is theoretically difficult to compare the results of this study to those of past OCB research.

Secondly, although this study revealed similar effects of job characteristics and job attitude on self-development to the effects they have on other dimensions of OCB, this approach gives only small insight into the effectiveness of addressing self-development as a dimension of OCB. Even if this article found that the antecedents of self-development were similar to those of other OCB dimensions, it does not mean that the self-development we measured is necessarily reflective of an OCB dimension. For example, even if task unpredictability positively influences self-development, it might also mean that employees seek to remove themselves from a busy task by gaining new skills and changing jobs.

However, despite these limitations, this article is effective in showing that self-development might have similar relationships with factors that have been found to affect other OCB dimensions. We hope this article helps bring further attention to self-development as an aspect of OCB.

(Professor, Faculty of Economics, Seikei University)

## References

- Bateman, T. S., & Organ, D. W. (1983). Job satisfaction and the good soldier: The relationship between affect and employee "citizenship," *Academy of Management Journal*, 26, 587-595.
- Locke, E. A. (1968). Toward a theory of task motivation and incentives, *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 3, 157-189.
- (1996). Motivation through conscious goal setting, *Applied and Preventive Psychology*, 5, 117-124.
- McNeely, B. L., & Meglino, B. M. (1994). The role of dispositional and situational antecedents in prosocial organizational behavior: An examination of the intended beneficiaries of prosocial behavior, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 79, 836-844.
- Organ, D. W. (1988). *Organizational Citizenship Behavior: The Good Soldier Syndrome*, Lexington, MA: Lexington.

- (1997). Organizational citizenship behavior: It's construct clean-up time, *Human Performance*, 10, 85-97.
- Organ, D. W. & Konovsky, M. (1989). Cognitive versus affective determinants of organizational citizenship behavior, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 74, 157-164.
- Organ, D. W., Podsakoff, P. M., & MacKenzie, S. B. (2006). *Organizational Citizenship Behavior: Its Nature, Antecedents, and Consequences*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Organ, D. W., Ryan, K. (1995). A meta-analytic review of attitudinal and dispositional predictors of organizational citizenship behavior, *Personnel Psychology*, 48, 775-802.
- Podsakoff, P. M., Mackenzie, S. B., Bommer, W. H. (1996). A meta-analysis of the relationships between Kerr and Jemier's substitutes for leadership and employee job attitude, role perceptions, and performance, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 81, 380-399.
- Podsakoff, P. M., Mackenzie, S. B., Paine, J. B., & Bachrach, D. G. (2000). Organizational citizenship behaviors: A critical review of the theoretical and empirical literature and suggestions for future research, *Journal of Management*, 26, 513-563.
- Smith, A., Organ D. W., & Near J. (1983). Organizational citizenship behavior: Its nature and antecedents. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 68, 653-663.

## Appendix

This Appendix shows all items that measured job satisfaction, task autonomy, task unpredictability, well-defined task requirements, and positive (non-negative) attitude toward self-development.

Job satisfaction (alpha = 0.865)

1. I have a meaningful job.
2. I feel a sense of accomplishment through doing my job.
3. I feel a sense of self-growth through doing my job.

Task Autonomy (alpha = 0.709)

1. I can determine the process involved in performing my job by myself.

2. I can determine the amount work done for my job or task by myself.

Task Unpredictability (alpha = 0.866)

1. I often have to deal with an emergent event.
2. I am often assigned an unexpected task.

Well-defined Task Requirements (alpha = 0.888)

1. The requirements for the skill and knowledge necessary for my current job are clear.
2. The requirements for the skill and knowledge necessary to improve my career are clear.
3. The process that is necessary for improving my career is clear.

Positive (Non-negative) Attitude toward Self-Development (alpha = 0.762)

1. I am too old to learn (R).
2. I am poor at learning (R).
3. I have already learned the necessary skills for my job, and there is no need to study further (R).
4. My learning might come to nothing, as I am unsure of my future job in this organization (R).
5. Doing my best for my daily job is more important than learning to improving my skill (R).