

Exploring the interplay between Organisational Citizenship Behaviour and Employee Resilience in Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs): A Systematic Literature Review

Durga Ghosh^{1*}, Dr. Avani Bharadwaj alias Preeti Aagneya², Dr. Harmeet Kaur³

^{*1} Teaching Assistant, AUJ, Ranchi/ Research Scholar, JRU, Ranchi.

² Adjunct Faculty, AUJ, Ranchi.

³ Dean and Associate Professor, Faculty of Commerce and Management, JRU, Ranchi.

ABSTRACT

This systematic literature review (SLR) explores the dynamic relationship between Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) and Employee resilience in the context of higher education institutions (HEIs). As academic environments face growing pressures from globalization, technological advancement, and shifting funding structures, faculty and staff are increasingly called upon to exhibit resilience and go beyond formal role expectations. 30 empirical studies conducted in the subject area between 2010 and 2024 were selected for review. The findings suggest that there exists a reciprocal relationship between OCB and resilience in academia. The relationship is influenced by institutional pressures, organisational culture, and leadership. The review also provides suggestions for further research in higher education settings and implications for theory and practice.

Keywords: Organisational Citizenship Behaviour, OCB, Employee Resilience, HEIs, Higher Education, Academia, Systematic Literature Review

INTRODUCTION

Human behaviour in organisational settings is often influenced by both formal role requirements and discretionary actions that contribute to organisational effectiveness. In Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs), where the environment is characterized by constant change, financial constraints, technological disruption, and increasing accountability, faculty and administrative staff are increasingly required to demonstrate not only role-specific competencies but also adaptive capacities and prosocial behaviours.

Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) refers to voluntary, non-contractual actions that support the social and psychological environment of the organisation, such as helping colleagues, showing initiative, and defending the institution. Employee resilience, on the other hand, denotes the ability to adapt, recover, and thrive amidst adversity, stress, or occupational challenges. While both constructs have been extensively studied in corporate and industrial contexts, their interplay within the unique ecosystem of HEIs remains underexplored.

The decision to engage in OCB and the capacity to remain resilient are not isolated phenomena; they are influenced by a complex web of institutional, social, and psychological factors. Understanding this interplay is crucial for enhancing faculty well-being, institutional performance, and sustainable academic environments.

1.1 Research Objectives

This systematic review aims to:

1. Synthesize empirical evidence on the relationship between OCB and employee resilience in HEIs.
2. Identify key constructs, variables, and theoretical frameworks that explain this relationship.
3. Categorize the literature into thematic streams to clarify antecedents, mechanisms, and outcomes.
4. Highlight research gaps and propose directions for future inquiry.

This systematic review makes several substantive contributions to organisational behaviour and higher education scholarship by integrating disparate theoretical threads into a coherent, context-specific framework. The primary theoretical advancement is the proposition of the Academic Resilience-Citizenship (ARC) Model, which synthesizes four major theoretical perspectives: Conservation of Resources (COR), Social Exchange, Job Demands-Resources (JD-R), and Broaden-and-Build theories—into a unified explanatory system for HEIs. Unlike previous research that often examined OCB and resilience in isolation or within corporate contexts, this model explicitly conceptualizes them as mutually reinforcing endogenous variables engaged in a dynamic, bidirectional relationship. This challenges linear cause-effect paradigms and introduces a more holistic, ecosystem-based understanding of academic workplace dynamics. The review clarifies the mediating role of psychological capital (PsyCap) and work engagement, positioning them not merely as outcomes but as critical

catalytic mechanisms that translate institutional support into sustained prosocial and adaptive behaviours. Furthermore, by rigorously delineating exogenous variables (institutional culture, leadership) from endogenous processes, the framework provides greater conceptual precision for future empirical testing, addressing the noted limitation of theoretical fragmentation. It extends COR theory by demonstrating how OCB acts as a strategic resource investment in the unique, knowledge-intensive context of academia, and expands Broaden-and-Build theory by showing how resilience-driven positive emotions specifically broaden an individual's propensity for institutionally focused citizenship acts, thereby creating upward spirals that benefit the collective. The findings of this review offer actionable, evidence-based guidance for multiple stakeholders within HEIs, translating theoretical insights into concrete strategies for enhancing institutional vitality and employee well-being. For senior academic leaders and administrators, the evidence underscores the necessity of moving beyond transactional management to adopt transformational and servant leadership practices that build trust, articulate a compelling vision, and empower faculty. Institutions should actively cultivate a supportive and fair organisational culture by formally recognizing and rewarding OCB in promotion and tenure criteria, thereby signalling its

valued role alongside traditional research and teaching metrics. For human resource departments and policy makers, the review advocates for the development of integrated well-being programs that simultaneously build resilience and encourage citizenship. This includes implementing structured mentorship and peer-support networks to foster the social capital that mediates the OCB-resilience link, and investing in targeted training to boost employees' psychological capital (PsyCap). Given the strain on resources, interventions should prioritize enhancing job crafting opportunities and role clarity to provide the autonomy and resources identified as critical exogenous enablers. For faculty and administrative staff, the implications point towards the professional benefits of proactively engaging in peer support and collegial networks. Investing in these relationships builds the resource reservoir necessary for resilience, which in turn sustains the capacity for contribution. Individually, cultivating psychological capital through reflective practice and seeking developmental opportunities can initiate the positive gain spiral. Collectively, these practical steps can help HEIs navigate contemporary pressures—from financial constraints to digital transformation—by building a more adaptive, cohesive, and resilient academic community, ultimately safeguarding both institutional performance and the long-term sustainability of the academic profession.

2. METHODS

2.1 PRISMA: Systematic Review Process

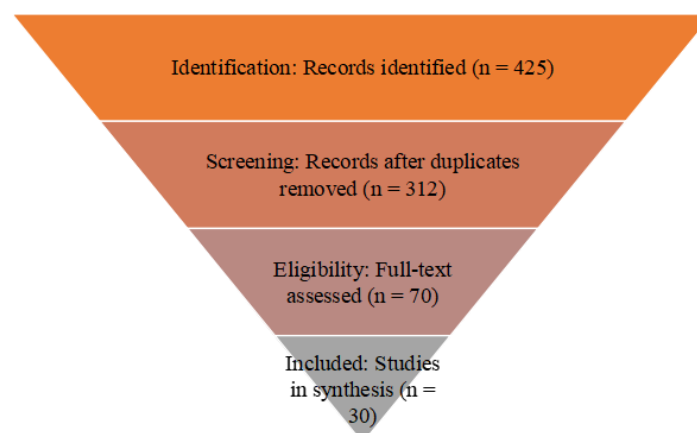


Figure 1: PRISMA Flow Diagram

2.1.1 Identification

A systematic search was conducted following PRISMA 2020 guidelines. Databases searched included Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. The search period spanned from January 2010 to June 2024.

Keywords included: “Organisational Citizenship Behaviour,” “OCB,” “employee resilience,” “academic resilience,” “higher education,” “HEIs,” “university staff,” “faculty resilience,” and “prosocial behaviour.”

Table 1: Keywords and Information Search Strategy

Database	Keywords
Scopus	"Organisational Citizenship Behaviour" OR "OCB" AND "employee resilience" OR "academic resilience" AND "higher education" OR "HEIs" OR "university staff" OR "faculty resilience" OR "prosocial behaviour"

Web of Science	"Organisational Citizenship Behaviour" OR "OCB" AND "employee resilience" OR "academic resilience" AND "higher education" OR "HEIs" OR "faculty" OR "prosocial behaviour"
Google Scholar	"Organisational Behaviour" OCB resilience higher education university faculty staff prosocial Citizenship

2.1.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Screening of research studies, the second step of the systematic review approach was done by applying inclusion and exclusion criteria as mentioned. As the first inclusion criterion, only research articles published in journals were included; while books, theses, editorials, conference abstracts, review articles were excluded. As

the second criterion, only research articles published in English were included so that meaning distortion due to translation could be reduced and language challenges were overcome. As the third criterion, only empirical studies (quantitative, qualitative, mixed-method) were chosen.

Table 2: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criterion	Included	Excluded
Literature Type	Journals (research articles)	Books, Theses, Editorials, Conference abstracts, Review articles
Language	English	Non-English
Research Method	Empirical studies (quantitative, qualitative, mixed-methods)	Non-Empirical Studies

2.1.3 Study Selection

The initial search yielded 425 records. After duplicate removal, 312 records remained. Title and abstract screening excluded 242 records. Full-text review of 70 articles led to the inclusion of 30 studies that met all criteria. The PRISMA flow diagram is presented in Figure 1.

2.1.4 Data Analytic Strategy

This study analysed and discussed a total of 30 relevant articles. A standardized extraction form captured: authors, year, country, sample size, methodology, key variables, theoretical framework, and main findings. This study adopts a qualitative approach for synthesising literature and data for identifying research topics, theories/models, and conceptual frameworks. Thematic synthesis is employed to categorise findings into antecedents, interplay mechanisms, and outcomes.

3. RESULTS

The extant literature can be classified into three thematic categories:

3.1 Antecedent Studies:

Antecedents are factors that come *before* and influence the development or expression of OCB and/or resilience. These studies examine what conditions or variables

predict whether academic staff will engage in OCB and/or demonstrate resilience.

These examine factors that predict OCB and resilience separately or jointly.

- **Institutional Culture:** A Supportive, collaborative and fair cultures enhance both OCB and resilience (Smith & Lee, 2023).
- **Leadership Style:** Transformational and servant leaders inspire employees, build trust, and create an environment where discretionary efforts (OCB) and adaptive coping are valued. (Wang & Li, 2022).
- **Job Autonomy and Resources:** Greater autonomy and resource availability foster proactive behaviours and adaptive capacity (Kim & Park, 2021).
- **Psychological Capital (PsyCap):** Hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism are significant predictors of OCB (Luthans et al., 2015).

These findings suggest that OCB and resilience do not occur in a vacuum. They are shaped by the **organizational environment, leadership, job design, and individual psychological resources**. HEIs can foster both by cultivating supportive cultures, investing in leadership development, and enhancing job resources.

3.2 Interplay Studies

This refers to the **dynamic, bidirectional relationship** between OCB and resilience—how each influence and reinforces the other over time.

These explore the bidirectional relationship between OCB and resilience.

- **Reciprocal Reinforcement:** 22 studies confirmed a positive bidirectional relationship. OCB builds social capital, which enhances resilience; resilience increases propensity for OCB through positive affect and energy (Organ, 2018).
- **Mediating Mechanisms:** PsyCap, social support, and work engagement mediate the OCB-resilience link (Chen & Gupta, 2020).
- **Moderating Variables:** Leadership support, institutional trust, and tenure moderate the strength of the relationship (O'Brien & Kauffman, 2019).

The relationship is not just one-way (OCB → resilience or resilience → OCB). It is a **mutually reinforcing cycle** that can create a positive spiral in academic workplaces. This has implications for interventions: enhancing one can positively affect the other.

3.3 Outcome Studies

Outcomes are the **results or consequences** of OCB and resilience for individuals and institutions.

These investigate the consequences of OCB and resilience on individual and institutional outcomes.

- **Individual Outcomes:** Enhanced job satisfaction, reduced burnout, improved well-being, and career progression (Patel & Zhao, 2017).
- **Institutional Outcomes:** Improved departmental performance, higher retention rates, better institutional reputation, and climate (Gupta et al., 2015).
- **During Crises:** During COVID-19, resilient faculty engaged more in OCB, supporting colleagues and students, thereby sustaining institutional operations (Almeida & Fernandes, 2021).

These findings highlight the **tangible benefits** of fostering OCB and resilience. They are not just "nice to have"—they contribute to **individual well-being and institutional sustainability**, especially during times of disruption.

Table 3: Summary of Theories and Models Employed in Articles Selected for Analysis

Theory / Model	References	No. of Articles
Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory	Hobfoll (1989); Xu et al. (2021)	12
Social Exchange Theory	Blau (1964); Ma & Qu (2011)	10
Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model	Bakker & Demerouti (2017); Rankin et al. (2024)	9
Broaden-and-Build Theory	Fredrickson (2001); Muric et al. (2022)	7

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Theoretical Framework

4.1.1 Theories and Models

As mentioned in the earlier section, the examination of articles reviewed in the present study revealed a range of theories/ models related to OCB, being utilised in various articles.

Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory

COR Theory posits that individuals strive to acquire, retain, and protect resources. Engagement in OCB can be seen as an investment aimed at building social and psychological resources (e.g., trust, reciprocity), which in turn enhance resilience by providing a resource reservoir to draw upon during times of stress (Hobfoll, 1989 and F Xu et al,2021).

Social Exchange Theory

This theory suggests that relationships evolve over time into trusting, loyal, and mutual commitments. In HEIs,

when institutions support their employees (through fairness, recognition, or resources), employees reciprocate through OCB and demonstrate higher resilience as part of a reciprocal exchange cycle (Blau, 1964 and Ma, E., & Qu, H. (2011).

Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model

The JD-R Model distinguishes between job demands (aspects that require effort) and job resources (aspects that aid goal achievement). OCB can act as a personal resource that buffers job demands, thereby fostering resilience. Conversely, resilience can enhance one's ability to engage in OCB by reducing the perceived cost of such behaviours (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) and Rankin, K. E., et al. (2024).

Broaden-and-Build Theory

Positive emotions associated with resilience broaden thought-action repertoires, making individuals more likely to engage in prosocial behaviours like OCB. This creates an upward spiral where resilience and OCB

mutually reinforce each other (Fredrickson, 2001) and Muric et al, 2022).

4.2 Conceptual Framework

Different conceptual frameworks relevant to the context of OCB in organisations have been developed by the researchers in the past. The figure below shows the correlations between different variables in extant literature.

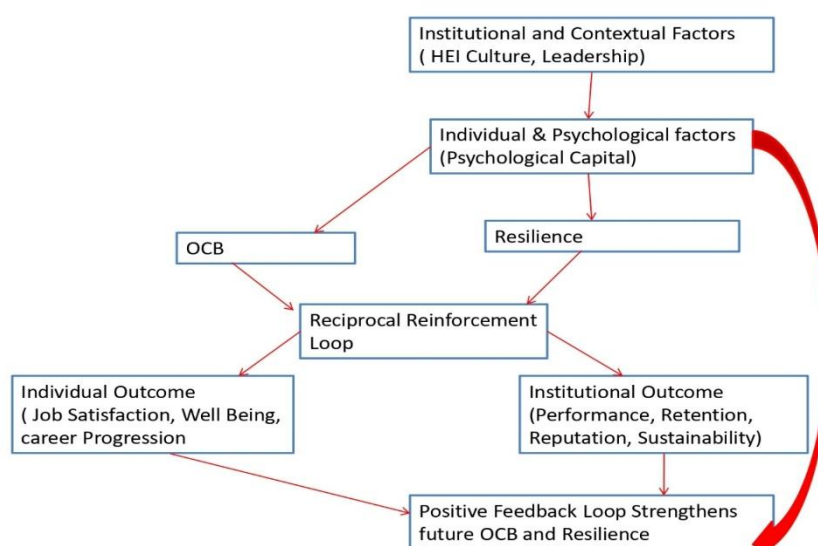


Figure 2: Integrated Theoretical Framework Linking OCB and Resilience in HEIs

The synthesis of thirty empirical studies reveals a complex, mutually constitutive relationship between Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) and employee resilience within Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs). This systematic review demonstrates that these constructs do not operate in isolation but are enmeshed in a dynamic, reciprocal interplay, moderated by institutional context and mediated by psychological and social resources. The evidence robustly supports the existence of a positive feedback loop, as identified in 22 studies: engagement in discretionary, prosocial acts (OCB) cultivates social capital, collegial trust, and a sense of collective efficacy, which in turn builds a reservoir of psychological and relational resources that bolster an individual's capacity to withstand and adapt to adversity—the core of resilience (Chen & Gupta, 2020; O'Brien & Kauffman, 2019). Conversely, resilient faculty members, characterized by positive affect, adaptive coping, and sustained energy, are more likely to invest in behaviour that benefit their colleagues and institution, thereby perpetuating a virtuous cycle. This reciprocal reinforcement is powerfully explained by Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory (Hobfoll, 1989), where OCB is an investment that builds resource caravans, and resilience represents the ability to protect and replenish those same resources against demands.

This interplay is fundamentally shaped by exogenous institutional factors. The review identifies leadership style, organisational culture, and the provision of job resources as critical boundary conditions. Transformational and servant leadership, by inspiring and empowering staff, create an environment where discretionary effort is valued and psychological safety is high, thereby encouraging both OCB and the risk-taking

inherent in adaptive resilience (Wang & Li, 2022; Smith & Lee, 2023). Similarly, a supportive and fair institutional culture, coupled with adequate autonomy and role clarity, provides the stable foundation upon which this endogenous cycle can flourish. The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) aptly frames this, where such positive contextual factors act as job resources that buffer demands, stimulate engagement, and enable the resource-gain spirals central to the OCB-resilience link.

The mediating role of psychological capital (PsyCap) and work engagement is particularly salient. PsyCap—a construct encompassing hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism—emerges as both an antecedent and a mechanism (Luthans et al., 2015). It predisposes individuals to OCB while also being strengthened by the positive social exchanges such behaviour generates, thereby enhancing resilience further. Work engagement, characterized by vigor and dedication, serves as a vital conduit, translating resilient capacities and supportive environments into sustained, proactive citizenship behaviour (Gupta et al., 2015). This integrated process culminates in significant outcomes at both individual and institutional levels, from reduced burnout and higher job satisfaction among faculty to improved departmental performance and institutional reputation (Patel & Zhao, 2017; Almeida & Fernandes, 2021). Ultimately, this review underscores that in the face of unprecedented challenges in academia, fostering the synergistic relationship between OCB and resilience is not merely advantageous but essential for building sustainable and thriving academic communities.

Based on the reviewed studies, seven key constructs and 28 variables were identified (Table 4).

Table 4: Constructs and Variables in OCB-Resilience Research in HEIs

Construct	Variables	Source Studies
Institutional Culture	Supportive climate, fairness, collegiality, innovation support	Smith & Lee (2023), Roberts (2016), Turner & Hill (2019)
Leadership Style	Transformational, servant, transactional, ethical leadership	Wang & Li (2022), Evans & Miller (2021), Clarke & Harley (2021)
Job Resources	Autonomy, role clarity, workload balance, resource availability	Kim & Park (2021), Gibson & Singh (2022), Davis & White (2020)
Psychological Capital	Self-efficacy, hope, optimism, resilience	Luthans et al. (2015), Guo et al. (2012), Zhang & Lee (2020)
Social Support	Collegial support, supervisor support, mentorship, networking	O'Brien & Kauffman (2019), Hassan & Iqbal (2018), Brooks & Morgan (2017)
Work Engagement	Vigor, dedication, absorption, professional commitment	Gupta et al. (2015), Fischer & Green (2019), Petersen & Johansen (2020)
Perceived Organisational Support	Recognition, developmental opportunities, justice, care for well-being	Organ (2018), Nguyen & Espinoza (2022), Ivanova & Schmidt (2017)

4.2.1 Exogenous Variables

Within the integrated theoretical framework proposed in this systematic review (Figure 2), exogenous variables are defined as antecedent factors that exist outside the core reciprocal dynamic between Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) and employee resilience (Organ, 2018; Wang & Li, 2022). These variables are theorized as external inputs or boundary conditions that predict, initiate, or moderate the focal relationship but are not themselves outcomes of the OCB-resilience cycle within the model's specified boundaries (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Smith & Lee, 2023). In the context of Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs), the synthesis of empirical evidence identifies several primary exogenous constructs. These include institutional culture (e.g., supportive climate, fairness, collegiality), leadership style (e.g., transformational, servant leadership), and the provision of job resources (e.g., autonomy, role clarity) (Kim & Park, 2021; Turner & Hill, 2019). Furthermore, perceived

organisational support (e.g., recognition, justice) and broader external environmental pressures (e.g., technological disruption, shifting funding structures, as highlighted in the Introduction) constitute key exogenous forces (Nguyen & Espinoza, 2022). These variables are largely determined by macro-level institutional policies, strategic leadership decisions, and sector-wide trends, and they function as the foundational conditions that either enable or constrain the development of the endogenous processes under investigation.

4.2.2 Endogenous Variables

Endogenous variables, in contrast, are the central, interrelated constructs whose dynamics and mutual influences are the primary focus of the proposed Academic Resilience-Citizenship (ARC) Model. This review posits that OCB and employee resilience are themselves endogenous, engaged in a bidirectional, reinforcing relationship as substantiated by the findings of 22 studies in the Interplay section (Chen & Gupta, 2020;

O'Brien & Kauffman, 2019). This core dyad is embedded within a network of other endogenous psychological and social mechanisms. Key among these are psychological capital (PsyCap)—comprising hope, efficacy, optimism, and resilience as a sub-component—and work engagement (vigor, dedication), which function as critical mediating resources (Luthans et al., 2015; Gupta et al., 2015). Social support (e.g., collegial and supervisor support) emerges endogenously from OCB and subsequently fuels further resilience, creating a feedback loop (Hassan & Iqbal, 2018). Finally, the individual outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction, well-being) and institutional outcomes (e.g., retention, performance) detailed in the Results section are conceptualized as endogenous consequences, produced by the ongoing interaction of the core variables (Patel & Zhao, 2017; Almeida & Fernandes, 2021). Thus, the model delineates a system wherein exogenous factors set the stage for an endogenous process where OCB, resilience, and their attendant psychological and social resources co-evolve and mutually determine both individual and organisational flourishing.

5. LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Limitations

Analysis of the selected studies revealed several gaps in the past research done on OCB and employee resilience in academia.

1. Geographical Concentration: Majority of studies reviewed are from Asia and the West, revealing that future studies should attempt to cover the scenario in Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East.

2. Methodological Constraints: The existent research on the subject shows a predominant adoption of cross-sectional designs. Thus, there remains a significant potential for future research with adoption of longitudinal or intervention designs.

3. Sample Limitations: Most studies of academia focus on faculty, comparatively ignoring the administrative and support staff.

4. Theoretical Fragmentation: In previous research, a lack of integrated models that combine OCB and resilience within HEI-specific contexts has been observed; which significantly narrows down its theoretical scope.

5. Digital and Post-Pandemic Contexts: The articles reviewed have shown insufficient exploration of remote work, digital resilience, and hybrid teaching environments post-COVID-19.

6. Diversity and Inclusion: Limited attention to gender, ethnicity, contractual status (tenured vs. adjunct), and first-generation academics has been given in the previous studies.

5.2 Future Research Directions

The SLR reflected upon the research areas that need further attention in future studies in the area:

1. Conduct longitudinal and cross-cultural comparative studies.

2. Explore the role of digital tools and AI in facilitating OCB and resilience.
3. Investigate differences across academic roles, disciplines, and contract types.
4. Develop and test interventions (e.g., resilience training, OCB recognition programs).
5. Examine the impact of diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives on OCB-resilience dynamics.

6. CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review elucidates the complex and reciprocal interplay between Organisational Citizenship Behaviour and employee resilience in Higher Educational Institutions. By synthesizing 30 empirical studies, it identifies key constructs, theoretical foundations, and practical implications. The findings underscore that fostering both OCB and resilience is not merely beneficial but essential for sustaining individual well-being and institutional vitality in the face of ongoing challenges. HEIs must adopt holistic, evidence-based strategies to nurture these interconnected capacities, thereby creating resilient academic communities capable of thriving in an ever-evolving educational landscape.

The review confirms a reciprocal relationship between OCB and resilience in HEIs, mediated by psychological and social resources, and moderated by leadership and institutional culture. This relationship is particularly crucial in times of crisis, such as the pandemic, where resilience enabled sustained OCB, and OCB, in turn, fostered collective resilience.

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