Do Sick Coworkers Make us Help Others?:

Investigating the Critical Roles of Citizenship Pressure and Psychological Detachment

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Abstract

Although researchers have started to uncover the positive effects of presenteeism, research has yet to unearth the positive implications of coworker presenteeism. We draw from social information processing theory to hypothesize that coworker presenteeism has a positive indirect effect on organizational citizenship behaviors directed towards the organization (OCBOs) and other individuals (OCBIs) via citizenship pressure. Building on these hypotheses, we further theorize that the indirect effect of coworker presenteeism on OCBOs and OCBIs differ when employees are psychologically detached from their organization. Based on data collected using a time-separated research design (n = 277 employees), the results reveal that coworker presenteeism has a positive indirect effect on both forms of OCBs via citizenship pressure. The results further demonstrate that the indirect effect of coworker presenteeism on OCBIs via citizenship pressure strengthens for employees who are psychologically detached from their organization. Importantly, this research shows that there are positive behavioral implications associated with coworker presenteeism.

Keywords: Coworker presenteeism, citizenship pressure, psychological detachment, organizational citizenship behaviors, social information processing, social norms

Notes:

Over the past several decades, researchers have acknowledged the importance of social interactions for organizational effectiveness (e.g., Lavelle, 2010). Of particular importance are the social interactions between healthy employees and presentees, which refer to employees who attend work despite their ill-health (Cooper & Lu, 2018; Johns, 2010; Lohaus & Habermann, 2019). Throughout this past year, the global pandemic has prompted the health-focused literature to punctuate the critical importance of understanding the effects of sick workers on other employees (e.g., Gandhi et al., 2020) and businesses (e.g., Haffajee & Mello, 2020). Consistent with these health studies, research on coworker presenteeism (i.e., coworkers who show up for work despite their ill-health) has mostly adopted a health-focused lens that emphasizes its negative effects (i.e., fear of contracting the illness) (Asfaw et al., 2017; Luksyte et al., 2015). This health-focused perspective, however, overlooks substantial evidence that shows social interactions can lead to positive outcomes, such as organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) (i.e., discretionary behaviors that positively promote organizational functioning) (Organ, 1988, 2018). As such, we offer a more balanced perspective of presenteeism by investigating how coworker presenteeism positively relates to OCBs.

We theoretically ground our arguments by drawing upon social information processing (SIP) theory (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978), as it emphasizes how employees rely on social information from their coworkers to make sense of their work environment that subsequently affects their behaviors. We argue that employees who are exposed to coworker presenteeism are subject to social information that conveys behavioral expectations that prompt perceptions of social norms for similar behaviors (Elgaaied-Gambier et al., 2018). Since coworker presenteeism may be interpreted as an OCB (Miraglia & Johns, 2016; Ruhle et al., 2020), employees who are

exposed to coworker presenteeism perceive greater pressure to perform citizenship behaviors (i.e., citizenship pressure) (Bolino et al., 2010), which leads to OCBs (Liu et al., 2017).

While it has been widely accepted that social information shapes cognitive products and behaviors, researchers have recently started to direct more attention to the psychological characteristics that influence how employees respond to social stimuli (e.g., Kalkstein et al., 2016). One psychological characteristic is that of psychological detachment, which reflects psychological separation from the organization (Burris et al., 2008; Vogel & Mitchell, 2017). Research shows that individuals who experience psychological distance from their organization are inclined to conform to social information, such as social norms, within their proximal context (Ledgerwood & Callahan, 2012). Building on this research, we argue that, in comparison to those with low psychological detachment, employees with high psychological detachment are more apt to conform to citizenship pressure by engaging in OCBs because these employees are attuned to the social information that stems from their immediate social context. Altogether, we investigate the moderating effect of psychological detachment on the indirect effect of coworker presenteeism on OCBs via citizenship pressure (Figure 1) using data collected from a diverse sample of employees across three time periods.

INSERT FIGURE 1

This research offers three important contributions. First, this research responds to calls for a more socially-focused approach to presenteeism (Johns, 2010; Ruhle et al., 2020). In contrast to previous studies of coworker presenteeism that are health-focused (Asfaw et al., 2017; Luksyte et al., 2015), we are the first to contribute a socially-focused theoretical lens by using SIP theory (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978) to investigate why sick coworkers may contribute to

social norms that involve going above and beyond at work. Second, this study responds to calls for research that points to the positive outcomes of presenteeism (e.g., Miraglia & Johns, 2016). To the best of our knowledge, this study is the first to challenge the view that coworker presenteeism relates to negative implications. We identify citizenship pressure as a key theoretical mechanism that helps to explain why coworker presenteeism is associated with OCBs. Third, we advance research on the boundary conditions of presenteeism (e.g., Lu et al., 2014; Mazzetti et al., 2019). Consistent with research that shows psychological separation importantly shapes how employees respond to social information in their proximal social context (Ledgerwood & Callahan, 2012), we suggest that psychological detachment shapes how employees respond to their social environment within the context of coworker presenteeism, which affects how these employees act towards others.

Presenteeism and its Implications

Presenteeism refers to the act of attending work despite ill-health (Aronsson et al., 2000; Johns, 2010; Ruhle et al., 2020). Ill-health includes both physical (e.g., colds, back pain, migraines) and mental (e.g., anxiety, depression) health conditions (Goetzel et al., 2004; Johns, 2010). While most research has focused on the negative effects of presenteeism (e.g., Baeriswyl et al., 2017; Demerouti et al., 2009; Lu, Lin, et al., 2013; Whysall et al., 2018), researchers have recently called for a more balanced view of presenteeism, such that presenteeism is not to be viewed as inherently negative. Rather presenteeism ought to be recognized as having both positive and negative effects (Miraglia & Johns, 2016). There has been a small albeit budding vein of research that has started to illuminate the positive effects of presenteeism. In many cases (with the exception of contagious illnesses), presenteeism may actually be the optimal decision for employees, as it can facilitate the recovery process (Whysall et al., 2018). Presenteeism is

therefore often used as a substitute for absenteeism (Caverley et al., 2007) in that employees seek to derive benefits by showing up for work despite their ill-health. In fact, emerging research illustrates just this.

Karanika-Murray and Biron (2020) use a presentee-centered approach to identify four forms of presenteeism, three of which include some positive effects: 1) functional presenteeism (i.e., an optimal scenario where presentees experience some productivity, albeit not necessarily full productivity, and some personal goal fulfillment that supports the recovery process), 2) therapeutic presenteeism (i.e., presentees experience benefits by showing up for work, such as team support and improved self-worth, but performance gains are often limited in the short-term), and 3) over-achieving presenteeism (i.e., presentees maintain their performance, but at the expense of their health).[1] Interestingly, research on the negative and positive effects of presenteeism has almost entirely focused on the perspective of the presentee (Lohaus & Habermann, 2019) with few efforts investigating the social effects of coworker presenteeism.

To the best of our knowledge, only two studies have examined coworker presenteeism. In the applied psychology literature, Luksyte et al. (2015) draw from affective events theory and the black sheep hypothesis to show that coworker presenteeism evokes negative emotional and behavioral reactions when employees are demographically similar to the presentee. Specifically, coworker presenteeism heightens fears of contracting the sickness when there is racial similarity with the presentee, which leads to greater negative affect and deviance. In the healthcare literature, Asfaw et al. (2017) offered a different lens to coworker presenteeism with an investigation of the extent to which a sick coworker can infect employees by showing up for

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[1] The final type of presenteeism (i.e., dysfunctional presenteeism) fails to offer benefits for presentees. This form of presenteeism describes situations where presentees show up for work despite that it is deleterious for their health and performance. In turn, there is an increased likelihood of sickness absenteeism.

work despite their ill-health. Although these studies point to the importance of investigating coworker presenteeism, they do not shed insight into the potential positive effects of coworker presenteeism – an effect that is at the heart of this research.

<center>**Coworker Presenteeism and Citizenship Behaviors:**</center>

<center>**A Social Information Processing Perspective**</center>

Social information processing (SIP) theory states that individuals are adaptive organisms who modify their beliefs, perceptions, and behaviors to the social environment in which they function (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). More simply, the observation and interpretation of social stimuli in the work environment influences the formation of cognitive products that shape subsequent behaviors. Based on SIP theory (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978), we argue that coworkers who show up for work despite their ill-health imbue social information into the work environment, which is retrieved and interpreted by employees. One interpretation of this social information is that coworker presenteeism is an OCB (Johns, 2010; Miraglia & Johns, 2016).

OCBs refer to "behavior[s] of a discretionary nature that are not part of employees' formal [role] requirements, but nevertheless promote the effective functioning of the organization" (Organ, 1988, p. 4). Presenteeism may be considered an OCB in that it exceeds formal job role expectations, helps support organizational functioning, and is not recognized by the reward system (Ruhle et al., 2020). This social construction of coworker presenteeism shapes cognitive beliefs about the social norms of the environment (Walsh et al., 2018), which refer to unwritten rules that regulate behaviors (Feldman, 1984). As such, coworker presenteeism contributes to a perceived norm for OCBs – that is, shared expectations for OCBs, which elicits such behaviors from others. This norm elicits a cognitive product known as citizenship pressure – that is, the felt pressure to enact OCBs (Bolino et al., 2010). SIP theory further suggests that

these cognitive products foster similar behaviors (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). Accordingly, employees who perceive this citizenship pressure conform to it with OCBs.

However, employees do not universally respond to their perceptions of citizenship pressure (Bolino et al., 2010). We argue that the citizenship pressure and OCB relationship is moderated by psychological detachment from the organization. The crux of our argument relies on research that reveals that psychological distance enhances conformity to social information from their immediate environment through which cognitive regulation processes incorporate proximal context-specific information (Ledgerwood & Callahan, 2012). As such, employees who experience psychological detachment from their organization conform to social stimuli within their proximal social environment. In a similar vein, we reason that employees who are high on psychological detachment are more likely to conform to citizenship pressure with OCBs. Insights from the social influence literature are drawn upon to explain *why* psychologically detached employees respond to citizenship pressure with *more* OCBIs (i.e., OCBs that are directed towards other individuals) and *fewer* OCBOs (i.e., OCBs that are directed towards the organization). We argue that OCBIs are targeted behaviors that are more likely to elicit approval from coworkers (Deckop et al., 2003) compared to OCBOs that are not targeted towards those in their immediate context. This social approval is particularly important for psychologically detached employees in that they have a strong need to feel a sense of belongingness to their coworkers (Tröster et al., 2019).

Coworker Presenteeism, Citizenship Pressure, and OCBs

Drawing insights from SIP theory (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978), we argue that coworkers who engage in presenteeism send social information into the immediate work environment. Research suggests that employees are particularly attuned to social information that emanates

from their coworkers who engage in presenteeism, as coworkers provide salient and relevant

information (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008; Duff et al., 2015). According to SIP theory, salient

sources of social information from coworkers are influential in shaping subsequent cognitive

products (e.g., interpretations, beliefs, attitudes) (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). As such, coworker

presenteeism importantly conveys social cues that contribute to a perceived norm for OCBs,

wherein there is a shared belief of an unwritten expectation to go above and beyond with

discretionary behaviors. This norm for OCBs fosters the development of cognitive products that

are norm-congruent (e.g., Elgaaied-Gambier et al., 2018). We reason that employees become

exposed to *informational social influence,* which serves as a 'reality check' as to how employees

are expected to behave at work (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955). That is, employees socially construct

their interpretation of the reality that their coworkers go above and beyond by showing up for

work despite their ill-health, which leads to beliefs that similar behaviors are expected from

others, thereby leading to perceptions of citizenship pressure (Bolino et al., 2010). In support,

Somech and Bolger (2019) find that teachers who observed their coworkers engage in OCBs

experienced heightened pressures to enact similar behaviors. Building on this research, we

predict that coworker presenteeism leads to felt pressures to enact OCBs.

Hypothesis 1: Coworker presenteeism positively relates to citizenship pressure.

SIP theory (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978) further suggests that employees who form

perceptions of citizenship pressure conform with OCBs. Drawing theoretical insights from

Deutsch and Gerard (1955), we argue that employees who perceive citizenship pressure are

subject to *normative social influence* – that is, "an influence to conform with the positive

expectations of another" (p. 629). Accordingly, citizenship pressure exposes employees to

normative social influence that prompts employees to conform to these felt pressures, such that

the intention is to gain approval and avoid rejection (Turner, 1991). Despite that OCBs are not explicitly recognized by the formal reward system (Bolino et al., 2010), research indicates that OCBs do elicit approval from others. For example, OCBs are associated with higher manager-rated job performance evaluations and reward recommendations and allocations (Podsakoff et al., 2009) and are linked to OCBs from others (Chen et al., 2013). In line with extant research (Bolino et al., 2010; Liu et al., 2017), we theorize that employees conform to normative social influence that underlies citizenship pressure by engaging in OCBOs and OCBIs.

Thus far, we have used SIP theory, coupled with insights from the social norms and social influence literatures, to argue that coworker presenteeism imbues social information into the work environment that contributes to a perceived norm for OCBs. As such, employees are subject to informational social influence that conveys behavioral expectations (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955), which leads to the felt pressure to similarly enact OCBs (Bolino et al., 2010). This citizenship pressure exposes employees to normative social influence, wherein employees are socially influenced to conform to these pressures with OCBs to elicit social approval and avoid rejection from others (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955). In sum, we predict that citizenship pressure mediates the relationship between coworker presenteeism and both forms of OCB.

Hypothesis 2: Citizenship pressure mediates the positive relationship between coworker presenteeism and OCBs, namely, (a) OCBOs and (b) OCBIs.

The Moderating Role of Psychological Detachment

Despite the importance of social information in shaping cognitive products and behaviors (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978), there is no universal response in terms of how employees respond to social information, which includes how employees make sense of how to respond to citizenship pressure (Bolino et al., 2010). We investigate how psychological detachment affects how

employees respond to citizenship pressure with OCBs. As alluded, the crux of this argument stems from research that suggests that employees who are psychologically detached from their organization conform to social information within their immediate environment (Ledgerwood & Callahan, 2012). We therefore reason that psychologically detached employees conform to citizenship pressure with more OCBs because this psychological detachment regulates the intake of context-specific information, thereby eliciting conformity to this information (Ledgerwood & Callahan, 2012). However, we draw insights from the social influence literature to offer a more nuanced argument in that psychologically detached employees respond to citizenship pressure with *fewer* OCBOs and *more* OCBIs.

Employees who are high on psychological detachment from their organization are less likely to conform to citizenship pressure with OCBOs as compared to those who are low on psychological detachment. Drawing on normative social influence research (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955), we reason that employees who perceive citizenship pressure are subject to normative social influence that influences the enactment of OCBOs in order to adhere to the expectations of others. However, psychologically detached employees respond to this normative influence with *fewer* OCBOs, such that these organization-directed behaviors elicit less social approval from their coworkers. The rationale is that OCBOs are not directed at those from which this citizenship pressure largely stems (i.e., their coworkers), which means that these behaviors are less noticeable by those in their proximal social context. To illustrate, an employee attends a social event to benefit the organization (i.e., an OCBO), but this behavior may easily go unnoticed by coworker. As a result, this fails to elicit the desired approval from their coworkers. Related to this, Burris et al. (2008) find that employees who are psychologically detached from the organization are less likely to voice improvement-oriented suggestions to improve

organizational functioning. One interpretation of this is that psychologically detached employees are less likely to engage in behaviors that are not directed towards those in their proximal context, as these actions are less likely to elicit social approval (Grutterink & Meister, 2021).

Conversely, employees who are high on psychological detachment from their organization are more likely to conform to citizenship pressure with OCBIs, as compared to those who are low on psychological detachment. Building on the above reasoning, employees respond to the normative social influence that underlies citizenship pressure with OCBIs (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955). However, we argue that psychologically detached employees respond to this normative influence with *more* OCBIs. The core of this argument stems from research that finds that psychological detachment from the organization heightens the need to maintain a sense of belongingness to coworkers (Tröster et al., 2019). One important way that employees maintain this belongingness is by conforming to social norms, such that employees conform to social norms when they feel a sense of belongingness to their coworkers (Terry & Hogg, 1996). Therefore, we argue that psychologically detached employees are more likely to conform to the normative social influence that underlies citizenship pressure with OCBIs, such that they seek to elicit social approval from their coworkers to feel this sense of belongingness. In support, Deckop et al. (2003) find that coworkers do convey approval for OCBs, such that receiving OCBs from others leads to the enactment of helping behaviors by the recipient. In sum, we predict that employees who are psychologically detached from their organization react to citizenship pressure with fewer OCBOs and more OCBIs.

> *Hypothesis 3a: The positive relationship between citizenship pressure and OCBOs will be weaker for those with high psychological detachment compared to those with low psychological detachment.*

Hypothesis 3b: The positive relationship between citizenship pressure and OCBIs will be stronger for those with high psychological detachment compared to those with low psychological detachment.

Our predictions culminate into two conditional indirect effects: psychological detachment moderates the indirect effect of coworker presenteeism on OCBOs and OCBIs via citizenship pressure. Drawing from SIP theory (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978), we argue that employees who observe their sick coworkers show up for work despite their ill-health form perceptions of a social norm for OCBs. Through this process, employees are subject to informational social influence (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955), which leads to perceptions that going above and beyond is the reality in their work environment. In turn, employees develop perceptions of citizenship pressure, which exposes employees to normative social influence that prompts employees to conform with OCBs to gain the social approval from others (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955; Turner, 1991). However, we further predict that psychological detachment from the organization moderates this relationship, such that psychologically detached employees respond to citizenship pressure with fewer OCBOs and more OCBIs. The rationale is that OCBIs are more likely to garner social approval from coworkers compared to OCBOs, which is particularly important for psychologically detached employees who have a strong need to feel a sense of belongingness and connection to their coworkers (Tröster et al., 2019).

Hypothesis 4: Psychological detachment moderates the positive indirect effects between coworker presenteeism and (a) OCBOs and (b) OCBIs via citizenship pressure.

Method

Procedure and Sample

Data was collected across three time periods using a sample from Prolific (https://www.prolific.co/). Following calls for more 'shortitudinal' studies (Dormann & Griffin, 2015), we opted for one-week intervals over other intervals (e.g., daily, monthly) for two reasons. First, although mental health issues are a common condition of presenteeism (Goetzel et al., 2004), employees may find it difficult to identify such situations. However, given that the common cold is a major condition of presenteeism (Bramley et al., 2002), we selected one-week intervals to maximize potential exposure to sick coworkers who enact presenteeism given that common cold symptoms subside around seven days (e.g., Baldassarre et al., 2020). Of course, this recall period also captures exposure to chronic conditions (e.g., cancer, arthritis, diabetes) that relate to presenteeism (Goetzel et al., 2004). Second, standard recall periods in presenteeism research range from one week to one month (with some studies of up to 12 months) (Johns, 2010). Given accuracy concerns with memory recall (Demerouti et al., 2009), we followed the recommendation to use a one-week recall period in presenteeism research to decrease potential errors in memory recall (Zhang et al., 2011). Respondents were rewarded £1 for each survey (e.g., Kim et al., 2020). All surveys were linked with unique respondent IDs. At time 1, 300 respondents participated in survey 1. At time 2, 286 out of 300 potential respondents participated in survey 2 (95.3% response rate). At time 3, 279 out of 286 potential respondents participated in survey 3 (97.6% response rate). Across the three surveys, the overall response rate was 93%.

Following best practices to include attention checks (Kung et al., 2018), we included two attention checks in each survey. Two respondents failed an attention check on the final survey, and their responses were removed from the dataset. Based on recommendations to ensure high-

quality data (Meade & Craig, 2012), we informed respondents that high-quality data was critical to generate reliable and useful conclusions. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they provided honest responses and were informed their reward would not be affected by their response. There were no concerns of dishonest responses. Following the removal of the respondents with missing data, the final sample was 277 employees.

On average, respondents were 37.5 years old ($SD = 9.65$) and had 5.2 years of organizational tenure ($SD = 5.36$). The majority of respondents had permanent positions (86%). Approximately three-quarters (72%) of the sample held an undergraduate degree and 54% were female. Respondents were primarily from the United Kingdom (UK) (51%), the United States (US) (32%), Portugal (5%), Canada (4%), and Italy (3%). Respondents also worked in a variety of sectors, with 16% in health and social work, 10% in education, 9% in wholesale and retail, 8% in the financial services, and the remaining in other sectors.

Measures

Coworker presenteeism. At time 1, we measured coworker presenteeism with one item, which is similar to many presenteeism studies (e.g., Aronsson et al., 2000; Demerouti et al., 2009). Specifically, respondents were asked the following question: "Sometimes employees show up for work despite feeling unwell. Thinking about your last work week, how many coworkers did you interact with at work who showed up for work despite being sick?".[2]

Citizenship pressure. At time 2, we measured citizenship pressure with eight items from Bolino et al. (2015). A sample item is: "I feel a lot of pressure to go the extra mile by doing a lot

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[2] Appropriate previously validated scales on coworker presenteeism were not available. Specifically, Luksyte et al. (2015) manipulated coworker presenteeism using an experimental research design in study 1 and created two student-focused groupwork items for study 2. Asfaw et al. (2017) measured coworker presenteeism as the average number of employees a presentee interacted with by the adjusted transmission rate.

of things that, technically, I don't have to do". Responses were evaluated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree (Cronbach's α = .92).

Organizational citizenship behaviors. At time 3, an abbreviated version of Lee and Allen's (2002) scale was used to measure OCBO (4 items) and OCBI (4 items), which is in line with extant studies (e.g., Shantz et al., 2013). A sample OCBO item is: "Offered ideas to improve the functioning of my organization" (Cronbach's α = .72), whereas a sample OCBI item is: "Assisted others with their duties" (Cronbach's α = .71). Items were evaluated on a 6-point scale that ranged from 1 (never) to 6 (every day).

We conducted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) on the line items to investigate whether we should consider two factors of OCB (i.e., OCBI, OCBO) or a single factor. We compared a single-factor model, where all line items were set to load on a single OCB factor (χ^2 = 15.12; df = 8; χ^2/df = 2.16; CFI = .98; TLI = .96; RMSEA = .07; SRMR = .07), to a two-factor model, where OCBI and OCBO line items were set to load on their respective factors (χ^2 = 11.22; df = 7; χ^2/df = .62; $\Delta\chi^2$ = 3.9*; CFI = .99; TLI = .97; RMSEA = .05; SRMR = .06). This comparison revealed the two-factor model outperformed the single-factor model of OCB. Accordingly, we consider OCBO and OCBI as distinct factors in our models.

Psychological detachment. At time 3, we followed Burris et al. (2008) who operationalized psychological detachment with a turnover intentions scale. Boroff and Lewin's (1997) two-item turnover intentions scale was evaluated using a 7-point scale (1 = strongly agree to 7 = strongly disagree). A sample item is: "I am seriously considering quitting my current employer for an alternative employer".

Controls. Five control variables (i.e., gender, age, actual hours worked, team size, country of residence) were included in the first survey to help rule out alternative explanations.

Based on research that reveals gender (Kidder, 2002) and age (Ng & Feldman, 2008) are related

to OCBs, we controlled for these variables. We controlled for actual hours worked per week

because full-time employees (who work more hours) exhibit greater helping behaviors compared

to part-time employees (Stamper & Dyne, 2001). Team size was also controlled to account for

the fact that respondents who worked in larger teams are simply exposed to more coworkers.

Country of residence was controlled to account for potential cultural differences between

respondents (Lu, Cooper, et al., 2013). Specifically, there were two sub-samples that were

considerably large in our dataset (i.e., there were 142 UK respondents and 88 US respondents).

As such, we created two dummy codes: one for UK respondents (i.e., UK respondents were

coded as 1, and other respondents were coded as 0) and one for US respondents (i.e., US

respondents were coded as 1, while other respondents were coded as 0).

Data Analysis

Our data analysis unfolded in the following way. First, our study measures were validated

by conducting a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using AMOS (version 25) on the

hypothesized measurement model, which included three latent variables (i.e., citizenship

pressure, OCBO, OCBI). Variables were ordinal in nature (i.e., 5-point and 7-point Likert

scales). We used the Maximum Likelihood estimator used in AMOS. All paths were freely

estimated and error variances were constrained to one. The following metrics were used to

evaluate model fit: chi-square goodness of fit to degrees of freedom ratio (χ^2/df) should be 2 or

less (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007); comparative fit index (CFI) and Tucker-Lewis index (TLI)

should be .90 or higher (Bentler, 1990; Browne & Cudeck, 1993); root-mean-square error of

approximation (RMSEA) should be .07 or less (Steiger, 2007); and the standardized-root-mean-

square-residual (SRMR) should be .08 or less (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Second, we added in the control variables and tested the hypothesized model using structural equation modeling (SEM). Mediation hypotheses were evaluated using nested structural equation models (Shrout & Bolger, 2002), while the moderation hypotheses were evaluated using interaction terms created between observed variables (Steinmetz et al., 2011). More specifically, we first mean-centered (i.e., the mean of the variable was subtracted from each respondent's value of the variable) our independent and moderating variables to examine the moderating effect (Dawson, 2014). These variables were then multiplied to create an interaction term. In all analyses, we used bootstrapping (n = 5,000) to evaluate the significance of the hypothesized direct, indirect, and moderating paths (Shrout & Bolger, 2002).

Results

The alphas, means, standard deviations, and correlations are shown in Table 1. There were zero correlations above 0.4, which indicates a low likelihood of multicollinearity. The measurement model revealed adequate fit (χ^2 = 450.39; df = 227; χ^2/df = 1.98; CFI = .94; TLI = .94; SRMR = .04; RMSEA = .05). To assess common method bias, we followed Williams and McGonagle (2016) by using the Hybrid Method Variables Model, which involves including an unmeasured latent methods construct, a marker variable (e.g., radical creativity), and a measured cause variable (i.e., positive affect) concurrently. Radical creativity was measured using Madjar et al.'s (2011) three-item scale (Cronbach's α = .93). Positive affect was measured using Thompson's (2007) five-item scale (Cronbach's α = .80). The hypothesized model revealed slightly improved model fit indices and a significant change in the chi-square test when compared to the hybrid model (χ^2/df = 2.02; $\Delta\chi^2$ = 6.49 ($p < .05$); CFI = .93; TLI = .92; SRMR = .05; RMSEA = .07), which suggests that common method bias (CMB) is not a problem.

Direct and Indirect Effects

Structural equation modelling (SEM) analysis revealed adequate model fit (χ^2 = 306.30; df = 163; χ^2/df = 1.88; CFI = .94; TLI = .92; SRMR = .06; RMSEA = .06). This research theorizes that citizenship pressure mediates the effect between coworker presenteeism and OCBs. To determine whether the possible mediation would be partial or full, the hypothesized model was compared to an alternative model that involved an additional direct path between coworker presenteeism and each type of OCB. The alternative model did not show significantly better fit than the hypothesized model (χ^2 = 303.84; df = 161; χ^2/df = 1.89; $\Delta\chi^2$ = 2.46 (*n.s.*); CFI = .94; TLI = .92; SRMR = .06; RMSEA = .06) and revealed non-significant direct paths from coworker presenteeism to each OCB (coworker presenteeism → OCBOs: β = .06, *n.s.*; coworker presenteeism → OCBIs: β = .04, *n.s.*). As such, the hypothesized model was retained for parsimony and is summarized in Figure 2 and Table 2.

Hypothesis 1 states that coworker presenteeism positively relates to citizenship pressure. Supporting Hypothesis 1, coworker presenteeism is positively related to citizenship pressure (β = .19, $p < .01$). Hypothesis 2 contends that citizenship pressure mediates the relationship between coworker presenteeism and (a) OCBOs and (b) OCBIs. The results showed that, via citizenship pressure, coworker presenteeism had a positive indirect effect on OCBOs (β = .05, $p < .01$) (supporting Hypothesis 2a) and OCBIs (β = .04, $p < .05$) (supporting Hypothesis 2b). Therefore, supporting Hypothesis 2, the results indicate citizenship pressure fully mediates the relationship between coworker presenteeism and both OCBs.

Moderation Effects

Hypothesis 3 states that psychological detachment moderates the relationship between citizenship pressure and OCBs. The results revealed that psychological detachment was not a significant moderator of the relationship between citizenship pressure and OCBOs ($\beta = .03$, *n.s.*), thereby rejecting Hypothesis 3a. However, the results revealed that psychological detachment was a significant moderator of the relationship between citizenship pressure and OCBIs ($\beta = .11$, $p < .01$). Figure 3 reveals citizenship pressure was a significant positive predictor of OCBIs for employees with high psychological detachment ($\beta = .37$, $p < .01$), whereas the same relationship was not significant for those with low psychological detachment ($\beta = -.07$, *n.s.*). Therefore, Hypothesis 3b was supported.

INSERT FIGURE 3

Lastly, the final hypothesis describes two conditional indirect effects of psychological detachment on the relationship between coworker presenteeism and OCBOs (Hypothesis 4a) and OCBIs (Hypothesis 4b). Since psychological detachment did not significantly moderate the relationship between citizenship pressure and OCBOs, there was no reason to test for a conditional indirect effect, thereby rejecting Hypothesis 4a. Furthermore, the results revealed that when psychological detachment was high, there was a positive indirect effect of coworker presenteeism on OCBI ($\beta = .07$, $p < .01$). When psychological detachment was low, the indirect effect of coworker presenteeism on OCBI was insignificant ($\beta = -.012$, *n.s.*). Therefore, Hypothesis 4b was also supported.

Post-hoc Analysis

Given that we collected data from a diverse sample of respondents, which is critical to generating more generalizable claims (Demerouti & Rispens, 2014), there may be cultural

differences that lead to participant bias (Landers & Behrend, 2015). We conducted a post-hoc analysis on a sub-sample from our dataset to limit concerns associated with the potential influence of cultural differences. The post-hoc analysis used a sub-sample of all UK respondents (i.e., the largest subsample in our dataset). We converted our country of residence variable into a binary variable, where we coded UK respondents (i.e., coded 1) and non-UK respondents (i.e., coded 0). These post-hoc results were consistent with the main study, such that there was a significant indirect effect of coworker presenteeism on OCBO ($\beta = .04$, $p < .05$) and OCBI ($\beta = .05$, $p < .05$) via citizenship pressure. There was also a significant indirect effect of coworker presenteeism on OCBI via citizenship pressure when psychological detachment was high ($\beta = .24$, $p < .01$), but not when it was low ($\beta = .02$, $n.s.$). These post-hoc results provide some assurance that cultural differences within our sample do not greatly impact our main findings.

Discussion

Contrary to coworker presenteeism research that adopts a health-oriented perspective (e.g., Asfaw et al., 2017; Luksyte et al., 2015), we draw from SIP theory (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978) and social norms research (e.g., Elgaaied-Gambier et al., 2018; Terry & Hogg, 1996) to uncover the positive implications associated with the social side of presenteeism. We find empirical support for a positive indirect effect of coworker presenteeism on OCBs via citizenship pressure. The results further reveal that the positive indirect effect of coworker presenteeism on OCBIs via citizenship pressure strengthens when psychological detachment is high. We contribute to the dearth of research on coworker presenteeism by shedding insights into this social phenomenon with an investigation of its positive effects.

Theoretical Implications

First, to the best of our knowledge, this research is the first to contribute a socially-focused theoretical lens to the dialogue on coworker presenteeism. Contrasting existing research on coworker presenteeism, which takes a health-centered perspective (Asfaw et al., 2017; Luksyte et al., 2015), we advance the idea that presenteeism contributes to social norms that affect employee cognitions and behaviors. Specifically, we use SIP theory (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978) to show that sick coworkers can make employees feel pressure to go above and beyond at work. Consistent with social norms research (e.g., Elgaaied-Gambier et al., 2018), our findings suggest that frequent exposure to social stimuli (i.e., coworker presenteeism) fosters the development of cognitive products that are norm-congruent (i.e., citizenship pressure). Coworker presenteeism subjects employees to informational social influence (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955) in that employees interpret social stimuli from sick coworkers that foster cognitive beliefs that similar behaviors are expected, thus leading to perceptions of citizenship pressure. In doing so, this research suggests that coworker presenteeism is a social phenomenon that may create lasting impressions on employees with respect to organizational life that remain after coworkers recover from their illness, as social norms are relatively stable over time (Uitdewilligen et al., 2018).

Second, as research on coworker presenteeism has solely emphasized its negative effects (Asfaw et al., 2017; Luksyte et al., 2015), this research is the first to challenge how coworker presenteeism is viewed by shedding insights into why coworker presenteeism may be associated with positive outcomes. Extending prior research that argues presenteeism may be interpreted as an OCB (Miraglia & Johns, 2016; Ruhle et al., 2020), we use SIP theory (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978) to articulate why interpreting coworker presenteeism as an OCB contributes to social norms related to expectations for OCBs (i.e., citizenship pressure). In line with social influence

research (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955), the findings support the argument that employees who perceive citizenship pressure are subject to normative social influence, which prompts OCBs. Importantly, we contrast extant research to show that coworker presenteeism can be associated with positive outcomes by identifying citizenship pressure as a key social theoretical mechanism.

Third, we contribute to the presenteeism literature by offering an important and novel insight into the boundary condition of psychological detachment within the context of coworker presenteeism. Research on the moderating role of psychological detachment research largely suggests that employees who are psychologically detached from their organization feel a sense of freedom to enact negative behaviors in that there is little concern for organizational consequences (e.g., Bani-Melhem et al., 2020; Christian & Ellis, 2014; Tepper et al., 2009). The dearth of research on the positive side of psychological detachment shows that psychological detachment can lead employees to actively strengthen their interpersonal relationships (Randel & Ranft, 2007; Tröster et al., 2019). Consistent with this positive view of psychological detachment, we highlight how the positive indirect effect of coworker presenteeism on OCBIs can be strengthened when employees are psychologically detached from their organization. Specifically, the findings suggest that psychologically detached employees are particularly susceptible to conforming to pressure that emanates from coworker presenteeism, as psychologically detached employees are more responsive to proximal social stimuli (Ledgerwood & Callahan, 2012). Identifying this boundary condition highlights the reality that how employees respond to the social context of coworker presenteeism is influenced by psychological characteristics, thereby affecting how these employees act towards others.

Limitations and Avenues for Future Research

Despite the importance of these findings, there are several limitations. To start, our measure of coworker presenteeism is subject to potential memory recall concerns (Demerouti et al., 2009), which we attempted to mitigate with a one-week recall period (Zhang et al., 2011). Furthermore, similar to much of the literature (e.g., Aronsson et al., 2000; Demerouti et al., 2009), our presenteeism measure does not differentiate physical health from mental health, which could potentially mask differences in terms of employee reactions. We also collected data from a diverse set of respondents to enhance the generalizability of the results, but most respondents resided in Western cultural contexts. Future research is recommended to replicate these findings in different cultural contexts (e.g., Eastern cultures), and extend these findings with an integration of cultural variables given that there can be cultural influences on presenteeism (Lu, Cooper, et al., 2013).

Following the recommendation of Conway and Lance (2010), we used self-report data because we were interested in understanding how employee perceptions of their work environment (i.e., coworker presenteeism, citizenship pressure) and their beliefs towards their employment with their organization (i.e., psychological detachment) would influence their behavior (i.e., OCBs). However, this raises potential concerns of common method bias, which we sought to mitigate with several remedies (Podsakoff et al., 2012). For example, temporal separation was fostered with time-separated data; previously validated scales reduced item ambiguity; unrelated constructs with different response options facilitated psychological separation; respondents were instructed to respond honestly to reduce social desirability; and the Hybrid Method Variables Model approach was used to rigorously assess CMB concerns.

Even though research supports the direction of the hypothesized relationships, our research design does not permit causal inferences, but future studies should use research designs that enable for causal inferences. Our data collection strategy also prevented a multi-level exploration of this phenomenon, but this presents a ripe area for future research. Organizational field-based data should be used to investigate the multi-level nature of this social phenomenon with multi-source data (e.g., employees, coworkers) to enhance external validity. In addition, while we investigated social norms at the individual-level (i.e., perceived norms) and not the group-level (i.e., collective norms) (Lapinski & Rimal, 2005), future research should examine the emergence of coworker presenteeism at the group-level followed by individual-level interpretations and reactions.

Future research should further examine alternative interpretations of coworker presenteeism (e.g., role overload, climate for performance, job insecurity, compensation needs), which could underlie the manifestation of specific social norms. To illustrate, we highlight a recent example wherein thousands of employees continued to attend work despite the onset of COVID-19 symptoms due to insufficient sick leave policies (Global News, 2021). Moreover, while empirical research suggests that psychologically detached employees conform to social norms from their proximal social context (Ledgerwood & Callahan, 2012), we did not test for psychological attachment to the workgroup. We recommend that future inquiry simultaneously test the moderating effects of psychological detachment from the organization and psychological attachment to the workgroup to further validate our results. Lastly, we adopted a positive lens to OCBs, but given that there is a dark side to OCBs, we recommend that researchers investigate the possible negative aspects (e.g., job stress, exhaustion, conflict) that could be associated with OCBs within this context (Bolino et al., 2013).

Practical Implications

We highlight the importance of recognizing the social aspect of presenteeism because, as our research reveals, employees do pay attention to acts of coworker presenteeism. Contrary to the prevailing negative view of presenteeism (e.g., Patel et al., 2012), our research highlights a silver lining to coworker presenteeism: employee reactions can be beneficial in that employees enact more OCBs. Notwithstanding this alternative view, we must continue to be mindful that research also points to negative behavioral reactions from coworker presenteeism as well (Luksyte et al., 2015). Therefore, managers must proactively address any possible negative reactions to coworker presenteeism to prevent potentially harmful outcomes. Importantly, we caution against any explicit encouragement of presenteeism in attempt to relish positive behaviors from others in that, so far, we know very little about the widespread implications. For example, we show that OCBs manifest from citizenship pressure (as this arises from coworker presenteeism), however, citizenship pressure has been associated with negative outcomes that could be part of the larger story (Bolino et al., 2010).

We further recommend that managers devote special attention towards retaining employees who could potentially be at risk of leaving the organization. Research has recommended the identification of pre-quitting behaviors to help managers support those who are at risk of leaving the organization (and psychologically detached employees can be at risk of organizational departure, even though they may not actually depart the organization) (Gardner et al., 2018). However, our research suggests that managers should adopt a more nuanced approach to effectively support potential leavers. Interestingly, we show that employees who are psychologically detached from their organization can enact *more* discretionary behaviors towards other employees, which is important for two reasons. First, these discretionary behaviors make it

difficult for managers to identify these potential at-risk employees. Second, managers should be

aware that detached employees still offer value to their team members and their organization.

Therefore, managers should regularly survey employees to gather insights into how employees

are feeling at work coupled with solicited suggestions for improvement (Christian & Ellis, 2014).

Doing so can help managers directly enhance the employee experience by improving the quality

of the manager-employee relationship, which can decrease turnover intentions (Harris et al.,

2014) and empower employees to engage in discretionary behaviors.

Conclusion

To the best of our knowledge, this research is the first to investigate how coworker

presenteeism leads to positive behaviors from others. We underscore the social aspect of

coworker presenteeism by revealing that coworker presenteeism indirectly leads to OCBs from

others through citizenship pressure. Contrasting much of the extant literature, this relationship

strengthens when employees are psychologically detached from the organization, such that these

employees enact *more* discretionary behaviors directed towards others. We hope that this

research inspires further research that deepens our understanding of this social phenomenon and

its social effects given the highly prevalent nature of coworker presenteeism (e.g., Lohaus &

Habermann, 2019).

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Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations

	Mean	Standard Deviation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Age	37.50	9.65							
2. Gender	.54	.51	.02						
3. Actual hours worked	.97	.11	-.06	-.25**					
4. Team size	12.74	19.00	.01	-.13*	.05				
5. Country - UK	.47	.49	.14*	.15*	-.12*	-.03			
6. Country - US	.30	.46	-.05	-.06	.07	.02	-.61**		
7. Coworker presenteeism	1.03	1.82	-.10	-.01	.06	.14*	-.06	.08	
8. Citizenship pressure	4.25	1.32	-.01	.13*	.10	.01	.21*	-.13*	.23**
9. OCBO	2.88	1.25	.02	.04	.131*	.04	-.03	-.04	.12
10. OCBI	4.50	1.29	-.12*	-.05	.17**	.01	-.06	.10	.12
11. Psychological detachment	3.40	2.07	-.14*	.03	-.06	.01	-.02	-.07	.07

Notes. $N = 277$ * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. Values on the diagonal in parentheses are Cronbach's alphas. Gender was coded as: 0 = male, 1 = female. Actual hours worked were coded as: 1 = full-time (i.e., greater than 30 hours) and 0 = part-time (i.e., 30 hours or less).

Table 2

Structural Equation Modelling Results

	Unstandardized Estimates	Bootstrapping BC 95% CI	
		Lower	Upper
Effects of coworker presenteeism to citizenship pressure			
Direct: Coworker presenteeism → citizenship pressure *(H1)*	.19**	.136	.255
Effects of coworker presenteeism to OCBO			
Direct: Citizenship pressure → OCBO	.22**	.122	.317
Indirect: Coworker presenteeism → citizenship pressure → OCBO *(H2a)*	.05**	.021	.072
Effects of coworker presenteeism to OCBI			
Direct: Citizenship pressure → OCBI	.16*	.034	.285
Indirect: Coworker presenteeism → citizenship pressure → OCBI *(H2b)*	.04*	.006	.062
Effect of psychological detachment on OCBO			
Moderation: Citizenship pressure X psychological detachment → OCBO *(H3a)*	.03	-.021	.074
Effect of psychological detachment on OCBI			
Moderation: Citizenship pressure X psychological detachment → OCBI *(H3b)*	.11**	.047	.158

Note. N = 277. Gender, age, actual hours worked, team size, and two dummy variables for country (i.e., UK resident = 1, non-UK resident = 0; US resident = 1, non-US resident = 0) were included in model as control variables. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.
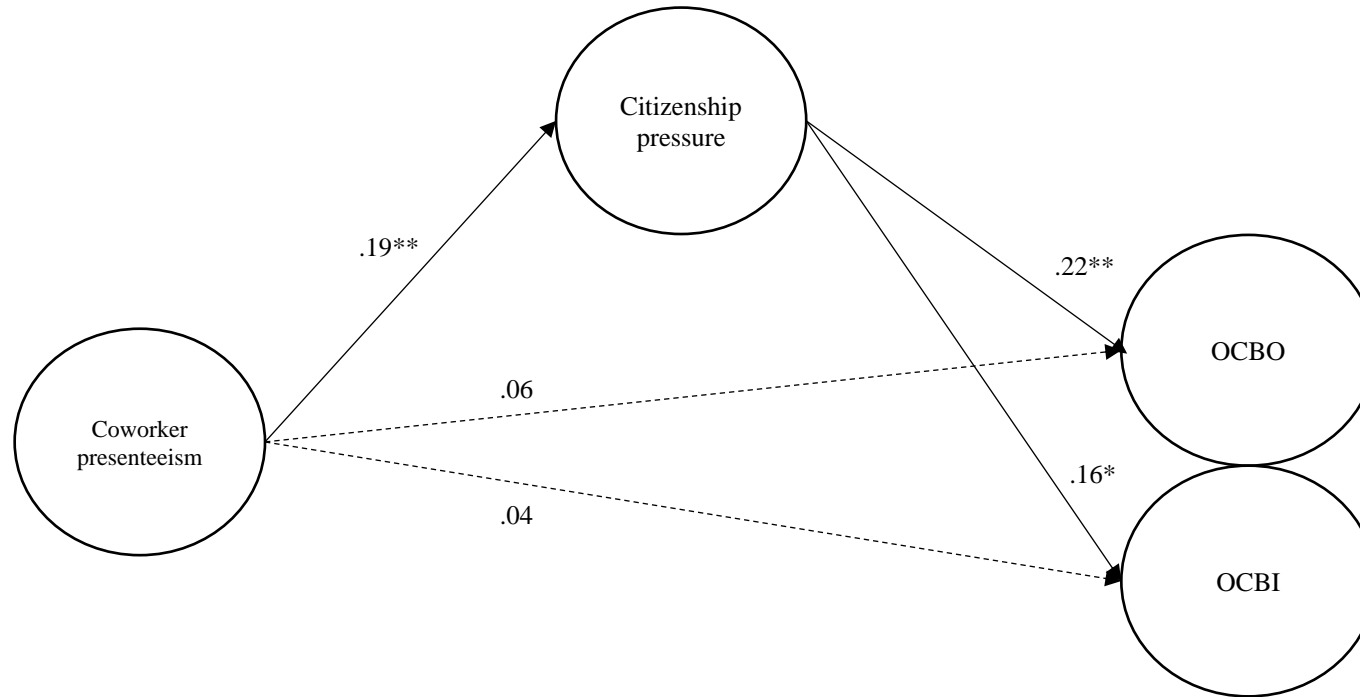
Figure 1

A Moderated Mediation Model of Coworker Presenteeism, Citizenship Pressure,
Psychological Detachment, and OCBs
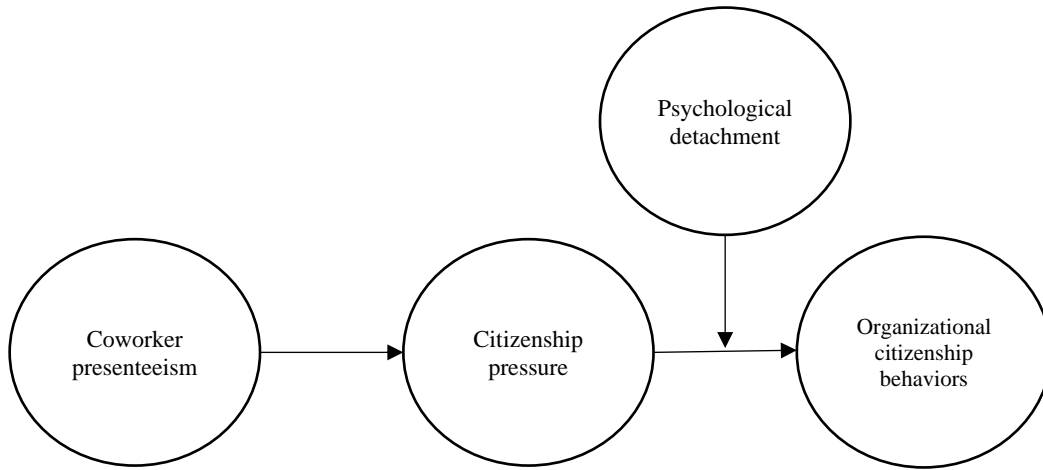
Figure 2

The Direct and Indirect Effects of Coworker Presenteeism on OCBs
via Citizenship Pressure

Note. Unstandardized regression coefficients are shown. Dashed lines indicate insignificant paths. Gender, age, actual hours worked, team size, and country included as control variables. Country coded with two dummy variables (i.e., UK resident = 1, non-UK resident = 0; US resident = 1, non-US resident = 0).
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Figure 3

Psychological Detachment as a Moderator in the Relationship between
Citizenship Pressure and OCBI