

ABSTRACT

Positive Deviance in the Workplace: Expanding the Boundaries of Dissent

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While a strong negative bias towards deviance subsists within society and scholarship, this study provides a theoretical basis and argues for the expansion of deviance as a constructive or positive resource within organizations. The central purpose of the following paper is to integrate positive deviance into the communication discipline as a subset of organizational dissent. For the purposes of this paper, positive deviance is defined as any action exhibited by a member or group of members of an organization that violates or circumvents the stated or implicit will of the encompassing organization, motivated by moral purpose, and lacking any malicious intent toward other members or the organization at large. Towards this end, the present study surveyed 285 working and retired full-time professionals in an effort to measure positive deviance through one of its most basic forms, rule breaking, as well as examine its relationship with both dissent style and personality.

Positive Deviance in the Workplace: Expanding the Boundaries of Dissent

by

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

In late 2011, ABC News and *Forbes* highlighted a recent academic study supporting “what some disgruntled employees have long-suspected: bosses don’t listen” (Cg, 2011; see also, Adams, 2011). The study’s results suggest that individuals with higher levels of power within an organization are less likely to accept advice or criticism (see, Morrison, Rothman & Soll, 2011). Ironically, however, the results of their study also revealed that while “higher power participants had greater confidence in their final judgments, they had lower final overall [judgment] accuracy relative to lower power participants” (p. 11). Unfortunately, this common workplace occurrence often leaves employees frustrated with the status quo yet powerless within their current organizational systems to affect change. In circumstances such as these, the orders of a superior can lead to inefficiency, confusion, or even counter-productivity. If managers and those in power within an organization are disinclined to take the suggestions of lower-level employees into consideration, what recourse is left for employees who are required to carry out their superiors’ orders? In addition, how can employees intervene when a company policy, manager, or behavioral norm might function in a counterproductive or even dangerous manner? This paper provides insight to both of these critical questions by investigating the concept of positive deviance.

Across sectors, cultures, and organizations, conformity is an implicit organizational norm that typically dominates the structure of a company. This norm is particularly persistent in the cases of organizational policies, rules, and procedures that,

once firmly established, are slow to change. As such, success is often attributed to an employee's compliance with these social and organizational norms of behavior which are typically determined by upper-level management (Puffer, 1987). On one hand, conformity and consistency play critical roles in providing structure, channeling institutional change, and expediting and clarifying decision making processes (Zhou, 1993). Conversely, Zhou (1993) contends that "the longer a rule exists in an organization, the more likely it is that the organization gains confidence in that rule" and the more resistant that rule becomes to change (p. 1138). While formal structures have undeniable benefits when implemented on a regular basis, they lack the flexibility to adapt to a dynamic working environment and as a result can have adverse effects under certain circumstances.

Just as traditional policies and rules provide consistency and confidence to employees' daily routines, they can also simultaneously limit the potential of a company or an individual by stifling innovation, creativity, and critical thinking (Puffer, 1987). However, if *positive deviance* is embraced and enacted within organizations, it has the potential to expand the productivity of a company by transforming organizations into adaptable entities with proactive rather than reactive characteristics. Overall, positive deviance is defined as any action exhibited by a member or group of members of an organization that violates or circumvents the stated or implicit will of the encompassing organization, motivated by moral purpose or goodwill, and lacking any malicious intent toward other members or the organization at large.

From this perspective, positive deviance offers a wide range of potential benefits including, but not limited to: organizational functioning (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004,

2003), creativity and innovation (Clifton, 2012; Dreu & West, 2001; Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004), growth and change (Clifton, 2012; Warren, 2006), employee well-being (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2003), means of managing organizational constraint (Morrison, 2006), workplace functionality and efficiency (Bennett & Robinson, 2003; Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004), and higher-level organizational development (Dehler & Welsh, 1998). At its full potential, positive deviance is a decision making process that empowers employees with the freedom to think and act critically in situations where organizational norms of behavior would typically limit or damage the outcome of an action. However, this ideal would only be achievable in circumstances where the organization actively cultivates an environment conducive to positive deviance. As it currently stands, positive deviance more often acts as a subversive form of dissent with which employees express “disagreement or contradictory opinions about organizational practices, policies, and operations” (Kassing, 1998, p. 32). However, most organizations are more likely to discourage deviance and dissent of any kind than to accept and foster an environment engaging in positive deviance (Bennett & Robinson, 2000; Dreu & West, 2001 Morrison, 2006; Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2003; Waldron & Kassing, 2011). Thus, employees may enact positive deviance as a form of dissent in response to their circumstances.

In cases of unmanageable frustration, positive deviance provides an unconventional and often risky avenue for employees to not only express their discontent regarding their circumstances but also to influence their environments in a way that would otherwise not be permitted by the organization. Contrary to popular literature, deviance is not monolithically negative but, rather, has the potential to act as a substantial

constructive or positive force which, if harnessed, can be utilized to promote organizational health, innovation, and productivity.

However, approaching deviance from this perspective presents an array of challenges that must be addressed. Historically, the study of deviant behaviors in for-profit organizations has produced a strong body of literature heavily informed by the guiding assumption that deviance is destructive and counterproductive (e. g., Goffman, 1963; Robinson & Bennett, 1995, 2000). The limited scope which the current studies of deviance provide has raised concerns in the scholarly community about the possible missed opportunities that a broader conceptualization of deviance could offer. The notion of positive deviance, in particular, challenges scholars to expand the current conceptualizations of deviance. One such expansion suggested by Robinson and O’Leary-Kelly (1998) is the inherent nature of deviance to be a communicative action rather than simply an individual level phenomenon. In fact, they describe deviance as “contagious” within a work group context because “as the richness of the group experience increases, members become more likely to match their level of antisocial [deviant] behavior to that of the group” (p. 667).

Adopting and actively applying innovative interpretations of deviance has, at present, an untapped potential within the work environment. For example, Dehler and Welsh (1998) insist that organizations which embrace positive deviant behaviors maintain a higher and more complicated level of thinking and acting. They contend that proactively harnessing the power of positive deviance, rather than uniformly discouraging all deviant behavior, produces an “enhanced effectiveness as organization[s], manager[s] and employee[s] have more accurate perceptions of divergent

thinking and acting and can synthesize these differences productively in problem formulation and resolution to construct more flexible, adaptive structures and processes” (p. 264). By expanding the scope of deviance studies, communication scholars can begin to gain a holistic perspective regarding the potential benefits, challenges, and recommendations to proactively utilizing positive deviance as a naturally occurring organizational resource.

The potential theoretical and practical implications suggested by the early work in positive deviance has sparked interdisciplinary interest in its study and produced innovative approaches and theoretical work surrounding positive deviant behaviors. In particular, management studies, sociology, and psychology are currently investigating the constructive or positive potential of deviance within groups (e. g., Applebaum, Iaconi & Matousek, 2007; Morrison, 2006; Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2003, 2004; Warren, 2003). However, the majority of research performed on the topic of positive deviance is purely theoretical and provides only limited guidance for the practical investigation and study of positive deviance in the workplace (c. f. Morrison, 2006; Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004). Thus, empirical inquiry of workplace deviance is needed to further advance positive deviance studies.

Communication scholarship, with a few exceptions (i.e. organizational dissent, resistance, and whistleblowing), has remained silent on the concept of positive deviance. Considering that social laboring theorists define deviance as a socially constructed phenomenon (Goffman, 1963; Robinson & O’Leary-Kelly, 1998; Warren, 2003), communication scholars are uniquely suited to investigate the communicative processes through which deviant behaviors are established, practiced, and reinforced within human

interaction. In addition to adding new insight to the current interdisciplinary studies of deviance, positive deviance studies have expansive possibilities within the communication literature. For example, positive deviance may provide an alternative avenue for employees to manage their dissatisfaction when traditional forms of organizational voice are limited or neglected; further, it may even offer an alternative route to influencing necessary organizational change (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2003, 2004).

This current work attempts to integrate positive deviance into the communication discipline by conceptualizing and empirically examining it as a subset of organizational dissent. Toward this end, the remainder of this paper proceeds as follows. First, the theoretical framework for placing positive deviance studies within the communication literature is discussed by presenting the potential relationship between organizational dissent, employee voice, and positive deviance. This will be accomplished by positioning voice and positive deviance as parallel extensions of dissent with voice and positive deviance sharing similar roots and causes but diverging through their means of construction and expression. After doing so, this paper provides an account of a research initiative which investigated two environmental factors, risk and reward, under differing levels of intensity as well as two internal factors, personality and dissent style, and their relationship to positively deviant behaviors. Next, the methods for the current study are outlined, and the results of this inquiry are presented and discussed. Finally, this paper underscores the scholarly and practical implications of this research and outlines several directions for future studies in positive deviance.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

As discussed previously, the first goal of this paper is to advance a theoretical grounding for positive deviance within the communication literature by positioning it as a subset of dissent related to, but distinct from, employee voice. This will be accomplished in three primary sections. The first section will summarize the key characteristics and definitions of both employee voice and dissent as they are currently developed in the communication literature. The second section will provide an inclusive summary of the historical and contemporary conceptualizations of deviance as well as the factors which potentially influence its use. Finally, this chapter will describe the hypotheses and research questions to be investigated throughout the subsequent research project.

Organizational Voice and Dissent

Characteristics of Voice as a Subset of Dissent

The first step in developing a theoretical grounding of positive deviance as a subset of dissent requires a thorough exploration of employee voice and dissent as they are described within the current literature. Employee voice has many functions within organizations, but in one narrow sense, it allows individuals the opportunity to express dissatisfaction about their circumstances. As a result, voice has been shown to benefit both organizations and their employees. Such benefits include, but are not limited to: employee satisfaction (Kassing, 1998, 2011; Garner & Garner, 2010), facilitating organizational change (Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008; Van Dyne, Ang & Botero, 2003),

and early detection and innovative solutions to potential problems (Botero & Van Dyne, 2009; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008; Van Dyne, Ang & Botero, 2003). While some types of voice such as agreement, supportiveness, and suggestion-making (Kassing, 1998) are considered non-confrontational forms of dissent, many forms of dissent are often defined as an “assertive nonconformance that often causes disruptive alterations to an organizational status quo” which is intentionally stifled (Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008, p. 1189).

When located under dissent, employee voice is primarily characterized by verbal or written forms of expression. In other words, expression acts as the means through which dissatisfaction becomes known to a group. Kassing (2011) provides two possible methods for employees to express voice. He states, “Voice can refer to formal procedures or arrangements that allow for employees to be involved in policy- or decision-making, or it can refer to the informal efforts by employees to have some say in their workplaces” (p. 44; see also, Van Dyne, Ang & Botero, 2003). Unfortunately, formal forms of employee voice (i.e., surveys, unions, representatives, and committees) are often viewed by employees with distrust and skepticism or “as symbolic rather than functional” (Kassing, 2011, p. 44; see also, Garner, 2012; Waldron & Kassing, 2011). In this case of no confidence, one provocative question remains: How do employees express and manage their dissatisfaction outside of formal channels? In order to determine the answer to this question, a careful examination of both the limitations and the subsequent gaps caused by the current definitions in the literature is necessary.

At first glance, the current definitions of voice reside in what appears to be a theoretically oppositional stance to deviance. Within the literature, voice represents a

communicative, prosocial, and constructive behavior firmly rooted in the communication discipline. Initially presented by Hirschman (1970) as a response to employee dissatisfaction, voice has drastically expanded in both its implementation as well as the actions associated with its expressions (Botero & Van Dyne, 2009; Kassing, 2011; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008; Van Dyne, Ang & Botero, 2003). Voice behaviors, as defined by Botero and Van Dyne (2009), represent the “employee expression of constructive ideas, information, and opinions about change in organizations” (p. 85, see also, Van Dyne, Ang & Botero, 2003). Currently, Kassing’s (2011) definition of informal voice includes speaking up by means of “championing ideas, providing constructive feedback, engaging with management in meaningful ways, taking charge, issues of selling, and making constructive suggestions” (p. 44). While Kassing’s and others’ definitions credit informal voice with behavioral qualities, this explanation limits the power of voice as a singularly written or verbal form of expression. Overall, traditional definitions clearly limit voice in two primary ways and consequently create issues that may be reconciled by considering positive deviance as a distinct form of dissent.

First, on a theoretical level, this definition limits the forms of expression of dissatisfaction. For example, most definitions of voice highlight or emphasize its vocal or written characteristics. However, these simplistic definitions are inherently problematic because they lack clear resolution (Van Dyne, Ang & Botero, 2003). This lack of resolution creates one particular critical problem that must be addressed. By limiting voice to a one-way expression of dissatisfaction, there is no obligation on behalf of the receiver to enact any change or even to accept criticism. Employee distrust of

traditional methods for expressing voice (e.g., suggestion boxes, questionnaires) alludes to this dynamic. Thus, employees must find alternative ways to ensure that some action will be taken to improve their circumstances or resolve a problem. Without larger organizational support, employees may be compelled to utilize positive deviance in secrecy to find resolution to their dissatisfaction. In an effort to shield oneself from an organization's punishment, these actions often take place in the context of small groups (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004). As a result, these social collectives use consensus as a guide to create and sanction behaviors that are deviant at the organizational level but pro-social within the context of that group. As communication scholars have a specialized understanding of the ability of groups to socially co-construct cultures, norms, and reality, it is essential to measure positive deviance from a communication perspective.

Second, the previous definitions of voice also limit the practical application of voice by assuming that communication is singularly directed upwards from employees to management. As it currently stands, there is a limited understanding of how employees manage and express dissent in a lateral direction. However, positive deviance provides one possible avenue to expand and explore our current understanding of the expression of lateral dissent. If voice is to be limited to the expression of dissent between organizational members of different statuses, then perhaps positive deviance may supplement the concept of voice by approaching dissent from the perspective of same-status organizational members expressing and managing their dissatisfaction as a group.

Characteristics of Dissent

Before expounding upon the relationship between voice, dissent, and positive deviance, the muddled definitions of dissent require some clarification. One widely

accepted definition by Kassing (1998) describes organizational dissent as, “expressing disagreement or contradictory opinions about organizational practices, policies, and operations” (p. 32; see also, Waldron & Kassing, 2011). Kassing’s two pronged definition clearly divides the process of organizational dissent first by “feeling apart from one’s organization” and second by “expressing disagreement or contradictory opinions” (Kassing, 1998, p. 183). Waldron and Kassing (2011) also describe dissent as a “communicative response to workplace conditions, practices, and policies that [employees] find dissatisfying” (p. 165). However, he describes two primary categories of dissent, articulated and latent. Articulated dissent is described as “expressing dissent directly and openly to management, supervisors, and corporate officers” (Kassing, 1998, p. 192). On the other hand, latent dissent “occurs when employees desire to voice their opinions but perceive that they lack sufficient avenues for expressing dissent. Consequently, they become frustrated and resort to expressing dissent aggressively to ineffectual audiences within organizations or collectively to other frustrated employees” (Kassing, 2000, p. 61). According to Kassing’s definitions, both voice and positive deviance may fall within the category of latent dissent, but each concept satisfies Kassing’s requirements for dissent in different ways.

Under the umbrella of dissent, voice functions as a subset of dissent including verbal or written forms of expression which move vertically through the organization; whereas positive deviance acts as a multi-directional expression of dissent but primarily moves in a horizontal direction. While both voice and positive deviance can be expressed in multiple directions, they differ in their dominant direction of expression. Employee voice often anticipated to be a vertical form of expression (e.g., surveys,

questionnaires, suggestion boxes, and representatives) communicated between management and lower-status employees (Botero & Van Dyne, 2009; Kassing, 2011). In these cases, change is considered to be an exchange between upper and lower level employees within the organizations rather than between groups of same-status employees. On the other hand, lateral dissent, while discussed far less frequently within the literature, represents the expression of dissent among co-workers when employees doubt the receptiveness of management to dissent messages (Waldron & Kassing, 2011). Based on this understanding of dissent, it can be assumed that positive deviance, like voice, begins with the verbal expression of dissent but at the lateral rather than vertical level. It then steadily progresses from words into behaviors as either routines or one-time occurrences. At this point, positive deviance becomes a behavioral form of dissent rather than a purely verbal or written expression. Garner (2012) presents organizational dissent as a purely “verbal subset of the broader understanding of employee resistance” (p. 226; Kassing, 1998). Under Garner’s (2012) definition, dissent can be expressed to “supervisors, coworkers, and even friends and family members outside of the organization” (p. 226; Kassing, 1997). However, by expanding employee dissent beyond the confines of verbal or written expression positive deviance functions as the natural progression of lateral dissent into behavioral norms. This study will begin to provide a gateway to the unexplored areas of the extant dissent and resistance literature (Garner, 2009; 2012; Kassing, 1998).

Currently, the majority of dissent literature describes boat-rocking, whistleblowing, loyalty, neglect, and exit as the extreme forms of dissent (Hirschman, 1970; Kassing, 2011, 1998). However, these specific behaviors could also be placed

under the category of positive deviance. For instance, Warren (2003) has suggested that whistleblowing, in particular, acts as a positively deviant behavior because it may function against the interests of a particular industry but serve the interests of an alternate group. Within his article, Warren describes an instance of whistleblowing in the pharmaceutical industry that was necessary because a dangerous drug would have been placed on the market. In this case, “individuals who deviate from norms of silence by voicing concerns may not only rescue an organization from failure but also save human lives” (Warren, 2003, p. 622). Under these circumstances, whistleblowing appears to function against organizational interests yet acts prosocially for a different group subsequently placing this particular instance of whistleblowing under the category of positive deviance. In the case of a company’s actions having large scale moral repercussions, whistleblowing provides a necessary avenue to implement change. However, under smaller-scale instances of improper behavior whistleblowing would be considered an overreaction and might even be ignored. In these cases, an alternative form of dissent might be implemented.

According to the current literature, there is little recourse for employees, other than exit, silence, loyalty, or neglect when they face unsatisfactory conditions that do not violate serious moral or cultural norms. Additionally, in companies implementing strong levels of control over employees, dissenters often face significant risks when expressing their dissatisfaction or even simple contradictory opinions. As a result, they must weigh the potential risks and rewards involved in the process of dissent expression. Waldron and Kassing (2011) suggest that “by attending to these risk factors, employees decide on the audience for dissent messages and the communication strategies they will use” (p.

173). Unfortunately, many work environments enforce an extreme version of conformity to organizational norms that reward compliance but punish dissent of any kind (Dreu & West, 2001; Puffer, 1987).

If positive deviance is reconceptualized for scholarly understanding as a form of dissent, it provides both theoretical and practical benefits. On a theoretical level, positive deviance provides a more precise category for labeling unsanctioned actions performed by employees with the intent of both expressing dissatisfaction and improving the circumstance of employees. While positive deviance has not yet been conceptualized as an alternative form of expressing dissent, it has the potential to fulfill Kassing (2011) and Garner's (2009) call for scholars to expand the study of dissent to a wider organizational context. Likewise, scholars outside of the communication discipline are insisting on broadening the understandings and investigations of deviance studies (Bennett & Robinson, 2003; Morrison, 2006; Robinson & O'Leary-Kelly, 1998; Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2003, 2004; Warren, 2003). In response to this gap within multiple literatures, positive deviance acts as a strong supplement to both current dissent and voice studies.

On a practical level, positive deviance broadens the recourses available to employees who are unable to change their circumstances through the category of employee voice. For instance, when employees feel as though expressing dissent through official channels has failed, they may begin to initiate their changes locally, within small groups or branches of the organization, without official organizational approval. If these changes are not brought to the attention of management, the employee's action may go unnoticed and unpunished by management and could potentially continue indefinitely. If

so, the individual becomes the change agent rather than a superior. As such, employees reap the benefits of the change in spite of the inaction on the part of the management. Additionally, because positive deviance is a group action, it provides an element of safety and shields employees from the possible repercussions that the individual would normally face from the organization if they acted alone.

Positive Deviance

Visualizing Positive Deviance as Dissent

Because traditional studies of voice have limited it to verbal or written forms of expression, a multitude of dissent behaviors exist outside of the boundaries of employee voice. As such, an expansion of both the unaddressed forms and flow of expressed dissent are necessary. For instance, Hirschman (1970) suggests that employees are limited to four ways of dealing with workplace frustration: voice, neglect, loyalty, or exit. However, research into deviant behaviors suggests that deviance is another alternative to workplace frustration (Applebaum, Iaconi & Matousek, 2007; Robinson & Bennett, 2000). This study intends to augment the voice literature by pairing it with positive organizational deviance. In doing so, positive deviance occurs as an alternative means of expressing dissatisfaction within the work environment that progresses from a lateral form of dissent into behavioral norms shared by a reference group. Whereas voice represents the means by which employees communicate upset in hopes of change, positive deviance is the collective action of a group enacting organizationally unsanctioned solutions to dissatisfaction in their daily routines.

At the point at which verbal expressions of dissent are collaboratively transformed into action positive deviance behaviors begin to emerge. This inherently places employee voice and positive deviance at parallel positions beneath the broader category of organizational dissent (see Figure A.1). Within this frame, employee voice is bounded by verbal or written forms of dissent that do not violate significant organizational norms (i.e., policies and procedures) (Kassing, 2011). On the other hand, positive deviance provides a wider array of alternative actions for employees wishing to improve their circumstances. In effect, positive deviance allows for greater amounts of employee control over their circumstances which, while requiring a far greater level of risk in environments practicing high organizational control, is perceived as significantly more productive than merely voicing concerns and frustrations through traditional means.

While these two branches of dissent share the motivation of dissatisfaction and the goal of change, each uses different tactics to achieve its end. Hence, these concepts are not mutually exclusive. In fact, one form of dissent could potentially facilitate another. For instance, Gossett and Kilker (2006) provide an example of a counterinstitutional website where employees anonymously voice their dissatisfaction regarding their work environment and its management. While the comments posted are accurately labeled as employee voice, the creation of the website itself is an example of employees collaboratively enacting positive deviance. In this case, the deviant action functions to enable employees to express voice while simultaneously safeguarding themselves against any reprisals from their organization. This safety net becomes crucial when considering the historical stigma associated with the concept of deviance or

difference. However, the preconceptions held by scholars that have historically relegated deviance to a purely negative or destructive force are slowly evolving and expanding.

Historical and Contemporary Views of Deviance

Within society, the term deviance conjures strong images of undesirable actions with destructive consequences. It often evokes thoughts of the subversive and even dangerous activities or individuals such as: drug addicts, criminals, prostitutes, juvenile delinquents, and other marginalized groups (e. g., Bryant, 2012; Dehler & Welsh, 1998; Goffman, 1963; Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004). Goffman (1963) describes deviant behaviors as the “denial of social order” often accompanied by a socially assigned “stigma” (p. 144). Unfortunately, this culturally entrenched, negative perception of the term deviance permeates the scholarly literature to date. As a result, there is little disparity between early definitions of deviant behavior. These definitions predominantly conceptualize deviance as behaviors situated at the extreme edges of societal norms with destructive or harmful consequences. Only on rare occasions has deviance been attributed with more moderated behaviors (e. g., Bennett & Robinson, 2000; Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2003, 2004), and only recently have deviant behaviors been credited with constructive or prosocial capabilities (Bennett & Robinson, 2000; Clifton, 2011, 2012; Morrison, 2006; Warren, 2003). The deeply engrained stigma attached to deviance presents a unique set of challenges to scholars investigating the concept of positive deviance within any social context.

The first challenge facing scholars investigating positive deviance is the culturally engrained stigma attached to the term deviance. In particular, deviance evokes a severe reaction within organizational contexts because of the high value placed on conformity

and compliance (Bennett & Robinson, 2000; Bryant, 2012; Robinson & Bennett, 1995; Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004). For example, Spreitzer and Sonenshein (2003) acknowledge the intuitively oxymoronic nature of *positive deviance*. This stigma, on the whole, taints the perceptions that organizations have towards both deviance and dissent which ultimately encourages organizations to silence or even punish individuals who express formal forms of dissent (Waldron & Kassing, 2011). In spite of this, research indicates that employees regularly engage in deviant behaviors (e. g., Bennett & Robinson, 2000; Morrison, 2006; Robinson & Bennett, 1995; Robinson & O’Leary-Kelly, 1998; Singhal, 2010; Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2003; 2004), and these behaviors are motivated by “reactions to perceived injustice, dissatisfaction, role modeling, and thrill-seeking” (Robinson & Bennett, 2000, p. 349). As a result of these biases, scholars will face many difficulties if they wish to break the culturally engrained misperceptions surrounding deviance.

Overcoming the culturally engrained stigma associated with deviance may begin with conceptualizing positive and negative deviance as existing along a continuum (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004). Extreme forms of negative organizational deviant behaviors are demarcated by actions including embezzlement or theft (Bennett & Robinson, 2000; Greenberg, 1990, 1993; Hollinger & Clark, 1982; Robinson & Bennett, 1995; Robinson & O’Leary-Kelly, 1998; Warren, 2003), sabotage (Robinson & O’Leary-Kelly, 1998), and sexual harassment (Robinson & Bennett, 1995) among others. Bennett and Robinson (2000) identified twelve categories of moderated organizational deviant behaviors which include: unauthorized use of company property, daydreaming at work, falsified receipts from business expenses, additional or extended breaks, tardiness,

littering in the work area, neglect of managerial instructions, intentionally taking more time to complete a task, unauthorized discussion of confidential information, illegal drug or alcohol use on the job, minimal effort in daily activities, and extended work for the purpose of overtime. While Bennett and Robinson (2000) seem to assume that all of these actions are somewhat destructive in nature, this assumption inherently neglects the possibility and influence of socially constructed norms that are unique to specific groups within specific contexts.

By judging behaviors from multiple perspectives, it becomes possible to see how deviance can promote employee wellbeing. For example, taking more time to complete a task than is necessary, on an organizational level, appears to be counterproductive because it encourages inefficiency and expends unnecessary resources. However, for employees, this action may function as a buffer between unrealistic managerial expectations and employees' inability to change any dissatisfactory circumstances through official channels. In this case, unnecessarily extending a project is meant to ensure that management does not assign a series of unattainable or overly stress-inducing deadlines that workers cannot maintain over an extended period of time (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). Employees may view this form of organizational deviance as a positive method to reduce the amount of employee burnout that they may have experienced in the past. In this capacity, it is acting on an organizational level as counterproductive, but for employees, it functions to alleviate stress and increase employee well-being. As such, the action simultaneously acts prosocially and as an organizationally deviant behavior.

A second challenge facing scholars wishing to investigate positive deviance lies in unifying a multitude of fragmented and diverse definitions and characteristics of

positive deviance. Presently, conceptualizations of organizational deviance are inconsistent within the extant literature. For example, Warren (2003) broadly describes deviance in terms of “requir[ing] a departure from norms whereby employees must resist social pressure to conform” (p. 622). On the other hand, Robinson and Bennett (1995) provide a narrowed definition by describing deviance as a “voluntary behavior that violates significant organizational norms and in so doing threatens the well-being of an organization, its members, or both” (p. 556; see also, Dehler & Welsh, 1998; Lawrence & Robinson, 2007). If viewing deviance as a purely negative construct, Robinson and Bennett provide clear guidelines for judging deviant behavior. However, from a positive perspective, their definition confines deviance to an “individual-level phenomena” and restricts its application (Robinson & O’Leary-Kelly, 1998, p. 568). Spreitzer and Sonenshein’s (2003) definition of positive deviance was adapted for the purpose of this study. They initially describe positive deviance as an “intentional behaviors that depart from the norms of a referent group in honorable ways” (p. 209). This definition provides three criteria for labeling deviant behaviors as positive. Behaviors must be intentional, deviate from the values of at least one reference group while simultaneously aligning with another, and the behavior must be judged as “virtuous” from the perspective of the appropriate reference group (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2003).

Just as competing definitions of deviance have evolved over the last two decades, approaches and applications of deviance have slowly broadened in scope as well (e. g., Dehler & Welsh, 1998; Robinson & Bennett, 2003; Robinson & O’Leary-Kelly, 1998; Warren, 2003). In particular, Morrison (2006) questions the practicality of employees rigidly following all company policies even when the organization or stakeholder will

suffer because of it. While company policies play a critical role in enabling the normal and consistent operations of an organization, they may be rigid, slow to change, and, when followed too stringently, counterproductive or even destructive (Appelbaum, Iaconi, & Matousek, 2007; Applbaum & Anatol, 1979). Warren (2006) states “every day, employees face choices that pit obedience to formal organizational rules against responsiveness, innovation, customer service, or compassion” (p. 6). In these instances, organizational norms are acting outside of the context or situation in which they were intended to operate.

When management demands conformity and punishes any members who do not follow all organizational policies and procedures without consideration given to the circumstances, they discourage any alternative and, potentially, more efficient ways of accomplishing tasks. This leaves workers little recourse but to either rigidly follow the rules or to conceal any rule breaking behaviors from upper-level employees. However, this often leads to members engaging in deviant behaviors that from a traditional management perspective have categorized rule breaking or deviant behaviors as “noncompliance” (Puffer, 1987), “destructive” (Warren, 2003), “aggressive work behavior” (Kelly, Griffin & Glew, 1996), and “organizational misbehavior” (Vardi & Weiner, 1996). These negative connotations reflect a widely accepted perspective regarding the counterproductive nature of deviant or rule breaking behaviors within traditional organizational structures.

As demonstrated in Morrison’s (2006) study, rule breaking behaviors may be the simplest starting point for classifying and measuring positive deviance. To this end, the

present study will explore any similarities between the positively deviant behavior of rule breaking and dissent with the following research question:

RQ₁: What types of dissent have a significant relationship to rule positive deviance?

Positive Deviance as Socially Constructed

Even as Warren (2003) discusses the tendency of scholarship to highlight negative aspects of deviance, she suggests an alternative approach that provides a critical foundation for this study. While few, some scholars have explored the constructive potential of deviance (e. g., Appelbaum, Iaconi & Matousek, 2007; Dehler & Welsh, 1998; Morrison, 2006; Raelin, 1984; Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2003; Warren, 2003). Initially suggested by Hanke and Saxberg (1985), positive organizational deviance begins with an acceptance of “critical or pivotal values and goals of the organization” (Dehler & Welsh, 1998, p. 249). However, it also implies a selective conformity to the means through which those accepted goals are achieved. Raelin (1994) uses the terms “adaptive” and “deviant” interchangeably suggesting the only difference between the two terms “is the acquisition of a label” (p. 421). From this perspective, no behavior is inherently deviant. Rather, a behavior is labeled as deviant based upon the norms of a group. Warren (2003) also advocates for a similar understanding of deviance by suggesting that behaviors are only assigned the label of deviant when actions contradict the norms of a specific reference group. These reference groups act as a measurement by which one group assesses appropriate behavior, making deviance “a product of perception rather than behavior” (Warren 2003, p. 623; Raelin, 1994; Goffman, 1963). Put differently, actions that may be characterized as deviant by one reference group may

be received as prosocial by another group. This inherently suggests “deviance at one social level (e.g., organizational deviance) may also constitute conformity at another social level” (Warren, 2003, p. 624). In order to classify the nature of a deviant behavior, identifying the appropriate reference group is crucial.

Spreitzer and Sonenshein (2003) suggest three types of reference groups within organizations which deviant behaviors can be measured against: unit, organizational, and business norms (p. 210). While these groups can be identified in different ways, for the purpose of this study the unit level represents subsets of an organization comprised of same-status employees and their socially negotiated normative behaviors; whereas the organizational level describes a broader context of expectations and norms which are established and monitored by the upper-management of an organization. Focusing on the unit level of positive deviance allows for the exploration of how groups negotiate what they consider to be appropriate positive deviant behaviors and, additionally, how individual attitudes toward deviant behaviors are influenced by social interaction.

Reference groups are of particular importance within positive deviance studies because they socially construct and transmit meaning to members of the same group (Robinson & O’Leary-Kelly, 1998). If the messages which they transmit to other members are oppositional to organizational level norms, these messages are of a deviant nature. After establishing that individuals may label actions differently based upon their perspective or unit level, investigations exploring both the social and personal factors which may influence an individual’s choice to engage in organizationally deviant behaviors may begin.

External and Internal Indicators of Deviance

Throughout the deviance literature, researchers have suggested several environmental and personal factors which appear to increase the likelihood that individuals will engage in deviant behaviors. First, job autonomy is perhaps one of the most common external factors discussed in the literature. In essence, research suggests that greater levels of autonomy contribute to both positive and negative forms of deviance (Morrison, 2006; Warren, 2003). Second, understanding deviance as a continuum of behaviors (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004), the severity or degree to which an action is perceived as deviant by an individual also acts as an external influence on an individual's choice to engage in positively deviant behaviors (Bennett & Robinson, 2000; Robinson & Bennett, 1997; Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2003, 2004). For instance, borrowing a pen from work may be perceived as less severe than falsifying quarterly reports. Consequently, an individual is more likely to perform what they consider to be minor deviant actions because they perceive it as a negligible violation of organizational norms. Actions that deviate from the larger norms of a group but remain within a certain level of tolerance are known as *tolerable deviance* because the "welfare of a community is still maintained" (Clifton, 2012, p. 25). However, no research has yet assessed the link between tolerable deviance and positive deviance, if they are interconnected or interdependent.

Closely linked to autonomy, the third environmental factor, risk, is described as the likelihood that an individual will be caught and punished for actions which deviate from organization-level expectations. As discussed previously, organizations often

punish those who fail to follow organizational norms (Bennett & Robinson, 2000; Morrison, 2006; Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2003; Waldron & Kassing, 2011).

Consequently, when employees engage in positive deviance they are at risk of being punished by the organization. These punishments can range from the proverbial slap on the wrist to demotions or even lay-offs. As a result, the severity of the punishment is likely to influence an individual's choice. Morrison's (2006) study on prosocial rule breaking confirmed that individuals who have a higher tolerance of risk are more likely to engage in rule breaking behaviors. However, most individuals, when faced with risk-related decision making, are "markedly risk averse" and according to the law of aversion "people are more sensitive to the possibility of losing object or money than they are to the possibility of gaining the same objects" (Tom, Fox, Trepel, & Poldrack, 2007).

Subsequently, it is important to understand how differing levels of risk as well as the severity of an expected punishment influence an employee's level of tolerance for risk in comparison for their level of expected reward. As such, this study investigated the following hypotheses in risk-related positive deviance:

- H₁: Lower levels of risk are associated with higher levels of positive deviance.
- H₂: Higher levels of risk are associated with lower levels of positive deviance.

The second environmental factor which was investigated measured the tendency of an individual to engage in positive deviance under escalating levels of potential reward. Because altruism has been shown to influence an individual's choice to engage in positive deviant behaviors (Morrison, 2006; Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2003; Quinn & Quinn, 2002), this study also argued that divergent levels of potential reward will influence an individual's choice to engage in positive deviance. In order to simulate an accurate portrayal of a work environment, it was necessary to include a small, but

standardized, possibility of risk within each of the reward scenarios used in the study. If all elements of risk were controlled out of the scenarios, no competition between the two choices would exist (see, Ernst et al., 2004). For the high risk scenario, the inclusion of a minimal level of risk was anticipated to have a nominal impact because studies in neuroscience have shown that situations with “higher reward [were] always associated with higher-risk” (Ernst, et al., 2004, p. 1594). As a result, participants were more likely to accept the high levels of risk because of the possible high returns. For this reason, the following hypothesis was investigated:

H₃: The potential for a high level of reward will increase the likelihood that an individual will engage in a deviant action.

Conversely, the results of Ernest’s (2004) study in regards to reward motivated decision making revealed that low-reward situations paired with low levels of risk “were the preferred (most frequently chosen) option” (p. 1594). If this concept is transferred to positive deviance, it may indicate that individuals who feel as though they are risking little to gain small victories may also be likely to engage in positive deviance under low-reward conditions. Based on this premise, the following hypothesis is advanced:

H₄: The potential for a lower level of reward will increase the likelihood that an individual will engage in a deviant action.

However, the choice to engage in deviant behaviors is not only a reflection of environmental factors but is equally influenced by internal factors that are unique to each individual. Personality plays a critical role to the exploration of positive deviance studies because different individuals function differently under different levels of supervision. As a result, some employees may be more suited to work in environments that promote conformity and consistency while others may thrive in work environments that cultivate

diversity and ingenuity. Understanding the connection between positive deviance and personality will help organizations make this determination.

Several studies have attempted to find a connection between personality characteristics and participation in deviance. Spritzer and Sonenshein (2003) suggest that there are five facilitators which may “contribute to an individual’s willingness and ability to engage in positive deviance” (p. 211). These factors include: sense of meaning, focus on the other or altruism, self-determination, personal efficacy, and courage (Spritzer & Sonenshein, 2003). However, these five factors are purely theoretical in nature with no specific empirical research providing support. Morrison (2006) also suggested that certain personality traits, specifically proactive personality, would influence an individual’s choice to participate in positive deviance. Unfortunately, the results of her study in respect to this personality trait were inconclusive. As such, this study will expand on her assumption regarding the link between personality and positive deviance by broadening the inquiry and asking the following research question:

RQ₂: What personality traits increase or decrease the likelihood that an individual will engage in positive deviance?

While Spritzer and Sonenshein’s (2003) five facilitators may be investigated in future, the present study will begin with a generalized approach to the influence of personality beginning with Saucier’s (1994) Big-five personality traits. These traits include five primary categories that will be explored: agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, extraversion, and openness to experience. Personality traits, according to Gardner et al. (2012), provide a relatively stable and consistent baseline for predicting an individual’s typical “behavior, choices, and decision making” processes (p. 588).

Increasing the current understandings of the link between personality and positive

deviance will allow scholars and practitioner's to more effectively anticipate which individuals will react positively to an environment which invites positive deviance as opposed to those individuals who may function more effectively under traditional circumstances which promote organizational conformity.

At its core, this study will approach positive deviance within the "social context of work groups" or unit levels as suggested by Robinson and O'Leary-Kelly (1998, p. 658). However, due to a lack of a well-developed measure for positive deviance, it will be an expansion of Morrison's (2006) work which discovered three categories of prosocial rule breaking behaviors. After a series of interviews with MBA graduates, Morrison (2006) identified these broad categories or motivations for prosocial rule breaking as: efficiency, desire to aid a co-worker, and customer service. Within her study, all but three of the forty respondents were able to recall a time when either the participant or their co-workers participated in a rule breaking behavior. Additionally 60% of rule-breaking instances were judged as prosocial rather than self-motivated. The results of Morrison's (2006) study heavily influenced the direction of the current research. This paper suggests that prosocial rule breaking represents a minor subsection under the broader category of positive deviance but offers a definitive starting point for investigating positive deviance.

CHAPTER THREE

Methods

Design

The following research was performed as a two-pronged study conducted within one online survey using SurveyMonkey. For the purpose of this project, surveys were collected electronically over the course of two weeks through a networking sample method. Participants were recruited by students from basic undergraduate communication courses. These students received extra credit for recruiting up to two qualified participants. The survey was completed anonymously and only required between 15-30 minutes of the participant's time.

Participants

Participants included individuals who had at least one year of full-time working experience in any organization. This level of experience was selected because it ensured that individuals would have had sufficient time to become a full member of their organization. As a result, they would most likely be assimilated into the employee community having social ties to a group. The final sample consisted of 288 individuals with 56.7% of participants between the ages of 45-54 ($M=51$, $SD=1.16$). Among these, 76.5% of participants classified their primary working history within the for-profit industry, and 75.1% of participants had a Bachelor's degree or higher.

Both studies were measured using a one-tailed hypothesis with an alpha of .05. Since the current literature does not provide a validated positive deviance scale,

Morrison's (2006) six question Pro-social Rule Breaking scale measured positive deviance under the influence of risk and reward ($\alpha=.87$). Morrison's scale was used in conjunction with a series of scenarios adapted from his original study. In addition to the Pro-social Rule Breaking measure, the internal variables were measured using Kassing's (2000) Revised Organizational Dissent scale and Saucier's (1994) Big-Five Mini-marker scale. A complete list of scenarios and the scales used for this study are provided in Appendix B.

Dependent Variables

Study A: Influence of Risk

Study A measured the impact that increasing levels at which risk for personal punishment would influence an individual to participate or refrain from engaging in positively deviant behaviors. This risk was simulated through two criteria: past experience of previous employees who have engaged in similar rule breaking behaviors and varying degrees of anticipated severity of punishment. These two factors were presented at three levels: low, medium, and high (See Appendix B). Each participant received only one of the variable scenarios assigned at random. However, the final element of each risk variable scenario was a potential group reward which remained consistent across all three levels of intensity. This reward was a necessary element as the theoretical basis of positive deviance is the potential that any action has to benefit a group. As discussed previously, organizations typically discourage deviance through punishment. If this is so, it is reasonable to anticipate that the results of study A were

influenced by an individual's personal and third party observations of how an organization has treated individuals who have engaged in deviant behavior in the past.

Study B: Influence of Reward

Study B investigated the relationship between potential reward and positive deviance as proposed in H₃ and H₄. Reward was conceptualized through two criteria: the department's need for additional sales to maintain company expectations and increasing the branch's status within the company. As in study A, these criteria were also measured at three levels: low, medium, and high. Each participant received only one of the variable scenarios assigned at random. Though the reward scenarios specified punishment but merely alluded to its possibility, the risk was uniformly minimalized across all three levels by suggesting that ignoring or overlooking similar policies was a regular occurrence among coworkers. This was necessary, to offset the probable influence that placing risk prior to reward may have on the results.

Independent Variables

Dissent

Currently, scholars have yet to investigate the relationship between positive deviance and dissent styles. As such, in response to RQ₁, participants completed Kassing's (2000) Revised Organizational Dissent Scale which measures two particular categories of dissent, articulated ($\alpha=.83$) and latent ($\alpha=.87$). While the prosocial rule breaking scale only represents one sub-category of positive deviance, confirming the relationship between the two elements is a necessary step to incorporating positive deviance into the dissent literature.

Influence of Personality

While previous studies have investigated specific personality traits and their influence on positive deviance, the results have, thus far, been inconclusive (Morrison, 2006). So in response to the RQ₂, participants completed Saucier's (1994) abbreviated version of Big-Five Mini-Maker measurement of personality. Past studies have investigated one aspect of a personality type. However, Saucier's (1994) scale measures five broad categories of personality: agreeableness ($\alpha=.88$), openness to experience ($\alpha=.86$), emotional stability ($\alpha=.84$), conscientiousness ($\alpha=.89$), and extraversion ($\alpha=.90$). This broadened approach to investigating personality and positive deviance may provide clearer guidance for future studies.

Data Analysis

The results of the studies were assessed in a two-step process. First, both studies A and B used a one-way analysis of variance with a Bonferroni Post Hoc test to measure positive deviance under varying conditions of risk in study A and reward study B. These tests allowed for the comparison of risk and reward at three varying levels of intensity and to gauge the results of H₁, H₂, H₃, and H₄. Second, the independent variables of dissent style and personality were analyzed using a covariate test (see Table 1). This test was used to measure any common personality traits that may increase or decrease the likelihood that an individual will engage in positive deviance.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

The following section provides a summary of the results formulated by applying the analysis previously explained. The independent variables, risk in study A and reward in study B, were manipulated and measured at three levels of intensity for each corresponding study: low, medium, and high. They were analyzed using a Bonferroni Post Hoc test. The dependent variables used in both studies included two main categories: personality and dissent style. The linear relationship between positive deviance and the two categories of independent variables were analyzed using a one-tailed correlation test.

Study A

Dependent Variable: Risk

Hypothesis one in study A predicted that low-risk scenarios will be positively correlated with higher levels of positive deviance. Conversely, the second hypothesis anticipated that high-risk scenarios would be negatively associated with positive deviance. As a result of the Post Hoc comparison using the Bonferroni test, a statistically significant difference was shown to exist between the high and low conditions for study A's dependent variable $F_{2, 271}=5.475$, $p=.005$. However, no significant difference was shown between either the low-medium or medium-high risk scenarios. The data supported the researcher's assumptions regarding H_1 and H_2 . Essentially, when faced with lower levels of anticipated risk, the data showed that

participants were more likely to engage in rule breaking behaviors than those participants who were presented with a high-risk scenario (see Figure 1).

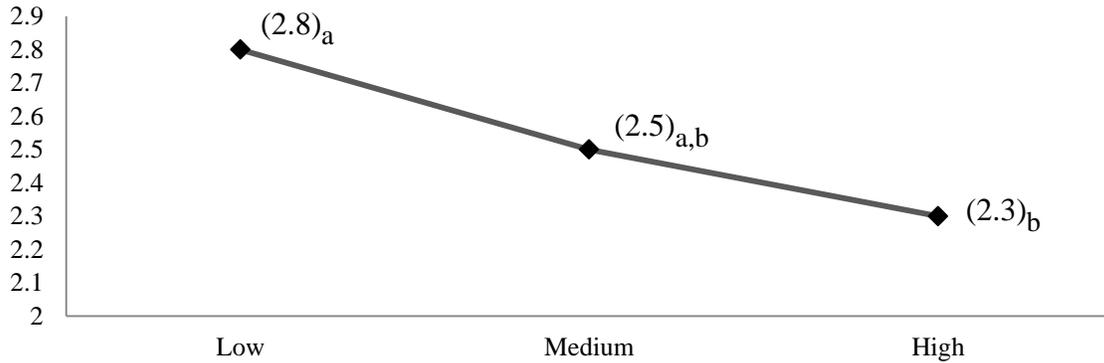


Figure 1. Risk Variable: Bonferroni Post Hoc Test Results *Different subscripts indicate significance of $p < .01$

Independent Variable #1: Dissent Style

In order to investigate the relationship between risk-related positive deviance and dissent discussed in RQ₁, this study utilized Kassing's (2000) revised dissent scale which measured two categories of dissent: articulated and latent. The relationship between positive deviance and these independent variables were analyzed with a correlation test. While the results revealed no statistical significance for the relationship between positive deviance and articulated dissent, they indicated a strong positive correlation between latent dissent and positive deviance $r = .238$, $n = 266$, $p = .000$. The results of this test as well as means and standard deviations are located in Table 1.

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviation, and Correlations

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Risk-related positive deviance	2.56	1.04								
2. Reward-related positive deviance	2.75	1.08								
3. Agreeableness	2.81	1.08	.138*	.099						
4. Conscientiousness	3.08	1.18	-.025	-.034	.397***					
5. Emotional stability	4.05	1.23	.115*	.074	.418***	.298***				
6. Extraversion	3.80	1.33	-.054	-.029	.244***	.278***	.150**			
7. Openness to experience	3.63	1.18	-.162**	-.077	.380***	.318***	.075	.323***		
8. Articulated dissent	3.72	0.68	.051	.051	-.072	-.173**	-.194**	-.342***	-.161**	
9. Latent dissent	2.52	0.71	.238***	.235***	.238***	.130*	.293***	.141*	.107*	.057

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.000 (1-tailed)

Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations, and Demographic Correlations

Variable	M	SD	Risk-related Positive Deviance	Reward-related Positive Deviance
1. Age	51	1.16	-.143**	-.081
2. Highest level of education	5.84	1.54	.015	.038
3. Household income	9.42	3.24	-.043	-.008
4. Work History	1.32	.622	.000	-.016

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.000 (1-tailed)

Independent Variable #2: Personality

In addition to the initial hypotheses, study A also investigated RQ₂ which explored the relationship between positive deviance and Saucier's (1994) Big-five personality traits including: agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, extraversion, and openness to experience. As a result of the analysis, three of the five personality traits were found to have a correlation to risk-related positive deviance: agreeableness, $r = .138$, $n = 263$, $p < .05$; emotional stability, $r = .115$, $n = 263$, $p < .05$; openness to experience, $r = -.162$, $n = 266$, $p < .01$. As a result, higher levels of agreeableness and emotional stability were positively correlated to risk-related positive deviance. However, lower levels of openness were positively correlated with risk-related positive deviance. Table 1 contains a complete list of the correlations test results for Saucier's five categories of personality as well as means and standard deviations.

Study B

Dependent Variable: Levels of Reward

For study B, H₃ predicted that high-reward scenarios would be positively correlated to higher levels of positive deviance. Likewise, H₄ also predicted that low-reward scenarios would also be associated with higher levels of positive deviance. However, the results of the post hoc Bonferroni test revealed no significant difference when manipulating the levels of reward $F_{2, 263} = .685$ $p = .505$. As a result, neither H₃ nor H₄ were supported (see Figure 2).

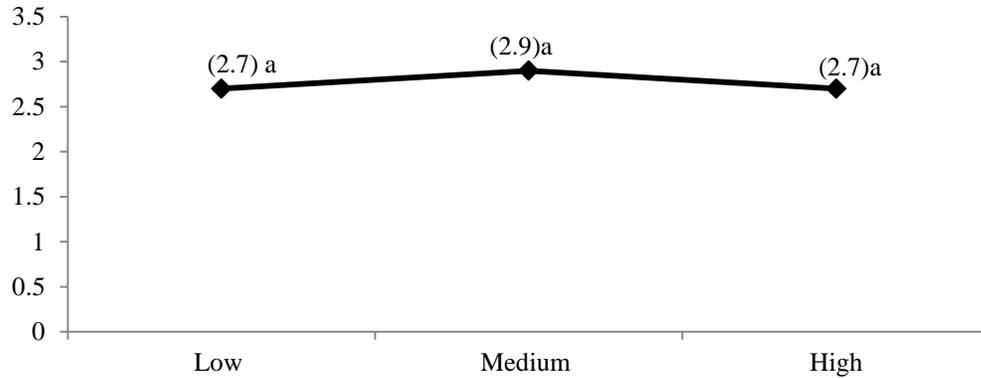


Figure 2. Reward Variable: Bonferroni Post Hoc Test Results *Different subscripts indicate significance of $p < .01$

Independent Variable #1: Dissent Style

Dissent style was also analyzed to measure the linear relationship between latent dissent and reward-related positive deviance. The results confirmed that while articulated dissent had no relevant relationship to positive deviance, latent dissent, just as in the case of risk-related positive deviance, exhibited a linear relationship to reward-related positive deviance $r = .235, n = 259, p < .000$. A complete list of standard deviations, means, and correlations are available in table 1.

Independent Variable #2: Personality

In order to further investigate personality which may influence an individual's choice to engage in positively deviant behaviors, Saucier's (1994) Big-five were also analyzed to find any linear relationships to positive deviance. However, the tests revealed no statistically significant relationship between any of the five personality traits and reward-related positive deviance. Means, standard deviation, and correlations are located in Table 1.

Overall, the results of study A and study B provided a broad investigation of the relationship between positive deviance, personality, and dissent style. In regards to the study's dependent variables, study A confirmed that differing levels of risk have a statistically significant influence on an individual's decision to engage in positive deviance. However, study B, contrary to the researcher's predictions, indicated that reward had no significant effect on an individual's tendency to participate in positive deviance. Concerning the independent variables, latent dissent was found to have a strong statistically significant relationship to positive deviance in both study A and study B. Three personality traits were shown to influence risk-related positive deviance: agreeableness, emotional stability, and openness to experience. However, study B indicated no significant relationship between personality and reward-related positive deviance.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

The overarching goal of this project was to advance positive deviance as a sub-category of dissent and to provide an exploratory empirical research project which may aid in the providing direction for future research in positive deviance. On a theoretical basis, positive deviance was established as an alternative to traditional forms of voice that employees may choose to utilize in order to express dissatisfaction or affect change within their organization. From a theoretical standpoint, there are three dimensions of the study's results that warrant further discussion and investigation. First, a statistically significant difference was shown between high and low levels of risk $p=.003$ yet there was no significant difference between high and low levels of reward $p=1$. Second, latent dissent was shown to have a strong statistically significant relationship to both risk $p=.000$ and reward-related $p=.000$ positive deviance. Finally, the personality traits of agreeableness $p=.138$, emotional stability $p=.115$, and openness to experience $p= .162$ exhibited a significant relationship to risk-related positive deviance. After discussing the study's implications for theory, research and practice, this chapter will examine both the limitations of the current study as well as possible directions for future research.

Theoretical Implications

From a theoretical perspective, this project grounds positive deviance within the communication literature by positioning it as a sub-category of dissent that is distinct from employee voice. The primary premise of this argument suggests that deviance is

merely a departure from the norms of a reference group; nevertheless, multiple reference groups can exist within one larger culture meaning that a behavior may simultaneously be acting in the interests of one group while damaging the wellbeing of another. As a subversive tactic, positive deviance provides a means for employees to influence their workplace with innovative ideas or even recognize and prevent problems before they have been brought to the attention of the management in environments that are resistant to criticism. As an additional means for employees to manage dissatisfaction, positive deviance represents something distinct from what is presently accounted for in Hirschman's (1970) model of exit, voice, loyalty, and silence. Furthermore, if positive deviance is utilized as an organizational resource and proactively encouraged, it may promote organizational innovation, creativity, early problem detection and prevention, among others (e.g., Singhal, 2010).

Conceptualizing dissent in terms of positive deviance also considers a range of dissent behaviors that are not fully encompassed by scholarly conceptualizations of voice. For instance, it is suggested here that positive deviance is expressed with a wider range of communicative behaviors than the written or verbal forms of expression typically attributed to voice. Also, positive deviance is distinguished from voice by its predominantly horizontal rather than vertical direction of expression. While these theoretical possibilities should be tested in future research, the current project provided an exploratory glimpse of empirical research in positive deviance that may act as a guide for future studies.

Implications for Research and Practice

While positive deviance has a number of fascinating possibilities for research in the scholarly community, it may also provide a series of possible practical applications in the context of organizations. As such, the following section discusses several of these opportunities by beginning with the relationship shown between risk and reward to influence positive deviance and followed by the effect of dissent and personality on predicting positive deviance.

Risk over Reward

The first implication the current research is the general tendency of employees to value personal security over the wellbeing of organization's goals and values. This conclusion may be drawn by comparing the results of both study A and study B. For instance, in study A the data reinforced the prediction that higher levels of risk are likely to discourage positive deviance whereas lower levels of risk are likely to encourage positive deviance. On the other hand, study B disconfirmed the suggested hypotheses regarding reward, insinuating that no level of reward would be more or less likely to influence the occurrence of positive deviance. Comparing the results of study A and study B suggests that risk has a greater influence on an individual's tendency to engage in positive deviance than reward. One interpretation of this finding is that individuals who consider their environments to be resistant to positive deviance are likely to fear the repercussions which they would endure if caught by a supervisor. A byproduct of this fear is a reluctance to engage in positive deviance in spite of the unit or organizational level benefits that it could provide.

For example, in study A, while the incentive remained consistent across the three variable scenarios, the risk of being caught and punished for the positive deviant behavior varied from extremely mild to severe. At the lowest level of risk, participants' were informed "customer service representatives who overlooked policies in the past mentioned that they have never been punished for it" (see Appendix B). This suggested to participants that their work environments offered a higher level of tolerance for deviance and minimized the severity of any punishment. On the other hand, the high-risk scenarios stated that past employees who had violated the policy, if discovered, "were severely punished by the current manager" (see Appendix B). No other details about the type or extent of the punishment were provided to participants, and the risk of being caught was minimal. In spite of this, it is reasonable to assume that the mere existence of a possible punishment may have decreased the probability that individuals would choose to break the policy.

Contrary to the results provided by study A, there appears to be minimal to no impact on positive deviance when comparing the high and low-reward scenarios used in study B. While risk was minimized across all three reward-scenarios, it was an element necessary to accurately portray a workplace environment. Even the high-reward scenario that included a necessary performance increase to meet and exceed company quotas, group bonuses, and even extra vacation days still failed to provide a sufficient incentive to counteract the possibility of even minimal levels of risk.

As a result of study A and study B, it is reasonable to conclude that the level of risk that employee perceive in their work environments is predisposed to have a stronger influence on an employees' decision to engage in positive deviance than the presence of

personal, unit, or organizational level rewards. Given that many organizations still tend to uniformly reward individuals who conform to company norms and punish those who deviate from these norms (Puffer, 1987), traditional organizational structures inadvertently promote environments of fear. As a result, employees are less likely to use positive deviance even when straying from an organizational norm could be beneficial to the company, its employees, or even the individual. The scenarios used for this study provided an example of how risk can influence an employee's choice to forgo engaging in positive deviance in spite of the losses that will result from following the company policy.

In both study A and study B, participants were provided an opportunity to engage in positive deviance and receive both personal and group rewards. However, this reward was contingent upon their willingness to face the possibility of personal risk. In this case, the deviant action implied that the participant could choose to break a company policy stating, "Customer service representatives are not allowed to rush a job without approval from their manager"; even so, the responsible manager would be "tied up in meetings until the end of the day" (see Appendix B). If a participant chose not to break the policy, the scenarios suggested that the organization would both lose present and future business from a reputable company.

In this scenario, time is of the essence and the deviant action is inherently harmless. It is almost guaranteed that the manager would approve the order if he or she was available. Yet because a company policy that generally serves the interests of the organization is out of context, following the policy would be counterproductive and act against the interest of the company. The most striking conclusion that can be drawn from

this data suggests that in environments where risk and fear are high, participants' exhibit a tendency to value their personal wellbeing over the goals of the organization. As such, if companies wish to gain the benefits that can be provided by positive deviance, employees must be given the freedom to act beyond the policy when a larger company goal is at stake. As Dehler and Welsh (1998) advocate, positive deviance protects the goals and interests of the larger organization but endows employees with the flexibility and freedom to utilize the best methods in any given situation. However, if organizations stringently cling to their guidelines and punish alternatives methods simply because they have not been approved, they may inadvertently be sabotaging their organizational goals.

In fact, the notion that organizational expectations act counterproductively under certain circumstances is not a novel concept (see, Appelbaum, Iaconi, & Matousek, 2007; Applbaum & Anatol, 1979). Taken to the extreme, Gino and Bazerman (2009) suggest that dogmatically enforcing company policies, rules, and norms can escalate into dangerous organizational circumstances. For example, employees who consistently work in these environments and witness their co-workers being punished by superiors for small infractions may subsequently develop a fear of punishment themselves resulting in the creation of an environment which stifles dissent of any kind. When these rules and policies have proven themselves to be flawed, positive deviance is often implemented as a last effort to respond to organizational crisis. When on the edge of ruin, Spreitzer and Sonenshein (2003) suggest that organizations encourage their employees to think "outside of the box." In other words, employees are instructed to break from the norm and begin to express dissent and deviance by finding different methods to accomplish a task when the normal approach has proven itself to be ineffective. On a practical level, if

organizations can minimize fear and risk associated with positive deviance, it can be utilized as a proactive measure rather than as a last resort. As a result, positive deviance can be implemented as a consistent series of dissent behaviors that provides influx of creativity, innovation, and feedback that may help to prevent stagnation.

Dissent

Overall, this study provided one key link between positive deviance and dissent. As stated previously the original theoretical premise of this paper positioned positive deviance as a sub-category of dissent, and the research provided limited support for this assumption. While the results failed to reveal any direct link between articulated dissent and positive deviance, latent dissent exhibited a statistically significant relationship to positive deviance across both studies A and B. Overall, the finding suggests that when employees lack an official means of influencing their circumstances, they may look to positive deviance, in this case in the form of rule breaking, as an alternative avenue for influence. The relationship discovered between positive deviance and latent rather than articulated dissent are consistent with Kassing's (2000) observations that "latent dissent occurs when employees desire to voice their opinions, but perceive that they lack sufficient avenues for expressing dissent" (p. 61). However, this study measured only one type of positive deviance rather than a broad spectrum of behaviors. As such future studies should investigate the relationship between dissent and a more inclusive list of positively deviant behaviors.

Personality

The final piece of insight provided by this study's empirical data is the impact of three certain personality traits on the occurrence of risk-related positive deviance. When

compared to risk-related positive deviance, two categories of personality were shown to positively influence a participant's tendency to engage in positive deviance: agreeableness and emotional stability. The first related personality trait, agreeableness, suggests that individuals with higher levels of agreeableness are more willing to engage in positive deviance because of their other-centered tendencies. Gardner et al. (2012) confirmed that individuals scoring high in agreeableness are likely to flourish in environments promoting "teamwork, cohesion, loyalty, and morale" (p. 596). These results help to reconfirm this paper's theoretical basis that positive deviance is a social rather than individual-centered behavior with a strong dependence on altruism (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2003). In other words, employees with pro-social tendencies are likely to thrive within work environments that actively promote positive deviance whereas those who value competition rather than cooperation will be prone to stifle positively deviant behaviors in favor of conformity. However, future research should investigate the degree to which agreeableness both positively and negatively affects an individual's tendency to engage in positive deviance. The second personality trait shown to influence positive deviance was emotional stability, also known as neuroticism. Those individuals who score high in neuroticism have a high level of dependency upon consistency and structure within organizations (See, Bering, De Fruyt, & Bouwen, 2004; Gardner et al, 2012). On the other hand, those who score lower in neuroticism may be more willing and compatible with positive deviance.

On the other hand, the results revealed a negative correlation between openness to experience and risk-related positive deviance. Even as most research suggests that those who score high in the area of openness are typically described as "creative, imaginative,

and broad-minded,” the data provide by the present study suggests that risk negatively influenced this natural tendency (Gardner et al., 2012, p. 597). While the reasoning behind this result should be explored further, one possible explanation may lie in a relationship between openness and the ability of an individual to analyze and recognize the possible outcomes of a given situation. In other words, individuals who have a higher score of openness may be prone to judging the possible repercussions associated with a deviant action and inadvertently amplifying their fear of punishment that accompanies that risk. In essence, the insight regarding the relationship between specific personality traits and positive deviance should help organizations to both identify and place employees in positions which are more specifically suited to their dispositions. This may be accomplished by placing those who are more naturally inclined to engage in positive in positions which allow for greater levels of autonomy and creativity; whereas those who prefer consistency might be better suited for positions which provide fewer opportunities for employees to implement positive deviance.

Limitations

While the primary goal of this project was to provide an exploratory investigation of how positive deviance functions within work environments, the results of this study were limited in several ways. Perhaps the greatest limitation was the study’s inability to measure a range of positively deviant behaviors. Due to the lack of an inclusive positive deviant measure, a rule-breaking scale acted as a substitute and was intended to represent positive deviance. However, rule breaking signifies only one category of positive deviance. Effectively, the lack of an inclusive scale limited the data collection by only offering participants the option to engage in only one form of positive deviance. Because

positive deviance is characterized by creativity and innovation, an extremely limited nature of scale used excludes the possibility of alternative actions or creative solutions that the participants may have developed if the questions had been open-ended.

Future Research

While several possible areas of emphasis for future research have been highlighted throughout the body of this paper, future studies should begin with the following areas of investigation. First, scholars should explore the boundaries and characteristics of positive deviance, and in essence, describe the limitations separating positive and negative deviance. In particular, it is likely that positive deviance will expose a tension that employees feel between their personal goals in which they strive for individual success and meeting overarching organizational goals. In the current study, this possibility was suggested by the tendency of personal to risk to outweigh reward as discussed previously. Investigation in this area should focus on reconciling the tension between organizational and unit levels benefits in an effort to alleviate the concern that employees will prioritize their personal wellbeing over the success of their organization. Once these distinctive characteristics have been established, a verified measure of positive deviance must be developed to aid in future studies. Finally, scholars should investigate the past, present, and future applications of positive deviance in the workplace. In particular, these studies should focus on the different perspectives, upper-management versus lower level employees, and how groups discuss deviant actions both among and between groups.

Implementation

After investigating the three areas mentioned above, one of the greatest challenges regarding the practical application of positive deviance in the workplace will involve producing a usable model for organizations to implement positive deviance. The figure in Appendix D provides one possible starting point for the implementation of positive deviance. Most importantly the figure provided in Appendix D approaches positive deviance as a multi-step process rather than merely as an isolated action. In this process, positive deviance is includes three main steps. First, companies must actively cultivate an environment which invites rather than condemns difference and deviation. If successful, these changes should reduce the anxiety and fear that typically accompany high-conformity minded work environments. Second, employees are encouraged to take actions and make decisions within the context of the situation using manuals and procedures as guidelines to aid in the decision-making process rather than as strict rules that must be dogmatically obeyed and unquestioned. Third, the action is judged by the relevant audience as either harmful or beneficial. If judged as beneficial or productive, the organization may choose to either reward the behavior or take a non-action by refraining from punishing the deviation. On the other hand, if the action is judged to be harmful or ineffective the organization refrains from punishing the action and encourages, when possible, the employee to regroup and take a new approach or learn from the failure to help guide the next attempt.

However, the model suggested also acknowledges that positive deviance may not be desirable under all conditions and that not all employees may be suited to work under

conditions promoting positive deviance. For instance, positive deviance would not be advantageous if consistently applied to employees working on an assembly line. In this case, conformity is expected and any unexpected or unmonitored deviation from the norm could be detrimental to the final product or the organization. As such, the decision making process flows in the manner typically found in the status quo where choices are made based upon established rules and procedures.

Overall, the investigation of positive deviance as an alternative form of dissent provides a gateway into an, as of yet, untapped area of research both on a theoretical and empirical level. As Singhal (2010) states, “Positive deviance is an approach that enables communities to discover the wisdom they already have and finds a way to amplify it” (p. 605). However, before this wisdom can be effectively implemented in organizations, scholars must investigate its use and provide further theoretical groundings. Even so, if scholars can someday reclaim deviance, perhaps it can offer organizations an untapped and potentially limitless resource created by positive deviance.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Positive Deviance Model

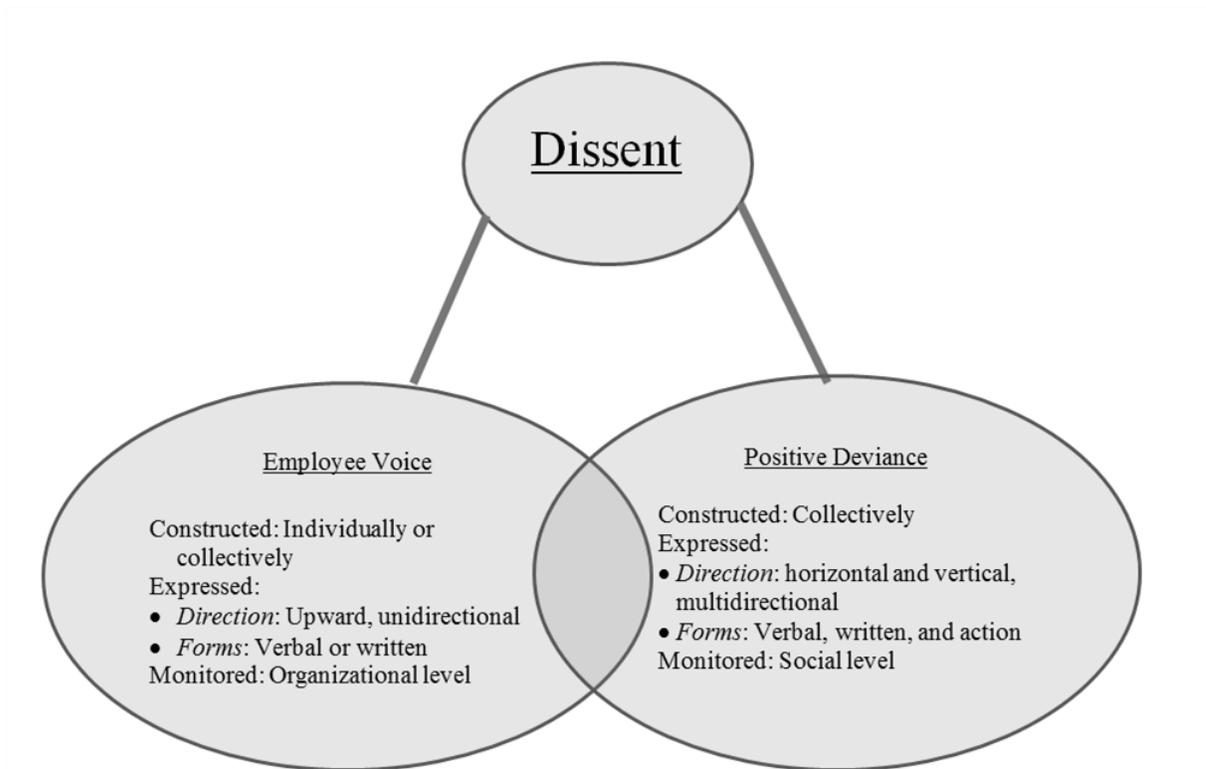


Figure A.1. Positive Deviance Model

APPENDIX B

Scales and Scenarios

Dissent scale:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

1. I am hesitant to raise questions or contradictory opinions in my organization.
2. I speak with my supervisor or someone in management when I question workplace decisions.
3. I make suggestions to management or my supervisor about correcting inefficiency in my organization.
4. I do not express my disagreement to management.
5. I tell management when I believe employees are being treated unfairly.
6. I bring my criticism about organizational changes that aren't working to my supervisor or someone in management.
7. I don't tell my supervisor when I disagree with workplace decisions.
8. I'm hesitant to question workplace policies.
9. I do not question management.
10. I complain about things in my organization with other employees.
11. I join in when other employees complain about organizational changes.
12. I share my criticism of this organization openly.
13. I hardly ever complain to my coworkers about workplace problems.
14. I let other employees know how I feel about the way things are done around here.
15. I do not criticize my organization in front of other employees.
16. I criticize inefficiency in this organization in front of everyone.
17. I make certain everyone knows when I'm unhappy with work policies.
18. I speak freely with my coworkers about troubling workplace issues.

Personality measure:

How accurately can you describe yourself?

Please use this list of common human traits to describe yourself as accurately as possible. Describe yourself as you see yourself at the present time, not as you wish to be in the future. Describe yourself as you are generally or typically, as compared with other persons you know of the same sex and of roughly your same age.

Before each trait, please write a number indicating how accurately that trait describes you, using the following rating scale:

Accurate				Inaccurate				
<u>Extremely</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Moderately</u>	<u>Slightly</u>		<u>Slightly</u>	<u>Moderately</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Extremely</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<input type="checkbox"/> Bashful		<input type="checkbox"/> Energetic		<input type="checkbox"/> Moody		<input type="checkbox"/> Systematic		
<input type="checkbox"/> Bold		<input type="checkbox"/> Envious		<input type="checkbox"/> Organized		<input type="checkbox"/> Talkative		
<input type="checkbox"/> Careless		<input type="checkbox"/> Extraverted		<input type="checkbox"/> Philosophical		<input type="checkbox"/> Temperamental		
<input type="checkbox"/> Cold		<input type="checkbox"/> Fretful		<input type="checkbox"/> Practical		<input type="checkbox"/> Touchy		
<input type="checkbox"/> Complex		<input type="checkbox"/> Harsh		<input type="checkbox"/> Quiet		<input type="checkbox"/> Uncreative		
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative		<input type="checkbox"/> Imaginative		<input type="checkbox"/> Relaxed		<input type="checkbox"/> Unenvious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Creative		<input type="checkbox"/> Inefficient		<input type="checkbox"/> Rude		<input type="checkbox"/> Unintellectual		
<input type="checkbox"/> Deep		<input type="checkbox"/> Intellectual		<input type="checkbox"/> Shy		<input type="checkbox"/> Unsympathetic		
<input type="checkbox"/> Disorganized		<input type="checkbox"/> Jealous		<input type="checkbox"/> Sloppy		<input type="checkbox"/> Warm		
<input type="checkbox"/> Efficient		<input type="checkbox"/> Kind		<input type="checkbox"/> Sympathetic		<input type="checkbox"/> Withdraw		

The Scenarios

Control Scenario

You are a customer service representative at a company that sells, leases, and services computer systems to small- and medium-sized businesses (e. g., PCs, servers, networking equipment, printers). You have been with the company for 3 years. Your responsibilities include, among other things, taking orders from customers. You have just received a “hot order” from a large, important customer. This means that the order would have to be pushed to the front of the schedule and turned around within 24 hours. You know that there are strict policies in place for rush orders. One such policy is that customer service representatives are not allowed to rush a job without approval from their manager. You want to be able to give the customer an answer, because otherwise, they are likely to place the order with a competitor. But your manager is tied up in meetings until the end of the day, so you cannot get their approval in time. You are considering whether to accept the order without approval, even though this would mean violating the policy.

Study A: Influence of Risk

Low Risk

This is the first time you have dealt with a rush order in your company, and while breaking company policy is discouraged by management, you know that your co-workers regularly do things that aren’t “technically” in line with company policies in order to help the department get their jobs done on time. Even though rushing the order without managerial consent goes against policy, it seems to be a normal occurrence in your department. Customer service representative who have overlooked policies in the past mentioned that they have never been punished for it. Overall, rushing this order will provide a significant increase in the entire departments’ sales for this quarter placing your branch at the top position for sales in the state. This could mean additional bonuses for everyone in the department as well as yourself and your manager.

Medium Risk

This is the first time you have dealt with a rush order in your company. However, you know that other customer service representatives have overlooked this policy in the past, and only on rare occasions have they been punished in any way. While breaking company policy is discouraged by management, you know that your co-workers regularly do things that aren’t “technically” in line with company policies. The current manager is relatively new, and no one, including you, has any idea how they will react. Everyone stands to benefit from you breaking the company policy. Rushing this order will provide a significant increase in the entire departments’ sales for this quarter placing your branch at the top position for sales in the state. This could mean additional bonuses for everyone in the department as well as yourself and your manager.

High Risk

This is the first time you have dealt with a rush order in your company. However, you know that other customer service representatives have overlooked this policy in the past, and if

they were discovered they were severely punished by the current manager. However, you believe that there is a 50% chance that your manager will not find out about you breaking the policy. You also know that no one in your department will turn you in for breaking the policy because everyone knows that the policy is pointless and makes everyone's job unnecessarily difficult. Even if they do find out about it, the manager will benefit just as much as everyone else in the department. In fact, rushing this order will provide a significant increase in the entire departments' sales for this quarter placing your branch at the top position for sales in the state. This could mean additional bonuses for everyone in the department as well as yourself and your manager.

Study B: Influence of Reward

Low Reward

This is the first time you have dealt with a rush order in your company, and while breaking company policy is discouraged by management, you know that your co-workers regularly do things that aren't "technically" in line with company policies in order to help the department get their jobs done on time. Even though rushing the order without managerial consent goes against policy, it seems to be a normal occurrence in your department. Overall, taking this order will benefit your department as a whole. It is a large order that will increase your sales substantially for the quarter. Your division has done quite well so far, but this order would increase your overall average in sales.

Medium Reward

This is the first time you have dealt with a rush order in your company, and while breaking company policy is discouraged by management, you know that your co-workers regularly do things that aren't "technically" in line with company policies in order to help the department get their jobs done on time. Even though rushing the order without managerial consent goes against policy, it seems to be a normal occurrence in your department. Overall, taking this order will benefit your department as a whole. In fact, rushing this order will provide a significant increase in the entire departments' sales for this quarter placing your branch at the top position for sales in the region.

High Reward

This is the first time you have dealt with a rush order in your company, and while breaking company policy is discouraged by management, you know that your co-workers regularly do things that aren't "technically" in line with company policies in order to help the department get their jobs done on time. Even though rushing the order without managerial consent goes against policy, it seems to be a normal occurrence in your department. Lasts year's numbers were rather poor, and your whole division has been eager to redeem themselves. This order may be your best option. Rushing this order will provide a significant increase in the entire departments' sales for this quarter placing your branch at the top position for sales in the region. It could also mean bonuses for most people in the department as well as additional perks like extra vacation days.

Pro-Social Rule Breaking Scale

1. In this situation, how likely would you be to violate the policy and place a rush on the order without your manager's approval?

<i>Very unlikely</i>	<i>Unlikely</i>	<i>Neither likely or unlikely</i>	<i>Likely</i>	<i>Very likely</i>
1	2	3	4	5

2. What is the probability that you would violate the policy?

<i>0%</i>	<i>25%</i>	<i>50%</i>	<i>75%</i>	<i>100%</i>
1	2	3	4	5

3. How appropriate would it be for you to violate the policy and place a rush on the order without approval?

<i>Very inappropriate</i>	<i>Inappropriate</i>	<i>Neither appropriate or inappropriate</i>	<i>Appropriate</i>	<i>Very appropriate</i>
1	2	3	4	5

4. How would you feel about violating the policy and placing a rush on the order without approval?

<i>Very uncomfortable</i>	<i>Uncomfortable</i>	<i>Neither comfortable or uncomfortable</i>	<i>Comfortable</i>	<i>Very comfortable</i>
1	2	3	4	5

5. I think that violating the policy in this situation would be wrong.

<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>
1	2	3	4	5

6. I would feel conflicted about violating the policy.

<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>
1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX C

Participant Consent Form

The purpose of this study is to measure employee attitudes toward over-looking or ignoring official company policies when the situation increase productivity and benefits the group in some way. This study also asks for basic personal information such as age, gender, income, education level, generalized work experience, and state that may be considered an invasion of your right to privacy. However, you will not be asked to divulge any specific personal such as your name, current employment, or address. Therefore, the study will be completely anonymous with no means for your answers to be traced back to you.

If you are completing this survey so that a student may receive extra credit in his/her class, you will be prompted to enter their name at the appropriate time. If you should choose to withdraw yourself from the survey at any time, the student will still receive their extra credit.

At any time for any reason, if you feel that your right to privacy is being violated, you may terminate the survey without penalty.

If you do agree to complete the survey, please select the check box at the conclusion of this consent form. All information is 100% anonymous, and you will not be asked for your name at any time. However, because data will be collected via the Internet, the complete security of your data cannot be fully guaranteed. However, SurveyMonkey is a secured site.

All participation is completely voluntary, and you may end your participation at any time without penalty. If you are completing this so that a student may receive extra credit in a course, declining or ending your participation at any time will not prevent the student from receiving extra credit.

Once you have given your consent, you may take up to 45minutes to complete the study. All answers and opinions are 100% anonymous and will not be traced back to you.

The results of this study will be published in a Master's level thesis or presented at a conference. However, all information is anonymous and no personal information will be used in presentations or publications. While you may receive no immediate benefits from study, this research will help to give scholars and organizations a clearer look at real-life employee practices and the best way to get the job done.

This study is being conducted by Brianna Bowman, graduate student at Baylor University, under the supervision of Lacy McNamee, Assistant Professor of Communication Studies. For any questions regarding your rights as a participant in this study contact Baylor's University Committer for Protection of Human Subjects in Research. Dr. David W. Schlueter, Ph.D., Chair Baylor IRB, Baylor University, One Bear Place #97368 Waco, TX 76798-7368. Dr. Schlueter may also be reached at (254) 710-6920 or (254) 710-3708.

- By checking this box, I am indicating that I have read, understood, and received a copy of the above consent and desire of my own freewill and volition to participate in this study.

APPENDIX D

Positive Deviance as a Process

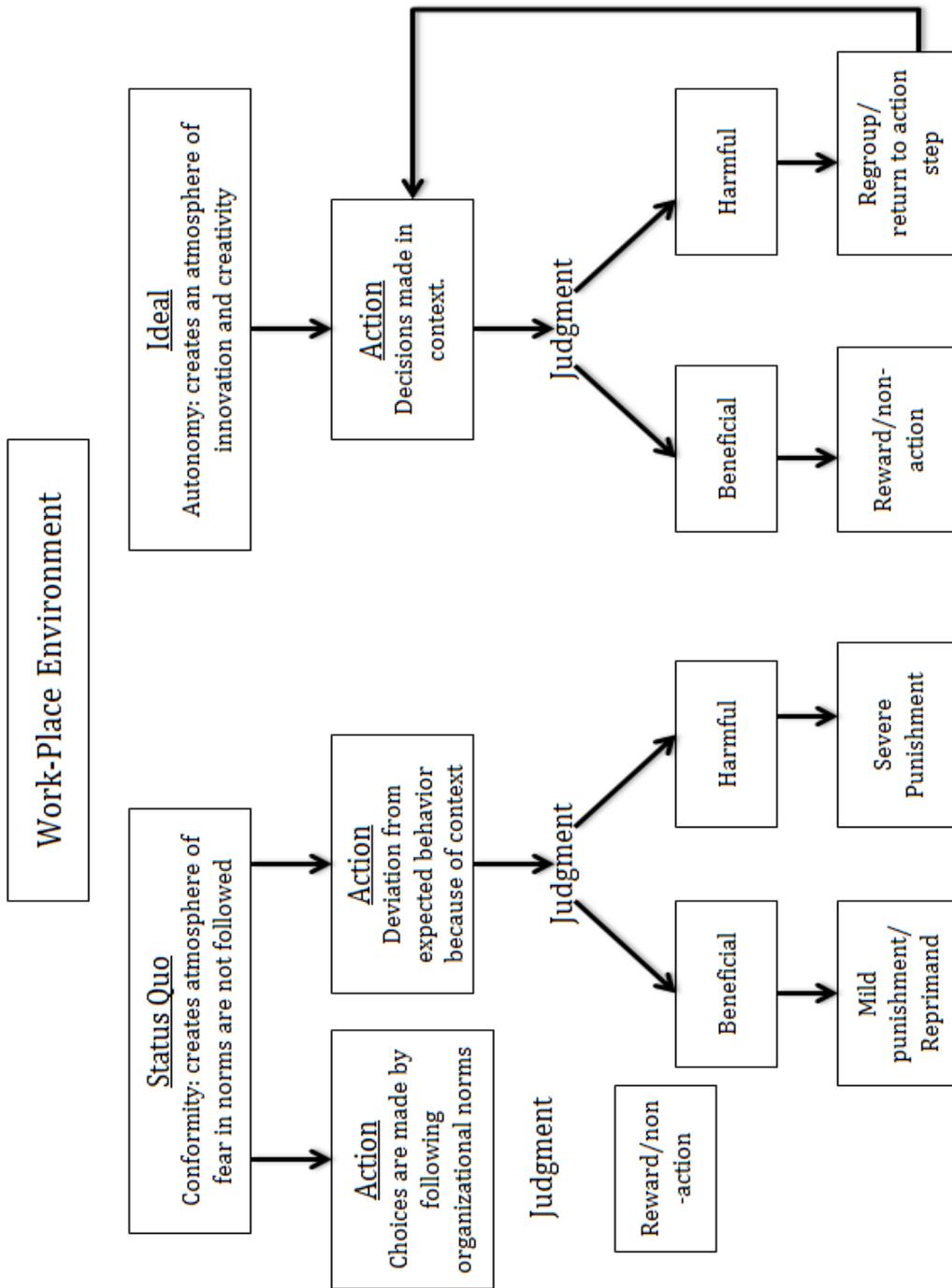


Figure D.1. Positive Deviance as a Process

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