CHAPTER 2

VISUAL IMAGES OF PEOPLE AT WORK: INFLUENCES ON ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR

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ABSTRACT

Although organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) is widely known to have a positive ethical impact in work organizations, the causal antecedents that influence the likelihood of such behaviors among employees is understudied. We addressed this gap by examining the influence of visual images of people on relevant work-related behavior in a work-like setting using the theoretical frame of the social identity perspective. We found that students in a university setting, who were exposed to religious-themed student images, exhibited slower helping behaviors toward the organization than those who were exposed to organizational-themed student images. The
results of the current study provide the first-known experimental confirmation of organizational identity as a causal antecedent of OCB.

Keywords: Organizational citizenship; helping behavior; influence; priming; Social identity; religion

Being service-minded has long been connected to positive ethical influences on society as a whole, yet only recently have researchers examined similar positive ethical influences in work organizations. Specifically, researchers have found organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), or behaviors that support an organization’s culture and goals that go beyond mere job descriptions, being expressed by constructive behavior (Ghitulescu, 2012; Kizilos, Cummings, & Cummings, 2013; Weitz, Vardi, & Setter, 2012), a specific focus on ethics (Bandsuch & Cavanagh, 2005), and helping behavior (Han & Altman, 2010; Hatcher, Ross, & Collins, 1989) in the workplace. Despite these positive influences, however, much less is understood concerning the causal antecedents of OCB as they relate to behavior in the workplace (James, Miles, & Mullins, 2011; Johns, 2006; Pawar, 2009). Although the researchers have identified a number of potential direct (e.g., personality and religious context) and indirect (e.g., organizational justice and organizational politics) influences on OCB (Bergeron, Schroeder, & Martinez, 2014; Blakely, Andrews, & Moorman, 2005; Chang, Rosen, Siemieniec, & Johnson, 2012; Day, 2013; Jacobson, Jacobson, & Hood, 2015; Lin, 2008; Rioux & Penner, 2001; Ryan, 2002), given the correlational nature of the work, cause and effect is not always clear (for a recent review of OCB see Han & Altman, 2010). In order to begin to address this gap in the literature, the purpose of this article is to present a controlled, experimental study specifically designed to examine the influences of visual images of people in a work-like setting on OCB operationalized as helping behavior in an organizational context.

THE SOCIAL IDENTITY PERSPECTIVE

William James (1890/1950) stated that a person “has… as many different social selves as there are distinct groups of persons about whose opinion he cares” (p. 294). From the perspective of social identity theory, a person may be said to have as many social selves as there are groups to which he
Social identity theory states that the self can be defined by group membership. People identify with groups because it allows them to enhance self-esteem within certain intergroup contexts (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and reduce uncertainty about the world (Hogg & Abrams, 1993). Research demonstrates that our current social identity is essential to how we think, feel, and act toward ourselves and others; for example, when we identify with groups, we are more likely to stereotype others (e.g., assume that all people of a categorized group have similar traits), as well as ourselves (e.g., be unwilling to change an attitude if it seems to contradict your group; Hogg, 2006).

Self-categorization theory focuses specifically on the cognitive processes underlying social identity. It states that people can categorize themselves on a continuum ranging from unique individual to human being. Therefore, at any moment, a person’s social identity can fluctuate depending on the context. Two factors that are critical in determining self-categorizations include the following: (1) the accessibility and fit (saliency) of a relevant ingroup category and (2) the availability of an intergroup comparison (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). The current research focused on the first factor by manipulating the saliency of either a religious or work organization identity using religious- or organizational-themed images of people, which was followed by a helping measure.

Consistent with self-categorization theory (Turner et al., 1987) and social cognition research more generally (Higgins, 1996), saliency of an identity was defined in the current research as the degree to which a particular ingroup category is made mentally accessible (i.e., accessibility) according to a relevant context (i.e., fit). Recent research has demonstrated that, similar to other mentally primed concepts (for a review see Schröder & Thagard, 2013), specific identities can be primed, subsequently affecting behavior consistent with that prime (e.g., greater self-reported identification as a university student after being primed with visual symbols of that university; Randolph-Seng, Reich, & DeMarree, 2012).

The mechanisms underlying such priming effects is thought to be three-fold: psychological, cultural, and biological. Psychologically, primed concepts impact general mental representations of specific contexts. These specific contexts, among mental representations, stem from culturally shared meanings. These shared meanings, in turn, biologically impact neural patterns of activation linking mental representations with underlying sensorimotor representations leading to actual behavior (Schröder & Thagard, 2013). It should be noted that the design of the current study took advantage of the established priming paradigm used in past research to be able to
experimentally test the influence of priming one identity versus another on subsequently applicable behavior (i.e., OCB) using relevant visual images of people. Therefore, the purpose of this research was not to test the relative influences of one competing identity (i.e., religious) over another (i.e., organizational), but simply to provide a strong and direct test of the importance of organizational identity as an antecedent of OCB in comparison to another identity (religious) that has been shown to relate to prosocial behavior in past research as reviewed next.

REligion And oCB

Religion, as used in the context of this research, does not refer directly to the collection of beliefs and practices that characterize many religions. Instead, religion is being used as one, of many, social identities that may become salient at any moment in time. When a social category or identity is made salient, the behaviors and attitudes that may be considered “typical” for that group can be triggered as discussed earlier (see Seger, Smith, & Mackie, 2009). There is a compelling body of research that gives credence to the notion that religious saliency increases prosocial and, therefore, group-enhancing behaviors (Graham & Haidt, 2010; Pinchon, Boccato, & Saroglou, 2007; Shariff & Norenzayan, 2007), even among people who do not personally claim to be religious (see Randolph-Seng & Nielson, 2007). However, there is also evidence that shows that religious saliency can lead to negative social behaviors such as out-group derogation (Johnson, Rowatt, & LaBouff, 2012; Rothschild, Abdollahi, & Pyszczynski, 2009) and increased risky behaviors (Shenberger, Smith, & Zarate, 2014). Therefore, evoking a religious identity could be unrelated and even counter to prosocial behavior (Gawronski, Bodenhausen, & Banse, 2005). Nevertheless, Galen (2012) identified a mutual religious ingroup identity as the source of prosocial behavior, which arises from religious identity being made salient.

It is important, therefore, to consider religious identity, when examining OCB in work situations. Employee attitudes are shaped by their social identities implicitly and/or explicitly (Han & Harms, 2010), and these attitudes affect inter-personal cohesion and inter-group interaction (Greenwald et al., 2002). It may be that differences in social identity among work teams could be divisive (Cooper & Withey, 2009; Johns, 2006), and organizational identification could actually be a significant mediating factor that overcomes differences in social identity (see Han & Harms, 2010). Using religious identity saliency as a strong comparison group, therefore, the current study separated
out religious and organizational identities by controlling for which identity was made salient through religious- or organizational-themed images of people and then examined the results on OCB as operationalized as prosocial behavior directed toward the organization.

**RELIGIOUS VERSUS WORK IDENTITY**

In an attempt to understand how religion and work may interact, researchers have examined the integration of spirituality into the workplace (e.g., Blair, Kunz, Jeantet, & Kwon, 2012; Byrne, Morton, & Dahling, 2011; Exline & Bright, 2011; Geh & Tan, 2009; McKee, Mills, & Driscoll, 2010). Research has shown positive influences on employees when spirituality is integrated into the work domain (King & Williamson, 2005; Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002). Nevertheless, it should be noted that spirituality in the workplace typically does not directly refer to a formalized set of beliefs like religion. Instead, workplace spirituality is more about how people are able to find meaning and fulfillment in their work (e.g., Williams, Randolph-Seng, Hayek, Pane Haden, & Atinc, 2017). Religion, on the other hand, is a unique and powerful social identity because of religion’s power to shape ideology and moral foundations (Ysseldyk, Matheson, & Anisman, 2010). Since self-categorization theory states that the salience of a particular social category will determine which category (identity) is adopted in the social context that the individual is currently in, making a religious identity salient could result in a degradation of an organizational identity. Specifically, while it seems important to understand organizational members’ needs in regards to their religion (Geh & Tan, 2009; Ghumman, Ryan, Barclay, & Markel, 2013; King, 2007), creating a work environment in which one’s membership in the organization is the salient identity, may lead individuals to better identify themselves with the organization, its leadership, and its goals (see Turner et al., 1987; Ysseldyk, Haslam, Matheson, & Anisman, 2011). As research in OCB suggests earlier, a strong salient identity with the organization may more likely elicit OCB from organizational members (Finkelstein & Penner, 2004; Liu, Loi, & Lam, 2011; Vondey, 2010).

**HYPOTHESES**

As very little experimental work has been done to examine the causal antecedents of OCB, a controlled, experimental approach was used to complement and extend other work done in the area (James et al., 2011;
Johns, 2006; Pawar, 2009). Given the sample and the context of the experiment, the work environment used was that of the university, and the role used was that of a student who has agreed to work as a participant. The work behavior examined was how fast the student helped another “coworker” (i.e., a student hired to be the experimenter). Levine and colleagues have recently examined how social categories influence helping behavior. Specifically, they have found that helping is dependent on how participants categorized themselves and others (Levine & Thompson, 2004; Levine, Prosser, Evans, & Reicher, 2005). Therefore, it was predicted that students would help the organization (i.e., student experimenter) faster when the university student identity was made salient compared to a religious student identity. Further, it was predicted that these results will be found regardless of mood, religiousness, or prosocial motivations of the participants, supporting the effect resulted from situational manipulations of social identity through exposure to visual images of people rather than dispositional influences. Stated formally:

Participants will be quicker to help their organization when their organizational identity is made salient compared to a religious identity, even when controlling for their self-reported mood, religiousness, and prosocial motivations.

METHOD

Participants

A total of 52 undergraduate female students participated as part of a course requirement in their Introductory Psychology course. Participants self-selected to be in the experiment based only on their individual schedules as no information about the study was given prior to their arrival. To maintain experimental control by having a relatively homogenous sample (see Mook, 1983), all participants were female undergraduate freshman students. Females were also chosen given differences in helping behavior that can occur with mixed-gender pairs (Eagly & Crowley, 1986). Four participants were excluded for awareness of the dependent variable of helping (i.e., they thought this was what the experiment was testing), leaving 24 participants in each condition (48 total for the study). No participants showed awareness of the influence of the manipulation on their behavior according to the funnel debriefing results discussed in the Results section.
Materials

To ensure that participants were categorizing themselves as university students, references to them being university students and receiving credit in their university class were made in the consent form. In addition, the setting of being on campus and participating in a study in a campus building to fulfill a course requirement that only university students could sign-up for was assumed to reinforce their self-categorization as a university student (e.g., Turner et al., 1987). Given that the university is a large secular state school, the religious environment was assumed to be neutral.

Two different sets of photographs of people were presented. These two sets contained either photographs of the same female sitting in a classroom with a textbook in front of them, or praying with a Bible in front of them. The photographs were pretested, with a completely different set of participants than those in the main study (N = 23), according to how religious the person in the photo seemed. The five out of 30 photographs that were rated the highest according to a seven-point scale were selected, along with five corresponding nonreligious photos of the same person (see Fig. 1). Although the photographs that were rated the highest in regards to religiosity were selected, all the photographs depicted the same religious behavior, a college-aged female sitting at a desk appearing to pray with a Bible in front of her (see Fig. 1). What varied among the photographs selected was the person who was praying. This particular depiction of religious behavior was consistent with the majority of the participants’ (i.e., 88%; 42 indicating a Christian-related religion and six not indicating a

Fig. 1. Example Photographs Used in the Saliency Manipulation Conditions.
religion) self-reported religious affiliation. The female in the photos were similar in age to the average participant and to the female experimenter ($M = 19.97, \text{SD} = 2.15$). Each picture was randomly paired with one of 20 sentences. These sentences were pretested, with the same group of participants who evaluated the photographs ($N = 23$), to ensure that the sentences were evaluatively neutral, nondiagnostic, and did not convey religious information.

Next, a funnel debriefing was conducted (adapted from Bargh & Chartrand, 2000), during which participants were given several opportunities to disclose awareness of the manipulations and of the purpose of the study by typing their responses to the open-ended questions. A manipulation check question asked how religious the photos seemed with further questions making sure participants followed directions, checking if the photographs influenced them to help the experimenter, and examining why they helped (if they did help). An additional questionnaire included a measure of the participants’ current mood from “very negative” to “very positive,” how religious they consider themselves to be, how helpful of a person they consider themselves to be, and how likely they are to help a stranger. All questions (except for the following directions questions) were rated on a seven-point scale with the question of why they helped being an open response. Finally, participants were asked to identify their gender, age, and religious affiliation.

**Procedure**

The experimenter was blind to the condition of the assignments and true purpose of the study. After reading and signing the consent form, each participant was tested individually in separate rooms containing a desk and a personal computer. When participants entered the room, the experimenter explained that the instructions will be given on the computer screen. The experimenter then started the computer program and left the room. The program was run using Media Lab. The stimuli presentation procedure described below is patterned after that used by Dijksterhuis, Spears, and Lepinasse (2001, Experiment 1).

The computer program began by introducing an “impression formation” experiment, which told the participants that they will be presented with photographs of a person paired with possible information about the person in the photo. The participants were explicitly instructed to form an impression of the person in the photo by judging, immediately after the photo is presented, as to how likely the statement accurately describes the person in the photo. All 20 sentences were randomly presented one by one with a photograph.
As described earlier, these sentences were specifically designed and pretested to not have an influence on the photograph primes by being evaluatively neutral, nondiagnostic, and free of religious information. Example sentences included the following: “This person rides the bus”; “this person drives a car”. These sentences were presented to support the cover story of why they were completing the task and to ensure they were looking at the photos that were presented to influence their saliency; therefore, actual responses were discarded. Each photograph was presented for one second followed by the sentence for two seconds; this in turn was followed by the judgment screen, until all 20 sentences were presented. The specific picture used was randomly selected from the five possibilities until all the photos were presented; therefore, across all 20 trials, participants received exposure to each photo four times.

Immediately after the presentation of the photographs, the participant was instructed to go out into the hall where the experimenter was waiting. The experimenter explained, while looking at a watch, that she needed to get a different participant started in the lab next door and pick up the last task for the participant to complete. The experimenter hurried toward the door with the watch in her hand. As the experimenter walked away, she “accidentally” bumped into a bookcase on which a box of paper clips was rigged to fall on the floor. Right when the paper clips fell on the floor, the experimenter started a timer with the watch in her hand out of the participant’s view. The experimenter expressed disgust by looking at the watch and saying, “I’ll be right back.” At this point, the experimenter continued to walk away out of the participant’s sight and sound. The experimenter strategically continued to time the participant until the participant either started to pick up paperclips, or three minutes had gone by. This behavioral helping variable was similar to that used by Macrae and Johnston (1998; see also, Van Baaren, Holland, Kawakami, & van Knippenberg, 2004). Helping behavior has been successfully manipulated in the lab by similar means in other studies (e.g., Cialdini, Darby, & Vincent, 1973; for reviews on other common procedures used to measure helping behavior see Batson & Powell, 2003). The experimenter then returned with the funnel debriefing form after briefly recording the results. After the participants completed this form, they were given the final questionnaire and then fully debriefed.

RESULTS

First, the results of the funnel debriefing were examined. No participants showed awareness of the influence of the manipulation on their behavior. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) found that the manipulation was
successful in that the participants perceived the photos in the religious saliency condition ($M = 4.54$, $SD = 1.64$) to be significantly more religious than those in the organizational saliency condition ($M = 1.83$, $SD = 1.79$), $F(1, 46) = 29.93$, $p < 0.001$. All of the participants reported that they followed directions, and overall, the participants reported that the photographs had little influence on their helping behavior ($M = 1.60$, $SD = 0.98$), which was further verified by the participants’ open-ended responses on why they helped primarily consisting of feeling like it was the right thing to do at the time.

Next, after calculating the descriptive statistics and correlations between the main variables (see Table 1), the rate of helping was examined. Overall, 45.8% of the participants helped pick up paperclips in the three minute timeframe. Of those that helped, 72.7% of the participants helped in the organizational-themed visual image condition, while only 27.3% helped in the religious-themed visual image condition. To test the hypothesis that female students would help the student experimenter faster when presented with female university student photographs than religious student female photographs, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. Results showed a significant difference between the two conditions in the amount of time to help the experimenter, $F(1, 46) = 10.70$, $p = 0.002$. When presented with the religious female photographs, students took almost twice as long to help the student experimenter ($M = 2.38$ min, $SD = 1.15$) than when presented with the female student photographs ($M = 1.21$ min, $SD = 1.34$).

### Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Between Helping Measure, Saliency Manipulation, and Self-Reported Measures of Mood, Religiosity, and Helping Motivations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Helping measure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Saliency manipulation</td>
<td>0.43*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Self-reported mood</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>−0.06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Self-reported religiosity</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Self-reported likelihood of helping a stranger</td>
<td>−0.22</td>
<td>−0.26</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Self-report on how helpful of a person</td>
<td>−0.13</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>5.19</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>5.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$SD$</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: *$p < 0.01$. 
In order to test if the above effects hold even after controlling for self-reported helping motivations, religiosity, and mood, a hierarchical regression analysis was conducted (see Table 2). The first step of the model included the following control variables: conscious helping motivations (how helpful of a person, how likely to help strangers), religiosity, and mood. In the second step, the dummy coded photograph variables were entered. The control variables accounted for 13.3% of the variability in participants’ helping times, $F(4, 43) = 1.65, p = 0.18$. The addition of the photograph variables created a significant improvement in the model, accounting for an additional 13.2% of the variance in helping time scores, $F(5, 42) = 3.02, p = 0.02$, with the photograph variable showing significance, $\beta = 1.04, p = 0.009$.

A logistic regression was conducted to provide additional support for the above hierarchical regression analysis. The logistic regression equation modeled the probability of helping (coded as Yes vs. No) as a function of the visual image condition participants received and their self-reported mood, religiosity, and helping motivations. The overall equation provided a significant fit for the data, $\chi^2(5, N = 48) = 16.51, p = 0.006$ and accounted for 38.9% of the variance in being classified as a helper. Although the model correctly classified 75% of the participants, according to the Wald criterion, only the visual image variable significantly predicted helping ($z = 5.84, p = 0.016$) compared to self-reported mood ($z = 1.72, p = 0.19$), religiosity ($z = 2.13, p = 0.144$), and the helping motivations of how helpful of the person they consider themselves to be ($z = 2.62, p = 0.106$) and how likely they are to help strangers ($z = 1.97, p = 0.16$). These results are consistent with those found in the hierarchical regression analysis reported earlier.

**Table 2.** Results of Hierarchical Regression Predicting Time to Help as a Function of the Saliency Manipulation Controlling for Self-Reported Helping Motivations, Religiosity, and Mood.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>(df)</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>Self-report on how helpful of a person</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-reported likelihood of helping a stranger</td>
<td>-0.27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-reported religiosity</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-reported mood</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>Saliency manipulation</td>
<td>1.04**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$. 
This study examined the influence of visual images of people on relevant work-related behavior in a work-like setting using the theoretical frame of the social identity perspective. We found that students in a university setting, who were exposed to religious-themed images of students, were slower to help the organization than those who were exposed to organizational-themed images of students. These results suggest that encouraging a religious identification at work does not necessarily encourage OCB, while encouraging identification with the organization in general does, consistent with the OCB literature (James et al., 2011; Johns, 2006; Pawar, 2009). In addition, this effect was found even after controlling for conscious helping motivations, mood, and religiosity. The findings of the current study are similar to Levine et al. (2005) who found that the participants were more likely to help others associated with their own social categorization and provide support for the idea that a salient religious identity in a work setting may at times be unrelated (or even counter to) to prosocial behavior such as OCB (see Galen, 2012; Gawronski et al., 2005).

It should be noted that the purpose of this study was to provide an experimental test of a potential antecedent of OCB (i.e., organizational identity), given the lack of experimental research done in the area of OCB to date (e.g., Day, 2013; Rioux & Penner, 2001). Therefore, the purpose of this research was not to provide evidence of the need to ignore a particular identity (i.e., religious) over another (i.e., organizational) in a work setting. Religion was simply chosen as a strong comparison identity, given the connection found between salient religious identity and prosocial behavior in past work, even when the participants do not claim to be particularly religious (for a review see Galen, 2012). In fact, given the design and context of the study, the participants entered the experiment with their organizational identity already primed. This was done on purpose in order to demonstrate that priming a student identity that was either consistent or different than their preexisting identity can impact their subsequent helping behavior toward the university.

In reality, greater social identity complexity among employees is likely to be the ideal. For example, Brewer and Pierce (2005) examined the effects of social identity complexity, which refers to the multitude of social groups that an individual may belong to, and the dynamic effects that this complexity can have on outgroup tolerance. The greater the social identity complexity, the greater was the acceptance of the outgroup members. To support this idea Riketta and Sacramento (2008) found that as notions of intergroup rivalry decreased, those that would have been considered an outgroup are rated as more acceptable, supporting the hypothesis that enhancing commonalities
mitigates the effect of normal ingroup–outgroup designations (see also Gomez, Dovidio, Huici, Gaertner, & Cuadrado, 2008; Han & Harms, 2010).

It should also be noted that religiosity, helping motivations, and current mood have all been identified as interacting with helping behavior in past research (see Batson & Powell, 2003). In the current study, religiosity was operationalized by simply asking the participants how religious they consider themselves to be, helping motivations was operationalized by asking how helpful of a person they consider themselves to be and how likely they are to help a stranger, and mood was operationalized by asking them what their current mood was. As the results show, none of these variables significantly accounted for the variance found in actual helping behavior, meaning that the helping behavior found cannot be attributed to these variables as measured. Instead, within the work context role participants had in the organization, helping behavior seems to be most attributable to making salient their identity as a member of that organization. This finding is not surprising, given that individual differences should be relatively equal across conditions since random assignment was implemented in the experimental design used.

Despite these findings, however, a salient religious identity in a work context may at times encourage helping behavior in the organization since religious identity is conceived as being a foundation for internalized values (Geh & Tan, 2009; Ghumman et al., 2013; James, 2007; King, Bell, & Lawrence, 2009). Integrating religious identity in a work setting to encourage helping behavior, therefore, may at times be possible. One factor that may be important to consider is the current state of the organization. Stable organizations tend to be resistant to change and new ideas (Zarate, Shaw, Marquez, & Biagas, 2012). Introducing religious expression to a diverse workplace in a stable organization could elicit resistance and resentment leading to divisions among employees. Leadership could be a vital component in the successful integration of religion into the workplace by providing the group vision while still allowing for individual expression of religious differences (Baker, 2001). Effective leadership could aid in building a cohesive, while inclusive, work environment that can respect religious differences and religious expression (Pillai & Williams, 2004). This perceived fairness, and feeling like a member of the company or the team, could mitigate the differences among the employees (De Cremer & van Knippenberg, 2002) and allow for the positive connections between salient religious identity and helping behavior found in past research (see Galen, 2012) to have an influence within the organizational context.

The results of the current study provide empirical support for the hypothesis that social identity is an important antecedent to OCB in the form of
helping behavior. Nevertheless, although great effort was put into controlling for alternate explanations with the use of random assignment and holding certain variables constant (i.e., treating all participants the same, gender of participants, and the same researcher across conditions), such findings need to be interpreted with caution as with all basic laboratory research where the stage of generalization is theoretical instead of applied (see Mook, 1983). First, additional controlled studies using other primed social identities implementing neutral conditions should be completed to ensure replication, baseline effects, and to identify underlying mechanisms. In particular, since there was no true control condition where neither a religious nor an organizational identity was made salient, it is not possible to determine the baseline of helping behavior (e.g., if the religious saliency condition may have positively or negatively influenced OCB overall). Further, the current conclusion would be strengthened if a cleaner separation between an organizational identity and an individualized role were made. Although care was taken to ensure participants were categorizing themselves as students of their university, it is possible they may have been categorizing themselves as students unconnected to a particular university. Second, after additional controlled studies, applied research in business organizations should be completed in order to better examine the continuous ongoing process of OCB that is not fully captured by using proxies for OCB like in the current study (i.e., examining a single type of helping behavior in a specific context). Third, religiousness and spirituality could be examined in ways beyond the broad form of social identity in the current work. Providing specific definitions and measurement of religiosity and spirituality could allow for tests of interactional effects between such variables as spirituality and salient religious identities on OCB.

Overall, despite the preliminary nature of the current research, the present work provides one of the first attempts to provide experimental evidence of a potential antecedent of OCB in organizations. As the results demonstrate, being exposed to organizational-themed images of students significantly lead to decreased time in the helping of the organization compared to being exposed to religious-themed images of students. Such results provide a useful starting place for future researchers seeking to clearly map the cause and effects of OCB in organizations.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE**

Given that a reduction in helping time was found in the religious identity saliency condition, it is interesting to speculate about possible real-life
implication since it is likely that in most modern-day workplaces there will be employees with different religious leanings and memberships. While the rich diversity in the workplace can have many positive ramifications (learning about other cultures, traditions, etc.), it could lead to negative results as well. These negative results may not be easily observed. For example, this study has shown a subtle reduction in helping behavior when religious social identity is made salient compared to an organizational identity. Such a reduction in helping behavior could have resulted from making a religious identity more salient, resulting in a degradation of the organizational identity and leading individuals to identify less with the organization, its leadership, and its goals. Though not overtly and consciously hostile, the reduction in helping behavior could in turn result in other problems, resulting from an overall feeling of disunity.

Previous research has demonstrated the negative effects of social identity clashes in the workplace (Chreim, 2007; Langley et al., 2012), while other research has demonstrated the importance of religiosity as a prophylactic against stress and “burnout” (Kutcher, Bragger, Rodriguez-Srednicki, & Masco, 2010). Therefore, it is not recommended that organizational leaders attempt to diminish personal expression of religious beliefs by their subordinates. However, it would be shortsighted to ignore the potentially negative side effects of personal religious expression in the workplace. To counteract these potentially negative effects, we recommend a work culture that builds an organizational identity that is separate from, but supportive of, individual’s religious social identity. Encouraging and supporting both social identities (religious and organizational) may help to create an environment in which the positive benefits commonly associated with these identities can develop and flourish.

NOTES

1. In the current study, participants did, on average, claim to be moderately religious by falling above the midway point on the seven-point scaled question that asked how religious of a person they consider themselves to be ($M = 4.83$, $SD = 1.36$). However, even analyzing those participants who put a six or seven on the religiosity measure did not produce significance in relation to the impact of the salience primes on helping behavior, $F < 1.6$. Such a finding is consistent with the social priming literature that finds religious primes can have an influence on relevant behavior regardless of self-reported religiosity (e.g., Randolph-Seng & Nielson, 2007). The current finding is in contrast to other researchers who argue that religious-type primes will only significantly impact individuals who self-report as being religious (e.g., Weaver & Agle, 2002).
REFERENCES


