

Abstract

The present study explored the reasons behind engaging in positive (e.g., prosocial) and negative (e.g., counter-productive) behaviors at work. In-depth interviews were conducted for 45 employees coming from diverse occupation backgrounds and age groups to solicit motivations behind positive and negative work behaviors. Content analyses of the interviewed data revealed 92 and 17 reasons for engaging and not engaging in positive work behaviors, and 129 and 26 reasons for engaging and not engaging in negative behaviors. Exploratory factor analyses of these four sets of reasons found 14, 5, 19, and 7 factors behind engaging and not engaging in positive and negative behaviors, respectively. Interestingly, the factor “maintaining good collegial relationships” was a common reason motivating both positive and negative behaviors. The present results provide a foundation for understanding the motivations for positive and negative behaviors at the workplace.