

RESEARCH ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONAL ETHICAL CLIMATE AND COMPULSORY CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR: MEDIATED BY JOB STRESS

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ABSTRACT

In this study, a research model is proposed to explore the relationships between organizational ethical atmosphere, job stress, and compulsory citizenship behavior. With data from a survey administered to employees in 52 organizations in China, we have found significant relationships between organizational ethical climate and each of compulsory citizenship behavior and job stress, and significant relationship between job stress and compulsory citizenship behavior. We also found that job stress completely mediates the relationship between the instrumentalism oriented organizational ethical climate and compulsory citizenship behavior, and partially mediates the relationship between benevolent oriented organizational ethical climate and compulsory citizenship behavior

Key Words: Organizational Ethical Climate; Job Stress; Compulsory Citizenship Behavior

INTRODUCTION

Anecdotal evidence suggests that traditional Chinese culture pays great attention to interpersonal harmony and promotes ethical behavior. Under this tradition, employees often willingly undertake more work, which typically exceeds the scope of their job responsibilities. Although it promotes effective operation of an organization, it does result in cases of "death from overwork." However, fierce competition between market and the uncertain environment broadens employees' responsibilities, especially in a flat organization. Employees are asked to work overtime and do extra work for free. The phenomenon causes intended organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) to turn into "compulsory citizenship behavior (CCB)," defined as the behavior that is not spontaneous and is made when employees are under pressure from their colleagues, leadership, and outside-of-the-role behavior. Therefore, under the climate with strong pressure and abusive supervision, it is hard to think of employees' compliance behavior as positively active and voluntary. Involuntary behavior has a negative impact on employees' work performance as well as organizational performance.

When employees suffer from mutual exclusion or are abused by colleagues in the organization, it may lead to interpersonal pressure and force employees to reveal compulsory citizenship behavior (CCB). Employee identity will be challenged and some employees may hold that the

organization is unsuitable for them, causing employee turnover. Some argued that employees showed "positive" behavior in order to get their career development opportunity with "superficial" OCB, which also affected the behavior and attitude of other colleagues around, and adversely influenced the organization's work efficacy. Some found that if an organization created a competitive or political climate, it would make employees fear of being neglected or compete among themselves, which would influence personal promotion and the sense of crisis and anxiety. Therefore, exploring the relationships between organizational ethical climate (OEC), which has important implication on the ethical behavior of an organization and its members, and compulsory citizenship behavior (CCB) may have some significance.

Based on the social exchange theory, the perception of OEC influences employees' perception of stress. If members of an organization have a stronger perception of stress, they will tend to show negative behavior based on the principle of "mutual benefit." In addition, "motivation" is the basis of determining whether an employee will behave in a certain way. Hence, even under "high pressure," employees will try to "package" themselves to be "good soldiers," according to the theory of rational behavior.

Different patterns of organizational ethical climate were proposed. Following the literature, this paper adopts instrumentalism-oriented, benevolent-oriented, and rule-oriented organizational ethical climate as the dimensions of OEC to be examined. In addition, this paper defines job stress as an intermediary variable in three dimensions: task stress, interpersonal stress, and career development stress.

We proceed by following the "climate-pressure-behavior" paradigm. Models and various testable hypotheses are developed to explore the relationship between OEC, job stress, and CCB, using employee survey data from Chinese firms. Looking into the possible nexus among the three facets of the paradigm, four sets of hypotheses are formed based on the literature to investigate: 1. the impact of the three dimensions of organizational ethical climate (OEC) on compulsory citizenship behavior (CCB); 2. the effect of individual OEC dimensions on job stress and its three dimensions; 3. the mediating role played by job stress on the impact of OEC dimensions on CCB; and 4. the intermediary role played by the three dimensions of job stress in the relationship between OEC and CCB.

DATA AND EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

The empirical work of this paper is based on a unique sample of 363 questionnaires collected during January to March 2015 on 52 companies, including 37 private firms, 12 state-owned enterprises, and 3 foreign capital enterprises. The survey covers a variety of industries in China, such as banking, IT, manufacturing, etc.

Several diagnosis tests were first conducted to verify data validity. A hierarchical, multi-level linear model (HLM) was adopted. The results, based on the hypotheses and different model specifications, are shown in Tables 1 through 3.

Models in Table 1 assume compulsory citizenship behavior (CCB) as the dependent variable and the three dimensions of organizational ethical climate (OEC), i.e., instrumentalism-oriented, benevolent-oriented, and rule-oriented OEC, as the independent variables. Several individual-level demographic variables are also included as the first-level control variables. They are gender, age, marital status, education, seniority, and post character. Enterprise property is adopted as the second-level control variable. The results support the hypotheses that instrumentalism-oriented OEC has a positive impact on CCB, while benevolent-oriented and rule-oriented OEC has a negative influence on CCB.

Secondly, Table 2 reports the results from models with job stress and its dimensions, i.e. task stress, interpersonal stress, and career development stress, as the dependent variables, and the three dimensions of OEC and the same set of controlled variables as the independent variables. In general, rule-oriented OEC has no significant influence on any of the job stress variables, and the benevolent-oriented OEC has no significant bearing on career development pressure. The rule-oriented OEC is hence deleted from further regressions.

When added as an independent variable (Table 3), job stress as one general variable is shown to have a significant and positive effect on CCB. Earlier it was shown that instrumentalism-oriented and benevolent-oriented OEC had a significant effect on CCB. When including the OEC variables and job stress as the independent variables, the coefficient estimate of the instrumentalism-oriented OEC variable becomes insignificant, and the estimate of benevolent-oriented OEC becomes smaller, although still significant. The results for job stress, on the other hand, stays the same. Therefore, job stress is shown to have a mediating effect on the relationship between the two OEC variables and CCB.

We try to reveal the mediating effects of task stress, interpersonal stress, and career development stress.

CONCLUSIONS

The main empirical findings of this research can be summarized below:

- All three dimensions of organizational ethical climate have a significant influence on compulsory citizenship behavior. As predicted by the social exchange theory and the principle of reciprocity, the instrumentalism-oriented organizational ethical climate has a positive influence on compulsory citizenship behavior, while the benevolent-oriented and rule-oriented organizational ethical climate, on the other hand, demonstrate a negative effect;
- The three dimensions of organizational ethical climate have different influences on job stress and its three dimensions. The instrumentalism-oriented organizational ethical climate has a significant and positive influence on job stress, while the benevolent-oriented organizational ethical climate has a significant and negative impact on job stress;
- Job stress has a significant and positive influence on compulsory citizenship behavior. Job stress can completely mediate the relationship between the instrumentalism-oriented organizational ethical climate and compulsory citizenship behavior, while job stress acts as partial mediation

between the benevolent-oriented organizational ethical climate and compulsory citizenship behavior.

APPENDICES

Table 1. The relationship between CCB and OEC

Model	Dependent Variable: Compulsory Citizenship Behavior (CCB)					
		Model-1	Model-2	Model-3	Model-4	Model-5
Controlled Variables	Gender ¹		0.009	0.021	-0.009	0.018
	Age ¹		-0.168*	-0.169*	-0.162	-0.162*
	Marital status ¹		0.083	0.084	0.072	0.081
	Education ¹		-0.181**	-0.180**	-0.183	-0.178**
	Seniority ¹		-0.074	-0.069	-0.073	-0.070
	Post character ¹		-0.032	-0.028	-0.034	-0.029
	Enterprise property ²		0.166	0.190	0.157	0.098
Independent Variables (OEC)	Instrumentalism oriented ²			0.579***		
	Benevolent oriented ²				-0.420***	
	Rule oriented ²					-0.443*
Tau		0.336	0.312	0.239	0.243	0.274

Note: Superscript '1' ('2') indicates the variable is an individual (organization) level variable. * indicates significance at 5%; ** at 1%; and *** at 0.1%.

Table 2. The effect of each dimension of OEC and the dimensions of job pressure

Model	Job stress				Task stress				Interpersonal stress				Career development stress			
	model -6	model -7	model -8	model -9	model -10	model -11	model -12	model -13	model -14	model -15	model -16	model -17	model -18	model -19	model -20	Model -21
Gender ¹	-0.03	-0.025	-0.041	-0.028	-0.01	0	-	-0.005	-0.073	-0.064	-0.094	-0.069	-0.017	-0.01	-0.028	-0.013
Age ¹	-0.042	0.041	-0.038	-0.039	-0.094	-0.093	-0.024	-0.089	-0.013	-0.012	-0.005	-0.009	-0.042	-0.039	-0.037	-0.037
Marital status ¹	-0.045	-0.040	-0.049	-0.056	-0.065	-0.057	0.027	-0.065	0.04	0.043	0.031	0.039	-0.085	-0.079	-0.09	-0.086
Education ¹	-0.140	-	-	-	-0.179	-	-0.117	-0.176	-0.105	-0.101	-0.105	-0.102	-	-	-	0.142
Seniority ¹	-0.03	-0.026	-0.030	-0.029	-0.025	-0.019	-0.024	-0.022	0.025	-0.019	-0.023	-0.023	-0.044	-0.039	-0.044	-0.042
Post character ¹	0.014	0.017	0.013	0.015	0.003	0.006	-0.008	0.005	0.008	0.011	0.005	0.009	0.028	0.032	0.027	0.03
Enterprise property ²	0.094	0.115	0.089	0.058	0.125	0.159	0.115	0.092	0.087	0.104	0.082	0.061	0.069	0.092	0.065	0.029
Instrumentalism -oriented ²		0.494 ***				0.544 **				0.394 **				0.544 ***		
Benevolent-oriented ²			-				-				-				-0.195	
Rule-oriented ²				-0.235				-0.284					-0.168			
Sigma-Squared	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.571	0.571	0.571	0.57	0.455	0.455	0.456	0.455	0.433	0.433	0.433	
Tau	0.212	0.158	0.187	0.204	0.316	0.253	0.286	0.306	0.161	0.129	0.127	0.159	0.218	0.153	0.206	

Note: Superscript '1' ('2') indicates the variable is an individual (organization) level variable.

* indicates significance at 5%; ** at 1%; and *** at 0.1%.

Table 3. Mediation analysis

Model		Dependent Variable: Compulsory Citizenship Behavior (CCB)					
		model-22	model-23	model-24	model-25	model-26	model-27
Controlled Variables	Gender ¹	0.009	0.021	0.025	0.029	-0.009	0.014
	Age ¹	-0.168*	-0.169*	-0.142*	-0.142	-0.162	-0.138*
	Marital status ¹	0.083	0.084	0.108	0.106	0.072	0.099
	Education ¹	-0.181**	-0.180**	-0.103	-0.105	-0.183	-0.107
	Seniority ¹	-0.074	-0.069	-0.057	-0.056	-0.073	-0.057
	Post character ¹	-0.032	-0.028	-0.040	-0.038	-0.034	-0.040
	Enterprise property ²	0.166	0.190	-0.040	0.130	0.157	0.111
Independent Variables (OEC)	Instrumentalism-oriented ²		0.579***		0.322		
	Benevolent-oriented ²					-0.420***	-0.285*
Intermediary variable	Job stress ¹			0.546***	0.521***		0.523***

Note: Superscript '1' ('2') indicates the variable is an individual (organization) level variable. * indicates significance at 5%; ** at 1%; and *** at 0.1%.

REFERENCES

References are available from the first author upon request