

Individual Behavior: In-role and Extra-role

Yanhan Zhu

School of Political Science and Public Management, Southwest University, Chongqing 400715, China

E-mail: littleyan@yahoo.cn

Received: October 2, 2012

Accepted: November 5, 2012

Online Published: January 5, 2013

doi:10.5430/ijba.v4n1p23

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5430/ijba.v4n1p23>

The research is sponsored by the Humanities and Social Science Fund of China Ministry of Education "Study on the Effects of Exchange Relationship Perception on Individual Behavior" (Project grant No. 12YJC630329), "the Fundamental Research Funds for the Central Universities (Project grant No. SWU1209373)", and "the Social Science Doctor Funds of Southwest University" (Project grant No. SWU11333).

Abstract

Behavior, as a variable, has caused widespread concerns in various disciplines. Based on different perspectives, different disciplines define it differently. Based on the different interpretations of behavior in various disciplines, this research defines the individual behavior of the employee as "a series of dynamic reactions of the employee, as a member of the organization, to the internal and the external environmental stimulates". On the basis of previous studies, this research tries to abstract and integrate the individual behavior of the employee and concludes that the behavior of the employee, as the member of the organization, can be divided into two types, i.e. the in-role behavior and the extra-role behavior.

Keywords: In-role behavior, Extra-role behavior

Behavior, as a variable, has caused widespread concerns in various disciplines. Based on different perspectives, different disciplines define it differently. The physiology defines the behavior as a response of human organs to external stimulates. The science of law defines the behavior as a kind of legal fact and an activity, which is subjective to the wills of subjects and can cause legal consequences. The behavioral psychology defines the behavior as the all responses of man and animals to any stimulates, including the explicit behavior and the implicit behavior. The Gestalt psychology argues that the human behavior is determined by the mutual relationship between human being and the environment. The behavior refers to the external activities that are under the domination of psychology. For the employee, as a member of the organization, the analysis and the interpretation to his or her behavior has become the hot topic of the organizational behavior, the management science, and other related fields. The researches on the behavior of the employee include many aspects, such as the deviance of the employee in the workplace, the silence of the employee, the pro-social behavior of the employee, and so on. Katz et al. in *The Social Psychology of Organizing* clearly defined the in-role behavior as the necessary or the expected behavior for the accomplishment of job duties. The extra-role behavior refers to the collection of a series of actions that are not included in the statement of work or related to the employee's position or the role in the organization. Thompson and Werner described the two kinds of behaviors as the "core behavior" and the "arbitrary behavior".

1. The In-role Behavior

The role theory, as an influential social psychology theory, provides the theoretical foundation for the explaining the difference and the consistence of the individual behavior. The central concept of the role theory is the role. The term "role" comes from the theater, originally referring to the script regulating the behavior of actors. The social psychologists notice that this concept can help people to understand the social behavior and the individual personality and introduces it into the social psychology. They believe that people's positions in the social relations determine their social behavior, which is similar to the script regulating the behavior of actors. George Herbert Mead was the first scholar who introduced the concept of role into the social psychology, but he did not present a clear definition of the role. He only used it as a metaphor to illustrate the phenomenon that different individuals showed similar behaviors in a similar situation. R. Linton believed when an individual fulfilled his rights and obligations according to his or her position in the society, the individual played an appropriate role. In H. H. Kelley and J.W.

Thibaut's opinion, the role was the system, by which the others expected a series of behaviors of an individual in certain position in the interaction mechanism, and the system, by which an individual in certain position expected his or her own behaviors. J.L. Friedman et al. pointed out that the social role was a set of rules about how people behave in a specific type of relations. According to a Soviet social psychologist, although making social psychological analysis of the role need to study the subjective factors of the role behavior, we should not make them abstraction in order to recognize the nature of these subjective factors. We should associate the subjective aspect of the role behavior with the objective social relations closely, because the role expectations were nothing more than the ideological forms of objective social relations in social practice. They were the subjective reflection. In her opinion, the social role was the social function, which was ultimately determined by the position of an individual in the social relation system. The society set the general behavior principles or standards for the implementers of certain social role. In an organization, the individual is a member of the organization, whose behaviors should be different according to the difference of specific positions. With this basis, the concept of the in-role behavior comes into being.

The in-role behavior also means the core-task behavior. This concept is first proposed by Katz and Kahn officially. Katz et al. believed that the in-role behavior was such a kind of behavior that was described and defined as one part of employees' work and reflected in the official salary system in the organization. Williams and Anderson defined the in-role behavior as all the behaviors that were necessary for the completion of the responsible work. The standards used to evaluate the employee performance of the in-role behaviors are usually divided into four categories, i.e. the rating, the quality evaluation, the quantity standard, and the document data record, such as the record on the work safety, the record of absence, and the record for the delay of work, etc.

Katz studied and identified the three types of primary behaviors that have core effects on the effective operation of the organization, i.e. people must determine whether entering the organization and maintaining the identity of an organization member; the organizational member must fulfill the specific requirements for the role in an interdependent way; the organizational member will spontaneously generate many acts other than the role requires. As for the third type, Katz pointed out that: those organizations that only depend on the behaviors required by the job descriptions were extremely fragile social system.

Starting from the 1920s, a large number of researches begin to focus on the third type of behaviors of organizational members proposed by Katz. Every factory, enterprise, and social organization depended on the numerous mutual cooperation, helps, and suggestions, i.e. the giving of the "citizenship behavior" named by the academic field, what happened everyday and every night. In the 1980s, the organizational citizenship behaviors were categorized into the "extra-role behaviors" proposed by Katz in 1964. Based on this, in this paper the author uses the organizational citizenship behavior to represent the extra-role behavior of the employee.

2. The Extra-role Behavior

The practical significance of the organizational citizenship behavior is that it can enhance the effectiveness and the operation efficiency of the organization by the transformation of organizational resources, the reform of resources, and the adaptability. The organizational citizenship behavior can be divided into two categories. The first category is the organization-oriented organizational citizenship behavior. For this category, the focus is on the organization. For example, "adhere to the informal rules that aim at maintaining the work orders"; "when I cannot go to work, I will ask for leave in advance"; etc. The second category is the individual-oriented organizational citizenship behavior. For this category, the direct purpose of the subjective behavior is to benefit the individual, but it indirectly contributes to the organization by this way. For example, help absent colleagues to complete the work, interpersonal assists, etc. The organization-oriented organizational citizenship behavior is labeled common obedience or compliance. The individual-oriented organizational citizenship behavior is labeled altruism.

Organ published a research article named *A Reappraisal and Reinterpretation of the Satisfaction-Causes-Performance Hypothesis*, in which he proposed a new idea that was opposite to the prevailing opinion at that time, i.e. "the satisfied employees would be the efficient staff". This article differentiated two kinds of different contributions of the employees. The one was the productivity, i.e. the measurement of the individual outputs; the other was the contribution, which was usually not reflected in the measurement of the individual outputs. The contribution was generally the constructive suggestions for the improvement of enterprise operation or the supports for the colleagues. At that time, the author did not conceptualize the contribution of the individuals as the organizational citizenship behavior or further deeply explored this kind of contribution. He only hoped to stimulate the academic colleagues to question the idea of "the job satisfaction was a key factor in the prediction of job performance", which was supported strongly by the managers in practice. When Bateman, a doctoral student of

Organ, did researches for his doctoral thesis, he found that the superiors' rating evaluation on the subordinate job performance included the evaluation on the productivity of the subordinate, as well as many other kinds of contributions mentioned by Organ in an article in 1977. In order to well distinguish this contribution in his research from the productivity, i.e. the contribution that was named as the "quantity performance", Bateman named this contribution as the "quality performance". Subsequently, Ann Smith played a pivotal role in the evolvement of the organizational citizenship behavior concept. Smith was strongly interested in Hawthorne's classic study and tried to explain the conclusions and the thoughts drawn from the Hawthorne experiment. Driven by this curiosity, she interviewed many superiors of some manufacturing enterprises in the south of Indonesia. "What behaviors are you want but not able to command your subordinates to do? As for the reward for these behaviors, except your praises, you cannot promise your subordinates any material rewards." The results of Smith's interviews showed that the praises of superiors made the management more effective from two aspects, i.e. the improvement of the job efficiency, and the improvement of the job effectiveness. Accordingly, it formed the primary measurement of the concept of organizational citizenship behavior, e.g. "work on time in the morning or after the lunch break", "help colleagues to complete the work when they are absent", "voluntarily complete the tasks out of the official work requirements", and other 13 items for the measurement. Smith took pre-test among his students using this primary Scale. The results of the test revealed two distinct factors. One of the two was initially named as the "altruism". Today, current researchers name it as "helping others". Regardless of the changes of the names, this factor clearly presented one type of the organizational citizenship behavior, i.e. directly point at specific individuals, usually the colleagues, sometimes the superiors or the customers. In other words, the target objects of this kind of organizational citizenship behavior and the direct beneficiaries are the individual. This factor contains a measure of the following items: "help new colleagues to familiarize with the work", "help colleagues to solve problems in work", etc. The other factor included in the organizational citizenship behavior does not directly affect specific individuals, but benefit the collectivity, the department, or the organization in a more holistic way. Initially, this factor was named as the "general compliance", and subsequently it was renamed as the "sense of responsibility". That was the former description of the later two-dimensional division of the organizational citizenship behavior, i.e. the organizational citizenship behavior that takes the organization as the behavior object, and the organizational citizenship behavior that takes the individual as the behavior object. Larry Williams tried to study whether there was certain difference between the "helping others" and "general compliance". Williams used the structural equation model to analyze the raw data. The study proved the significant difference between "helping others", "general appliance", and "core job performance", which verified the previous studies. The researches on the structure of the organizational citizenship behavior mostly follow the theory of five dimensions, i.e. the altruism, the compliance, the sportsmanship, the generosity, and the civic virtue.

The researches on the concept of the organizational citizenship behavior could be traced back to Inkeles' definition of "what is the citizenship behavior". The "active citizenship behavior" was described as the combination of the compliance, the loyalty, and the participation. Back to the time of Aristotle, the political philosophers have already realized that the citizenship contained many multiple related responsibilities and emphasized that a responsible citizen must be in the balance of the compliance, the loyalty, and the participation. Early researchers on the organizational citizenship behavior separated the citizenship behavior from the in-role behavior completely and emphasized that the organizational citizenship behavior should be taken as the integration of the extra-role behavior and the work functional behavior. In 1988, Organ in the book *Organizational Citizenship Behavior: A Good Soldier Syndrome* defined the organizational citizenship behavior as "the sum of the staff's spontaneous behaviors that are not clearly established or directly recognized by the organizational official salary system, what generally benefit the operational efficiency of organization". The practical meaning for the organizational citizenship behavior lies in enhancing the organization's effectiveness and the operational efficiency by the transformation of resources, the innovation of resources, and the adaptation of resources. Graham pointed out that these standards place researchers in an embarrassing position, i.e. there must be a clear distinction between what the in-role behavior is, and what the extra-role behavior is, while the standards for the distinction between the two kinds of behaviors change over time due to the differences of individuals, job requirements, and organizational structures. In order to avoid this difficulty, Graham expanded the political philosophical concept of the citizenship to the organizational context, and conceptualized the organizational citizenship behavior as a more holistic concept, including the three related types described by Inkeles. According to Graham, the compliance reflects the organizational members' acceptance to the organizational governance structure, the job descriptions, the personnel policies, and other related rules. The loyalty is defined as a kind of loyal commitment to the organizational manager and the organization, beyond the narrow ideology of individual self-interests, e.g. assisting the organization to fight against external threats and establish a good reputation, cooperating with others for the sake of organizational interests, etc. The positive participation means

participating in the non-work-requiring activities that benefit the organization or sharing useful information and suggestions with others, etc. The more extensive concept includes the traditional in-role job performance behavior, the organizational functional extra-role behavior, and the political behavior, while those have been neglected by the traditional researches on the citizenship behavior. On the basis of continuously deepening researches on the organizational citizenship behavior, Organ further improved his classic definition and redefined the organizational citizenship behavior as “a series of contribution behaviors that maintain and enhance the social and psychological environment in which task performance takes place.”

3. Conclusion

Based on the different interpretations of behavior in various disciplines, this research defines the individual behavior of the employee as “a series of dynamic reactions of the employee, as a member of the organization, to the internal and the external environmental stimulates”. On the basis of previous studies, this research tries to abstract and integrate the individual behavior of the employee and concludes that the behavior of the employee, as the member of the organization, can be divided into two types, i.e. the in-role behavior and the extra-role behavior. The in-role behavior of the employee refers to the collection of a series of actions of the employee based on his or her role in the organization. The extra-role behavior of the employee refers to the collection of a series of actions that are not described or defined as a part of the work or reflected in the official salary system of the organization.

References

- Amabile, T. M., Schatzel Elizabeth A., Moneta Giovanni B., & Kramer, Steven J. (2004). Leader behaviors and the work environment for creativity: Perceived leader support. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 15, 5-32. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2003.12.003>
- Blau P. M. (1964). *Exchange and power in social life*. New York: Wiley.
- Brief, A. P., & Motowidlo, S. J. (1986). Prosocial organizational behaviors. *Academy of Management Review*, 1986(11), 710-725.
- Chen, Z. X., & Francesco, A. M. (2003). The relationship between the three components of commitment and employee performance in China. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 62(3), 490-510. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0001-8791\(02\)00064-7](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0001-8791(02)00064-7)
- Coyle-Shapiro, J. A. M., & Neuman, J. H. (2004). The Psychological Contract and Individual Differences: the Role of Exchange and Creditor Ideologies. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 64, 150-164. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0001-8791\(03\)00031-9](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0001-8791(03)00031-9)
- Earley. (1993). East meets West meets Mideast: Further explorations of collectivistic and individualistic work groups. *Academy of Management Journal*, 319-348. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/256525>
- Eisenberger, R., Jones, J. R., Stinglhamer, F., & Shanock, L. (2003). Flow experiences at work: for high need achievers alone? *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 26, 755-775. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/job.337>
- Hackett, R. D., Farh, J., Song, L.J., & Lapoerre, L. (2003). LMX and Organizational Citizenship Behavior: Examining the Links within and Across Western and Chinese Samples. In G. B. Graen (Ed.), *Dealing with diversity* (219-264). Greenwich, CT: Information Age.
- Hui C, Law K. S., & Chen Z. X. (1999). A Structural Equation Model of the Effects of Negative Affectivity, Leader-Member Exchange and Perceived Job Mobility on In-Role and Extra-Role Performance: A Chinese Case. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1006/obhd.1998.2812>
- Icek Ajzen, & Martin Fishbein. (1977). Attitude-Behavior Relation: A Theoretical Analysis and Review of Empirical Research. *Psychological Bulletin*, 84, 888-918. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.84.5.888>
- Lenunink, J., & Mattsson, J. (2002). Employee Behavior, Feelings of Warmth and Customer Perception in Service Encounters. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 30, 15-33.
- Lynda Jiwen Song, Anne S. Tsui, & Kenneth S. Law. (2009). Unpacking Employee Responses to Organizational Exchange Mechanisms: The Role of Social and Economic Exchange Perception? *Journal of Management*, 35, 56-93. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0149206308321544>
- Mary, A. Konoysky, & Douglas, S., Pugh. (1994). Citizenship Behavior and Social Exchange. *Academic of Management Journal*, 37(3), 656-669. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/256704>
- Robert Eisenberger, Patrick Lynch, Justin Aselage, & Stephanie Rohdieck. (2004). Who Takes the most Revenge?

Individual Differences in Megative Reciprocity Norm Endorsement. *Society for Personality and Social Psychology*, 30, 787-799. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0146167204264047>

Schnake, M. E., & Dumier, M. P. (2003). Levels of measurement and analysis issues in organizational citizenship behavior research. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 76, 283-301. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1348/096317903769647184>

Smith, C.A., Organ, D.W., & Near, J.P. (1983). Organizational citizenship behavior: Its nature and antecedents. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 68, 653-663. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.68.4.653>

Walter C. Borman, Louis A. Penner, Tammy D. Allen, & Stephan J. Motowidlo. (2001). Personality Predictors of Citizenship Performance. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 9(1), 52-69. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1468-2389.00163>

Wexley, K. N., & Yukl, G. C. (1977). *Organization Behavior and Personnel Psychology*. Homewood, IL: Richard D, Irwin, 109.