

The Mediating Role of Procedural Justice between Participation in Decision-Making and Organizational Citizenship Behavior: An Empirical Study about Skeleton Government Civilian in China*

Guangjin Zhang¹, Gabriel Lee², Xiehua Zou¹

¹Politics and Law school, China University of Geosciences, Wuhan, China; ²College of Business, City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China.

Email: hbgzgj@126.com, hbwhlee@yeah.net

Received May 14th, 2010; revised June 21st, 2010; accepted July 26th, 2010.

ABSTRACT

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) is very important for organization to adapt changing external conditions. Numerous researches have found that the stable relationship between participation in decision-making (PD) and procedural justice (PJ), between PJ and OCB. This study examined the mediating effect of PJ on the relationship between PD and OCB. Data collected from 288 civilian from skeleton government in Hubei province of China indicated that: procedural justice perception mediates the relationship between participation in decision-making and one of two organizational citizenship behavior dimensions.

Keywords: Participation in Decision-making, Organizational Citizenship Behavior, Procedural Justice, Mediating Effect

1. Introduction

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) represents work-related activities that are discretionary, not directly or explicitly organized by the formal job description and formal reward system, and it improves efficiency and effectiveness of organization [1]. OCB includes such beneficial actions for organization as helping others who have been absent, taking a personal interest in other employees, attendance and punctuality beyond acceptable norms, and following the informal rules to maintain order.

Prior researches in this area had identified two main types of OCB: on one hand, OCBO-behaviors that benefit the organization in general (e.g., conserves and protects organizational property, gives advance notice

when unable to come to work), on the other hand, OCBI-behaviors that immediately benefit specific individuals and indirectly through this means contribute to the organization (e.g., voluntarily help new employees, shares knowledge with co-workers privately) [2].

OCB contributes efficiency and effectiveness for organization by strengthening its innovativeness and adaptability. Interest in OCB is increasing as global competition highlights the importance of innovation, flexibility, productivity, and responsiveness to changing external conditions [1].

In a meta-analysis review of 55 studies, Organ and Ryan found that job satisfaction, perceived fairness, organizational commitment, and leader supportiveness were robust predictors of OCB [3]. As for the relationship between participation in decision-making and organizational citizenship behavior, Van Yperen, Berg, and Willering found that participation in decision-making enhanced employees' sense of supervisor support, which made employees more likely to reciprocate

*This research was supported by the Primary Research Foundation of University belonging to Education Ministry of China under Grant CUGW090211, the Research Project of S&T of Hubei province under Grant B20080402, and the Humanity Social Science Foundation of Hubei province under Grant 2008y054.

by exhibiting OCB [4].

The purpose of this study is to examine the mediating role of procedural justice between participation in decision-making and OCB. The study suggests that participation in decision making is positively related to procedural justice which in turn mediates its relationship to OCB.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis

2.1. Participation in Decision-Making and Perception of Procedural Justice

Procedural justice refers to justice of the processes that lead to decision outcome, it focuses on discussion about legal procedures, Thibaut and Walker advanced two criteria for procedural justice: 1) the ability to voice one's views and arguments during a procedure (process control), 2) the ability to influence the actual outcome itself (decision control) [5]. These procedural justice criteria based on control have received robust support in the existed literature [6].

Early studies about the practice of performance appraisals had demonstrated that giving employees the opportunity to express their views and feelings (process control) was strongly related to perceived fairness of the performance appraisal procedures. Organizational justice researches had consistently shown that voice effect (process control) enhanced individual's evaluations of procedural fairness. More recently, the study by Dulebohn & Ferris found a positive association between the use of supervisor-focused tactics (voice effect) and procedural justice evaluations [7]. In line with these findings, Zhou Hao found the opportunity to present information to the authority to be one of the most influential factors generating procedural justice [8]. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that greater allowing employees to voice their views in the process of decision-making, greater Perception of the fairness of those procedures.

Hypothesis 1: Degree of participation in decision-making will be positively related to Perception of procedural justice.

2.2. Perception of Procedural Justice and OCB

Lind and Barley suggested that independent relationship between procedural justice and OCB can be explained by group value model [6]. The group value model suggests that an employee regards procedures as fair to the extent lying on how they were respected and valued member of a work group. Giving employees many opportunities during the procedures increases Perception of the procedures fairness not only because of employees' voice may influence the fairness of rewards distribution, but also

because they have the opportunity to express their opinions and feelings, which demonstrated that the group considered their input is of value. OCB occurs in organizations when there is a strong emphasis on group concerns and cognitions, such an emphasis often motivates employees to maximize group rather than individual rewards. Employees may therefore use OCB to support and maintain the group and seek ways to improve its health and welfare [6].

A variety of studies have found a robust relationship between Perception of procedural justice and OCB. For example, Fahr, Podsakoff, and Organ found that procedural justice accounted for unique variance with respect to altruism dimension of OCB [9]. Parallel results were obtained by Liu Ya who found a positive relationship between procedural justice and four OCB dimensions [10].

Hypothesis 2: Perception of procedural justice will be positively related to OCB.

2.3. Participation in Decision-making, Perception of Procedural Justice, and OCB

Social exchange theory provides an explanation of why procedural justice mediates the relationship between participation in decision-making and OCB. Social exchange theory based on reciprocity norm, it refers to the relationship that entails unspecified future obligations, and this kind of relationship presumes the other partners of the exchange will fairly discharge their obligations in the long run [11].

Participation in decision-making may be related to OCB because opportunity to participate in decision-making contributes to the enhancement of employees' Perception of the procedures fairness, this perception of fairness leads to employee citizenship behavior because of social exchange relationship developed between employees and their organizations. Based on the norm of reciprocity, when employees perceived their organization treated them fairly, social exchange relationship dictated reciprocity to employees, and Organ suggested that OCB likely was one avenue for employees' reciprocation [12].

Hypothesis 3: Perception of procedural justice will mediate the relationship between participation in decision making and OCB.

3. Method

3.1. Data and Procedures

Data were gathered from subordinates and their supervisors of skeleton government in HuBei province. To ensure respondents' objectivity, the surveys were anonymous. A random code was assigned to each survey ques-

tionnaire for follow-up purposes. Firstly, the researcher contacted some supervisors and asked them to enumerate their subordinates, and then the codes were assigned based on the subordinates' list, specifically, every subordinate has a unique code printed on his questionnaire, and also presented in his supervisor's, obviously, if a supervisor has more than one subordinate, he has more than one questionnaires been printed different codes, the code list only be knew by the supervisor, and the subordinates didn't know about the supervisor assesses their OCB. Finally, all the questionnaires sent and reclaimed by the researcher self.

A total number of 500 subordinates were contacted and 334 returned completed questionnaires for a response rate of 66.8%. At the same time, their supervisors were asked to rate subordinates' organizational citizenship behavior. Of the 357 surveys returned, and for a response rate of 71.4%. Matching surveys (a subordinate and his supervisor all returned the survey) were 288, and for a response rate of 57.6%, in total the 288 subordinates have 96 supervisors. The demographic characteristics of subordinates and supervisors showed in **Table 1**.

3.2. Measures

All the questionnaires were translated into Chinese by a PhD candidate whose major in business administration. In order to check consistency between the English and Chinese versions, the process of back-translation was used by another PhD candidate. When the items of the original English version questionnaire and the back-translation one are different, the two PhD candidates translated them into Chinese together.

Organizational citizenship behavior variable was measured by using supervisors assessed citizenship behavior with two dimensions scale developed by Williams and Anderson, response options ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree)[2]. The two dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior, each with six items, were organizational citizenship behaviors that have a specific individual as the target (OCBI), and organizational citizenship behaviors that on primarily benefiting the organization (OCBO). The explore factor analysis indicated that the variable including two dimensions, and the items loaded on the two factors are consistent with original English version, the Cronbach alpha for OCBI and OCBO were 0.82, 0.85 respectively, and the overall Cronbach alpha for this variable was 0.85.

Procedural justice scale developed from Niehoff and Moorman [13]. The explore factor analysis showed that the variable was one dimension, and the Cronbach alpha for this six items scale was 0.81.

Participation in decision-making was measured by us-

ing Van Veldhoven and Meijman six items scale [14]. The explore factor analysis showed that the variable was one dimension, and the Cronbach alpha for this six items scale was 0.90.

4. Analysis and Results

T test, ANOVA, descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and hierarch linear regression with SPSS 12.0, structural equation model with Lisrel 8.5 to analyze the data in this study.

In order to analyze the impact of supervisors' demographic characteristics on their assessment of OCB, independent T test and ANOVA were used to compare the difference of OCB under the different supervisors' demographic characteristics; the results showed that there wasn't significant difference.

The values of means, standard deviations, and correlation of the variables reported in **Table 2**.

Table 2 presented correlations coefficients, the results indicated that participation in decision-making (PDM) was significantly associated with procedural justice (PJ) and OCB. Results also showed that procedural justice was significantly associated with both OCBI and OCBO. Hypotheses were tested by using structural equation model to construct path analysis. Results of path analysis presented in **Table 3**, it indicated that there was a significant association between participation in decision-making and procedural justice, which confirmed hypothesis 1. Hypothesis 2 suggested that there was a positive relationship between procedural justice and organizational citizenship behavior. Results in **Table 3** confirmed the positive relationship between procedural justice and organizational citizenship behaviors that benefit the organization in general (OCBO), the significant relationship between procedural justice and organizational citizenship behaviors that benefit specific individuals (OCBI) wasn't found.

To test the hypothesis 3, we assessed the conditions for mediation with hierarch linear regression in **Table 4** Results in Table 4 showed the mediating effect of procedural justice between participation in decision-making and organizational citizenship behavior that benefit the organization (OCBO), the demographic characteristics of subordinates didn't have significant impact on PJ and OCBO. The final column of table 4 showed the VIF and the Durbin-Watson in the fourth step, the biggest VIF was the variable procedure justice (2.20), which indicated that the predictors haven't serious multiple collinearity, the D-W was 2.134(≈ 2), it indicated that the error items in the fourth step were independent.

Results in Table 4 showed the mediating effect of procedural justice between participation in decision-making

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the sample.

The sample	Item	Type	Frequency	Percent	
	Gender	Male	75	26.0%	
		Female	213	74.0%	
			=<3	36	12.5%
Subordinates	Tenure	>3 and =<10	193	67.0%	
		>10	59	20.5%	
	Position	Section member	225	78.1%	
Section chief		63	21.9%		
Supervisors	Gender	Male	74	77.1%	
		Female	22	22.9%	
			=<3	2	2.1%
	Tenure	>3 and =<10	68	70.1%	
		>10	26	27.8%	
	Position	Section chief	81	84.4%	
Director		15	15.6%		

Table 2. Descriptive statistics, spearman's correlations coefficients.

	Mean	Std dev	PJ	OCBO	OCBI
PDM	11.25	3.92	0.577**	0.428**	0.216**
PJ	21.46	5.18		0.752**	0.271**
OCBO	37.12	4.71			0.276**
OCBI	32.31	4.93			

Table 3. Path coefficients and significance.

Parameters	Estimates	Standard error	T-value	P-value
PDM → PJ	0.30	0.07	4.45	<0.001
PJ → OCBO	0.28	0.07	3.98	<0.001
PJ → OCBI	-0.15	0.07	-2.29	0.988

and organizational citizenship behavior that benefit the organization (OCBO), the demographic characteristics of subordinates didn't have significant impact on PJ and OCBO. The final column of table 4 showed the VIF and the Durbin-Watson in the fourth step, the biggest VIF

was the variable procedure justice (2.20), which indicated that the predictors haven't serious multiple collinearity, the D-W was 2.134(≈2), it indicated that the error items in the fourth step were independent.

5. Conclusions and Discussions

The purpose of this study examined the relationship among participation in decision-making, procedural justice, and organizational citizenship behavior. More specifically, it examined whether or not participation in decision-making was related to OCB via the mediating variable procedural justice. Results offered support for the role of procedural justice as mediator of the relationship between participation in decision-making and one of the two types of OCB (OCBO).

Evidence indicated that the employees participated in decision-making more; they perceived their work procedures to be fair more, which in turn prompted them to reciprocate with organizational citizenship behaviors that directly benefit the organization (OCBO). The relationship between procedural justice and organizational citizenship behaviors that benefit specific individuals (OCBI) was found to be insignificant. There are some reasons for which that it is often regarded as organizational institutional tactic to let employees participate in decision making, consequently, employee reciprocate activity with OCBO other than OCBI. As for OCBI, since it benefits specific individuals, therefore the attitude and affective cognitive among individuals maybe have direct influence on it, for example, the dimension co-worker relationship of job satisfaction, and interpersonal trust within organization might be the predictors for OCBI.

The results of this study consisted with the findings of Van Yperen *et al.*, who proved the existence of positive relationship between participation in decision-making and OCB. However, Van Yperen and colleagues suggested that perceived supervisor support mediated the relationship between participation in decision-making

Table 4. Hierarch linear regression to assess the conditions for mediation.

Dependents	Independents	PJ	OCBO	OCBO	OCBO	VIF	
		The first step	The second step	The third step	The fourth step		
Control variable	Gender	Female	0.03	0.11	0.09	0.05	1.72
	Tenure	>3 and =<10	-0.05	-0.08	-0.11	-0.09	2.13
		>10	-0.10	-0.10	-0.13	-0.11	1.47
	Position	Section chief	0.07	0.12	0.11	0.10	1.15
		PDM	0.56***	0.41***	—	0.14(p=0.68)	1.62
	PJ	—	—	0.73***	0.74***	2.20	
F	145.46***	73.21***	385.12***	278.76***	D-W		
Adj.R ²	0.32	0.17	0.55	0.59	2.134		

N = 288. *** P < 0.001.

and OCB. They argued that respecting the rights and a full status of individual employees, giving the opportunity to participate in decision-making enhanced employees' perception of supervisor support which was accompanied by OCB [4]. The findings of this study suggested that participation in decision-making is associated with perceived procedural justice, because allowing employees to participate in decision-making is giving them the opportunity to express their views to the authority, which is considered as one of the most influential factors to generate procedural justice perception. Consequently, the perception of procedural justice prompts employees to reciprocate by exhibiting OCB. The contribution of this study is that it sheds more light on the mediating role of procedural justice between participation in decision-making and OCB, which was not addressed in the literature.

Overall, this research has two primary limitations. First, all data were collected at the same time, and results derived from cross-sectional study may presume, but not confirm causality. Second, except the OCB data, all data were collected via self-report surveys of employees, which may create social desirability.

This study has valuable practical implication. Supervisors who desire to create an organizational atmosphere that foster citizenship behavior must make sure that the procedures used to allocate organizational rewards were perceived as fair; supervisors can do so by giving employees the opportunity to participate in decision making.

6. Acknowledgements

Thanks for Mr. Wen, X S' help, he provided a great deal of convenience to send and reclaim questionnaires.

REFERENCES

- [1] D. W. Organ, "The Motivational Basis of Organizational Citizenship Behavior," In: B. M. Staw and L. L. Cummings, Eds., *Research in Organizational Behavior*, CT: JAI Press, Greenwich, 1990, pp. 289-291.
- [2] L. J. Williams and S. E. Anderson, "Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment as Predictors of Organizational Citizenship and In-Role Behaviors," *Journal of Management*, Vol. 17, No. 3, 1991, pp. 601-617.
- [3] D. W. Organ and K. Ryan, "A Meta-Analytic Review of Attitudinal and Dispositional Predictors of Organizational Citizenship Behavior," *Personnel Psychology*, Vol. 48, No. 4, 1995, pp.775-788.
- [4] N. W. Vanperen, A. E. Berg and B. M. Willering, "Towards a Better Understanding of the Link between Participation in Decision-Making and Organizational Citizenship Behavior: A Multilevel Analysis," *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 72, No. 3, 1999, pp. 377-392.
- [5] J. Thibaut and L. Walker, "Procedural Justice: A Psychological Analysis," Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, New Jersey, 1975.
- [6] E. Lind and P. Barley, "Some Thoughts on Self and Group Interests: A Parallel-Processor Model," The Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management, Miami, 1991, pp. 251-259.
- [7] J. H. Dulebohn and G. R. Ferris, "The Role of Influence Tactics in Perception of Evaluations' Fairness," *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 42, No. 3, 1999, pp. 288-303.
- [8] H. Zhou, L. R. Long, Y. Wang, *et al.*, "The Different Outcome of Distributive Justice, Procedural Justice and Interact Justice," *Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 37, No. 5, 2005, pp. 689-692.
- [9] J. Fahr, P. M. Podsakoff and D. W. Organ, "Accounting for Organizational Citizenship Behavior: Leader Fairness and task Scope Versus Satisfaction," *Journal of Management*, Vol. 16, No. 4, 1990, pp.705-722.
- [10] Y. Liu, L. R. Long and Y. Li, "The Unique Effects of Organizational Justice Dimension on Organizational Outcomes," *Management World*, Vol. 19, No. 3, 2003, pp. 126-132.
- [11] Z. M. Wu and X. Wu, "An Empirical Study on the Antecedents of Organizational Behavior: A Social Exchange Theory," *Human Factors*, Vol. 12, No. 2, 2006, pp. 7-9.
- [12] D. W. Organ, "Organizational Citizenship Behavior: The 'Good Soldier' Syndrome," Lexington Books, Lexington, 1988, pp. 135-142.
- [13] B. P. Niehoff and R. H. Moorman, "Justice as a Mediator of the Relationship between Methods of Monitoring and Organizational Citizenship Behavior," *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 36, No.3, 1993, pp. 527-556.
- [14] M. Van Veldhoven and M. Meijman, "The Measurement of Psychosocial Job Demands," NIA, Amsterdam, 1994.