

# 18. AN INDUCTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CONSTRUCT DOMAIN OF ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR

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**Abstract:** Using an inductive approach, we examined the construct domain of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) in the People's Republic of China (PRC). From a diverse sample of 99 employees and managers in 40 state-owned, collective, joint venture, and private enterprises in the PRC, we collected 480 OCB incidents. Results of content analysis of these incidents revealed 11 dimensions of OCB, six of which are not evident in the Western literature. The type of organization influenced the forms of OCB reported. Results suggested that the Chinese formulation of OCB differs from its Western counterparts and is embedded in the PRC's unique social and cultural context.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Nearly four decades ago, Katz (1964) pointed out the importance of a class of innovative and spontaneous behaviors that are beyond employees' role requirements but essential for accomplishment of organizational functions. In the pioneering research of Dennis Organ and his associates (Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983), this class of behavior was conceptualized as

organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), broadly defined as “individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization” (Organ, 1988: 4). In subsequent research, several related concepts of OCB have been proposed and examined, including extra-role behavior (Van Dyne, Cummings, & McLean Parks, 1995; Van Dyne, & LePine, 1998), civic citizenship (Graham, 1991; Van Dyne, Graham, & Dienesch, 1994), prosocial behavior (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986), organizational spontaneity (George & Brief, 1992), and contextual performance (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993; Motowidlo, Borman, & Schmit, 1997).

Despite a considerable amount of empirical research on conceptualizing and categorizing OCB, the proliferation of related constructs and dimensions of OCB in recent years indicates that the academic community has not been able to settle on a single, well-defined construct for OCB. Organ, for example, proposed that it is no longer fruitful to regard OCB as “extra-role,” “beyond the job,” or “unrewarded by the formal system,” because of the fuzziness of the concepts of “role,” “job,” and “guaranteed contractual reward,” and he thus suggested thinking of OCB as similar to “contextual performance,” which he described as contributions that enhance the social, psychological, and political context in which task performance occurs (Organ, 1997). Van Dyne and her colleagues, on the other hand, have insisted that classifying a specific behavior as in-role or extra-role is theoretically significant, although it is empirically difficult, given the dynamic and relative nature of extra-role behavior (Van Dyne et al., 1995).

Recent research also shows that there is no clear, common understanding of OCB among organizational participants (Lam, Hui, & Law, 1999; Morrison, 1994). Morrison (1994) found that employees holding the same formal job differed in how broadly they defined their jobs. She also found not only that employees holding the same job reported different levels of job satisfaction, commitment, and tenure *and* tended to define in-role and extra-role differently, but also that employees and their supervisors differed in how broadly they defined in-role behavior. With so much uncertainty about the construct, it is not surprising that Organ reported “no definitive measure of OCB exists, and empirical analyses of existing measures have not shown entirely consistent results, so the articulation of different forms of OCB must necessarily go somewhat beyond the available data” (Organ, 1988: 8).

Even less is known about OCB in a global context. With the exception of Farh, Earley, and Lin (1997), it has been Western researchers using Western samples in a Western social-cultural context who have developed the current concept of OCB and its related measures. We do not

know if the current dimensions of OCB as identified in the Western literature are culture invariant.

George and Jones (1997) noted the importance of contextual factors as shapers of OCB. They referred specifically to individual, group, and organizational contexts. To these we must surely add two contexts that are even more pervasive and inexorable in conditioning the nature, meaning, and forms of discretionary contributions that sustain and enhance the social, psychological, and political contexts of task performance, and thereby aid the survival, growth, and effectiveness of organizations. The contexts to which we refer are national culture and the economic institutional framework.

In the United States, with its highly individualistic culture and long-established institutions promoting free-market capitalism on a level playing field, we would expect valued and salient forms of OCB to be those that enable an organization to operate more efficiently and offer improved products and services, so as to flourish in a competitive marketplace. In other cultures and economic institutional frameworks, price and product quality are not always omnipotent; personal relationships might be more decisive, and the goodwill and support of the state and community often count significantly in the allocation of resources to organizations. Cutting-edge, innovative ideas might matter less than internal solidarity and perceived legitimacy within societal values. Thus, the sense of what behaviors comprise genuine organizational citizenship might not correspond exactly to those identified in the Western literature.

Using an inductive approach, we sought to understand the content domain or dimensions of OCB in the People's Republic of China (PRC), a socialist country with strong collectivism. We would expect a broader conception of OCB stemming from collectivism and a less clear definition of core task stemming from the planned economy. We compared the dimensions identified in the PRC with those in the Western literature. We also examined the potential impact of the type of the organization in which a respondent was employed on the content domain of OCB in the PRC. This research helps us not only to understand the dimensions of OCB in the PRC context, but also to determine which OCB dimensions in the current literature are more etic (universal) and which are more emic (culture-specific).

### **1.1. Major Dimensions of OCB in the Western Literature**

In this section we identify major dimensions of OCB in the Western literature. We limit our review to the Western literature because we wish to contrast OCB in the West and in the PRC. We further limit our review to dimensions of OCB that have been operationalized and investigated in the

Western literature. In other words, we exclude dimensions that have been discussed conceptually but not measured empirically. For example, Katz and Kahn (1978: 403) provided five examples of innovative and spontaneous behaviors: (a) cooperative activities with fellow members, (b) actions protective of system or subsystem, (c) creative suggestions for organizational improvement, (d) self-training for additional organizational responsibility, and (e) creation of a favorable climate for an organization in its external environment. Among these five classes of behavior, categories a, c, and e have been studied empirically as distinct dimensions of OCB. Category b has not been followed up in subsequent empirical research. Category d has drawn some attention in the literature, but has never been taken up as a distinct dimension in empirical studies. For example, George and Brief (1992) discussed conceptually “developing oneself” as a distinctive dimension of OCB (in a broad definition). Graham (1986) included items similar to self-training in her measure of professionalism as a form of OCB. We do not include categories b and d as major dimensions of OCB found in the Western literature.

Empirical dimensions of OCB were first identified and measured by Smith, Organ, and Near (1983). In deriving their dimensions and measures, Smith et al. (1983) conducted semistructured interviews with a number of managers from several organizations. They asked these managers to identify instances of helpful, but not absolutely required, job behaviors that the managers valued but could not guarantee rewards for (other than their personal appreciation). A pool of such items was then pilot-tested with a sample of managers, and ensuing factor analysis distilled them into two dimensions: altruism and generalized compliance. These are the primary dimensions of OCB that have been used broadly in subsequent research.

Five years later, Organ reviewed the empirical literature on OCB and found that no definitive measure of the construct existed (Organ, 1988). He synthesized the literature and identified three more dimensions of OCB: sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue. Adding altruism and conscientiousness (a new name for generalized compliance) to the three, Organ proposed a five-dimension system of OCB. Subsequently Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, and Fetter (1990) developed empirical measures for each of the five dimensions of OCB. Organ’s classification, along with Podsakoff et al.’s measure, became the most popular formulation of OCB in the literature.

Drawing from research in political science, Graham (1991) proposed an alternative conceptualization of OCB, called civic citizenship. Civic citizenship was defined as a global concept that includes all positive, organizationally relevant behaviors of individual organization members. Graham identified three major forms of civic citizenship: (a) organizational

obedience, (b) organizational loyalty, and (c) organizational participation. This conceptualization of OCB was validated, and organizational participation was further broken down into social participation, advocacy participation, and functional participation by Van Dyne, Graham, and Dienesch (1994). As expected, there is a considerable amount of overlap in content domain between civic citizenship and Organ's five-dimensional OCB. Three dimensions of Graham's civic citizenship—functional participation, advocacy participation, and loyalty—are, however, relatively distinct from Organ's classification and have been investigated in empirical study (Van Dyne et al., 1994)

Van Dyne, Cummings, and McLean Parks (1995) proposed a typology to synthesize various forms of extra-role behavior. Their typology is divided along two dimensions: promotive versus prohibitive, and affiliative versus challenging. Promotive behaviors are proactive; they promote, encourage, or cause things to happen. Prohibitive behaviors are protective and preventative; they include interceding to protect those with less power as well as speaking out to stop inappropriate or unethical behavior. Affiliative behavior is interpersonal and cooperative; it strengthens relationships and is other-oriented. Challenging behavior expresses disaffection with the status quo and presses for change; it can spark improved operations but can also damage relationships. Van Dyne and her colleagues (1995) identified four types of extra-role behavior based on the two dimensions: voice, helping, stewardship, and whistle blowing. In a subsequent study, Van Dyne and LePine (1998) validated two types of extra-role behavior: voice and helping. Helping is similar to altruism. Voice, which is defined as promotive behavior that emphasizes expression of constructive challenge intended to improve rather than merely criticize, can be considered another distinct dimension of OCB.

Drawing on the above review, we identified nine major dimensions of OCB in the Western literature. They are altruism, conscientiousness, loyalty, civic virtue, voice, functional participation, sportsmanship, courtesy, and advocacy participation. These dimensions, along with their definitions and sources, are summarized in Table 18.1.

## **1.2. National Culture and OCB**

However, empirical studies of OCB in non-Western cultures are rare. Farh, Earley, and Lin (1997) derived OCB dimensions empirically in a non-Western cultural context. These researchers asked a sample of employees from Taiwan to generate a large number of OCB incidents. The researchers sorted these incidents, classified them into categories, and investigated them with an independent sample to derive dimensions. Five

**Table 18.1. OCB Dimensions in the Western Literature**

Dimension	Definition	Source
Altruism	Discretionary behavior that has the effect of helping a specific other person with an organizationally relevant task or problem.	Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983; Organ, 1988; Podsakoff et al., 1990. Similar dimensions include "helping" (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998) and "interpersonal helping" (Graham, 1989; Moorman & Blakely, 1995).
Conscientiousness	Discretionary behaviors on the part of an employee that go well beyond the minimum role requirements of the organization, in the areas of attendance, obeying rules and regulations, taking breaks, and so forth.	Smith et al., 1983; Organ, 1988; Podsakoff et al., 1990. Similar dimensions include "obedience" (Graham, 1989; Van Dyne et al., 1994) and "personal industry" (Graham, 1989; Moorman & Blakely, 1995).
Sportsmanship	Willingness of an employee to tolerate less than ideal circumstances without complaining employees "avoid complaining, petty grievances, railing against real or imagined slights, and making federal cases out of small potatoes".	Organ, 1988; Podsakoff et al., 1990.
Courtesy	Discretionary behavior on the part of an individual aimed at preventing work-related problems with others.	Organ, 1988; Podsakoff et al., 1990.
Civic virtue	Behavior on the part of the individual that indicates that he/she responsibly participates in, is involved in, or is concerned about the life of the organization.	Organ, 1988; Podsakoff et al., 1990.
Functional participation	Participative contribution in which individuals focus on themselves rather than others in their organizations but yet contribute to organizational effectiveness.	Van Dyne et al., 1994.
Advocacy participation	Behaviors targeted at others in an organization and reflecting a willingness to be controversial, such as encouraging quiet people to speak up in meetings and helping coworkers to think for themselves.	Van Dyne et al., 1994. Similar dimensions include "individual initiative" (Graham, 1989; Moorman & Blakely, 1995).
Loyalty	Allegiance to an organization and promotion of its interests.	Graham, 1989; Van Dyne et al., 1994. Similar dimensions include "loyal boosterism" (Graham, 1989; Moorman & Blakely, 1995).
Voice	Promotive behavior that emphasizes expression of constructive challenges intended to improve rather than merely criticize.	Van Dyne et al., 1995; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998).

dimensions of OCB were found in Taiwan. Three of the five were similar to altruism, conscientiousness, and civic virtue, as described by Organ

(1988), suggesting that these Western-derived OCB dimensions transcend cultural boundaries. The other two dimensions, protecting company resources and interpersonal harmony, have not been examined in the Western literature, suggesting that they are dimensions unique to Taiwan. The Farh et al. (1997) study suggests that some OCB dimensions are etic (universal) in nature and others are emic (specific to a cultural context).

Using the OCB items in the scale developed by Podsakoff et al. (1990), Lam and colleagues (1999) investigated the perceived job role boundaries of subordinates in four countries (the U.S., Australia, Japan, and Hong Kong). This study showed that employees from Hong Kong and Japan were more likely to rate courtesy and sportsmanship as part of their job roles than were employees from the United States and Australia. Furthermore, employees from the four countries did not differ on altruism, conscientiousness, and civic virtue in terms of perceived job role boundary. This study corroborates Farh et al.'s (1997) findings and suggests that some dimensions of OCB may transcend cultural boundaries and others may not.

These are the only two published studies of which we are aware that offer empirical support for the reasonable hypothesis that national culture is a context that conditions the sense of what constitutes "organizational citizenship" and the forms in which that citizenship occur. The current study contributes to understanding which OCB dimensions can transcend cultures and which cannot by examining OCB in the PRC context.

### **1.3. Organizational Citizenship Behavior in the PRC Context**

In the extensive observations and writings on the distinctive attributes of Chinese culture and the economic institutions that comprise the PRC (Child, 1994; Walder, 1983), three attributes are recurrently emphasized and would appear to be rife with implications for what the Chinese would regard as meaningful and important OCB.

#### **1.3.1. The Salience of Interpersonal Relationships**

Cultural anthropologists have observed that the Chinese perceive a person as inseparable from his or her surrounding network (Hsu, 1971). For example, the Chinese character for man (*ren*) carries the meaning of connectedness and reciprocal relations, whereas the English word "man" carries the meanings of separateness, free will, and individualism (Hsu, 1971). Moreover, the Chinese are described as dominated by "social orientation" (Yang, 1993), which means that they primarily attempt to establish and maintain harmonious relationships with their social surroundings in daily life. The importance of personal relationships (*guanxi*)

in business dealings has also been well documented in the literature (Farh, Tsui, Xin, & Cheng, 1998; Tsui & Farh, 1997; Xin & Pearce, 1996). The importance of interpersonal relationships in Chinese daily life suggests that some domains of Chinese OCB are likely to be related to social relations at the workplace. For example, Yang (1993) identified four types of Chinese social orientation: familistic, relationship, authoritarian, and other. The familistic and the relationship orientations, which respectively reflect the importance of family and interpersonal relationships in Chinese daily life, were identified as accounting for the emergence of interpersonal harmony and protecting company resources as OCB dimensions unique in Taiwan in the study of Farh et al. (1997). We expected to find similar dimensions in our PRC sample.

### 1.3.2. State Domination

Before the economic reform that began in 1979, China was gripped by a system of central planning in which the government exercised a tight control over its enterprises and employees. This is one of the most significant features that distinguish organizations in the PRC before the 1980s from their counterparts in the West. For example, before 1979, there was tight control by the Ministry of Labor over labor allocation. Workers and staff were assigned to organizations by the government without their having any say (Walder, 1983). Moreover, workers could not quit the organizations they were assigned to, as it was impossible for them to get comparable positions in other organizations (Walder, 1983). Such central allocation determined not only workers' jobs and careers, but also covered almost every aspect of their lives.

In recent years, the state has loosened its control over its enterprises and employees in many areas of life. Even so, the state remains a dominant force in the PRC. It wields enormous power over many aspects of business operations (for instance, there is state approval of investment projects, business loans, and licenses). We expected that OCB in the PRC would reflect the domination of the state. For instance, employee participation in activities promoted by the state might be considered as OCB because it could help satisfy the demands that the state places on its enterprises. The influence of the state is particularly strong for state-owned enterprises, given their higher dependence on the state for resources and key decisions.

### 1.3.3. Broad Definition of Performance

In the PRC, the concept of performance (*biaoxian*) takes on a completely different meaning than in the West. *Biaoxian* is an all-encompassing concept. It refers to many aspects of life beyond the actual

work of employees, including (a) the kinds of political opinions, suggestions, and criticisms they voice in meetings, (b) their willingness to volunteer extra effort when asked, (c) their character and integrity, (d) their willingness to accept orders without questioning them, (e) their ability to maintain cordial working relationships with coworkers, leaders, and so forth (Walder, 1983).

Because the concept of *biaoxian* is so inclusive, distinctions between what would be considered “mandated” task performance as opposed to “discretionary contributions” are likely to be more subtle and different in nature from those regarded as most intuitively obvious in the West. In the United States, for example, formal job descriptions and employee handbooks provide most organizational participants with some basis for gauging the degree to which contributions and constructive gestures are matters of obligation. In China, the sense of what is obligatory is much less likely to be derived from job analysis and formal records or contracts. In the West, philosophies and theories of management have consistently emphasized “tasks” and “relationships” as different domains of organization; in China, relationships are seen as pervasive concerns that cannot be divorced from tasks. Thus, it remains to be seen which forms of contribution the Chinese view as obligatory and enforceable task requirements.

#### **1.4. Respondent Organization Type**

We also expected that the type of organization in which a respondent was employed would influence the reporting of various forms of OCB in the PRC. As noted earlier, before 1979, China was gripped by a system of central planning which, unlike the free-market economy in Western societies, did not use price as a mechanism to determine resource distribution. Rather, the government owned all production resources and allocated them based on quotas. Before 1979, state enterprises were the mainstay of Chinese industry, with urban and rural collectives playing a supplementary role in industrial production (Lin, 2001). The reform in 1978 marked the beginning of a new era of rapid growth of rural industry and the emergence and subsequent expansion of foreign-invested enterprises and domestic private enterprises. In general, non-state-owned enterprises (i.e., foreign-invested enterprises, private enterprises, town and village enterprises, and collective enterprises) operate more or less according to the free-market mechanism that emphasizes competition and efficiency. Admittedly, state-owned enterprises are also changing in the new environment, but the contrast between them and non-state-owned firms is still significant.

Quasi-commercial ground rules different from those in the Western economies and the legacy of central economic planning mean that state-owned enterprises remain quite vulnerable to selective and arbitrary enforcement of legal and regulatory codes (Ahlstrom, Bruton, & Lui, 2000). Local bureaucrats to a great extent can influence allocations of scarce resources to a firm and can force it to discontinue producing and selling a certain product or to exit an industry altogether. The lack of a well-developed and tractable due-process system means that the firm, in order to protect itself from such capricious threats to its effectiveness, must develop a deep reservoir of external support for its practices and institutional presence. Developing such a reservoir requires, of course, good personal relationships between the firm's top managers and local government leaders, and also a general sense among outsiders that the firm positively contributes to welfare in the larger environment, or does what was called "serving the masses." One means by which such a reputation can be maintained and enhanced is the visible involvement of firm employees in both formal and informal activities that benefit the community. Therefore, we might well anticipate that an important component of OCB in state-owned enterprises will be spontaneous and discretionary prosocial gestures by the rank and file in the surrounding community.

A free-market economy implies competition on price and quality. To compete successfully (and impersonally) on price (as opposed to depending on advantages granted by powerful local bureaucrats or state officers, as do state-owned enterprises), non-state-owned enterprises must achieve a high order of efficiency in their internal operations. We would expect, then, that a significant portion of what we characterize as OCB in the non-state-owned enterprises would be those spontaneous behaviors that enhance and sustain efficiency. In the state-owned enterprises, however, buying and selling transactions among firms—though not utterly insensitive to price—are shaped in large measure by bureaucratic orders from the government that regulate both parties. Thus, internal efficiencies do not present with the same urgency as in the non-state-owned companies. Therefore, we might expect that important OCB in state-owned enterprises will not be so dominated by considerations of workforce efficiency.

Because economic transactions involving state-owned firms do not occur in the free-market structure of capitalism as it is known in the West, and therefore are not governed by a competitive marketplace that rewards quality and low-cost production, and because access to resources from the state and community can hinge importantly on the beneficence of the external political environment (at national, provincial, and local levels), we anticipated that salient forms of OCB in state-owned firms of the PRC will include contributions that go beyond, and perhaps be considered more

important than, those contributions that enhance production efficiency or improve product quality.

Because the research reported below was inductive, we refrain from stating precise hypotheses. However, as the foregoing discussion suggests, we generally expected that OCB in state-owned enterprises, compared with that in non-state-owned enterprises, (a) will be less dominated by considerations of efficiency, (b) will extend beyond the workplace to include behavior in the community, and (c) will reflect the importance of the social reputation of a firm.

## **2. METHODS**

### **2.1. Overview**

The purpose of this study was to identify the construct domain of OCB in the PRC. The inductive approach we used to identify the dimensions (Hinkin, 1998) was similar to the method Farh et al. (1997) used. This approach called for gathering descriptions of behavioral incidents from respondents and then classifying them into a number of categories by content analysis based on an agreement index constructed using multiple judges (Kerlinger, 1986). This inductive approach is particularly important in cross-cultural research, where construct and measurement equivalence cannot be taken for granted (Van de Vijver & Leung, 1997).

We sampled a diverse group of PRC employees, presented them with a broad definition of OCB based on Organ (1988), and then asked them to list examples of OCB from their daily work environments. To avoid having prior categories of OCB developed in the West bias their responses, we did not provide them with any OCB dimensions or examples. After building up a broad item pool, we proceeded with a rigorous item selection and classification process, which culminated in 11 OCB dimensions. We then compared these OCB dimensions with their Western counterparts.

### **2.2. Sample Characteristics**

Ninety-nine employees from some 40 enterprises (including state-owned, collective, joint venture, and private companies) from the city of Shanghai, China, participated in our study. We recruited our sample through three professors in the PRC. They distributed our surveys to participants in university-affiliated educational programs.

Of these 99 subordinates, 67 percent were male; 42 percent were in supervisory positions (versus nonsupervisory positions); and 28 percent had

at least undergraduate educations. In terms of type of organization, 49 percent were from state-owned enterprises, 33 percent were from foreign-invested enterprises, and 7 percent were from private enterprises. Although our study used a convenience sample, we expected it would provide enough diversity to detect major forms of OCB in Chinese organizations since our employee sample was drawn from a variety of enterprises. Table 18.2 summarizes the characteristics of our sample.

### **2.3. Definition of OCB**

In the survey, the respondents were first presented with Organ's (1998) classic definition of organizational citizenship behavior: employee behavior that is spontaneous and discretionary, not clearly listed as part of employee job responsibilities, not directly rewarded with monetary rewards by the organization, and that, in the aggregate, makes for a more effective organization. The respondents were then asked to list five to ten such behaviors on the basis of their daily observation of their own or others' behavior in organizations.

### **2.4. Item Pool**

The 99 respondents generated a total of 480 incidents or items (approximately 4.8 per respondent). All items were transcribed onto 3-by-4-inch cards. The two Chinese authors of this paper plus a Chinese Ph.D. student screened all items applying two criteria: (a) the item must have clear meaning in Chinese and (b) the item must refer to employee behavior. A total of 34 items (7.1%) were considered unusable (unclear in meaning or not a behavior) and discarded from the item pool. This elimination resulted in 446 usable items. The three-person screening panel then started to classify the 446 items into categories on the basis of content. After several iterations, they agreed upon a 26-category system that could classify all 446 usable items into mutually exclusive categories. In other words, each item had a designated category. The number of items per category ranged from 2 to 66. Admittedly, there are considerable repetitions among the 446 usable items. We did not discard repetitive items since we were interested in studying the frequency of each item mentioned. Our rationale is that the more frequently an item was mentioned, the more prevalent the behavior described by that item was. In other words, if helping coworkers or items with similar meanings were mentioned ten times, we regarded it as evidence of the validity of helping coworkers as a major form of OCB instead of as redundant information.

## 2.5. Test of Interrater Reliability

To test the reliability of our designated categories, we recruited three PRC Ph.D. students to serve as test judges. They went through a one-hour training in which they became familiar with the definition of each category and tried to classify some OCB exemplars.

Upon completion of the training, they classified the 446 usable items into the 26 categories. Since each item in the pool was classified by the three test judges independently, there were four possible outcomes: (a) full agreement, with all three test judges classifying an item into its designated category, (b) agreement by two, with two of the three classifying it into its designated category, (c) agreement by one, with only one of the

**Table 18.2. Sample Characteristics (N=99)**

Characteristics	Frequency <sup>a</sup>	Percentage
Types of enterprise		
State-owned	49	49.5
Collective	6	6.1
Foreign-invested	33	33.3
Private	7	7.1
Others	4	4.0
Organization size		
Less than 88	26	26.3
88-200	13	13.1
200-700	26	26.3
More than 700	31	31.3
Positions		
Supervisory	42	42.4
Nonsupervisory	55	55.6
Age		
21-30	30	30.3
31-40	34	34.3
41-50	34	34.3
Gender		
Male	67	67.7
Female	32	32.3
Education		
High school	38	38.4
Vocational school	33	33.3
Undergraduate	28	28.3

<sup>a</sup> Frequencies may not add up to 99 for some characteristics due to missing data.

three test judges classifying it into its designated category, and (d) zero agreement, with none of the three classifying the item into its designated category. On 74 percent of the items, full agreement resulted; for 14 percent, there was one disagreement; and for 12 percent, there were two or three disagreements. We kept items that had agreements of either three or two. In total, we retained 397 clear items for subsequent analyses.

## 2.6. Forming OCB Dimensions

The 26-category system is not ideal in terms of scientific parsimony. The two Chinese authors and one Chinese Ph.D. student grouped the 26 categories into broader, more abstract dimensions by combining conceptually similar dimensions. We worked independently and then discussed each other's results to reach consensus. The 26 specific dimensions were collapsed into 17 broader dimensions. Next, we eliminated categories that had fewer than 10 items. Our rationale here was that if a category had very few items, few employees had observed such OCB behaviors in work settings. Six of the 17 categories were eliminated on this basis. This procedure resulted in 11 OCB dimensions with 371 items.

## 3. RESULTS

### 3.1. Dimensions of OCB

Table 18.3 presents the 11 PRC OCB dimensions with their definitions and sample items and corresponding Western OCB dimensions, if available. These 11 dimensions can be divided into two groups: five common dimensions and six extended dimensions. The common dimensions have content domains that resemble those of the major OCB dimensions in the Western literature. The extended dimensions have content domains that differ from any of the existing Western OCB dimensions.

#### 3.1.1. Common Dimensions

The first common dimension is called *taking initiative*, which refers to behaviors that indicate one's willingness to take on additional responsibilities, such as working overtime, doing extra duties, and cooperating with fellow workers. This dimension is quite similar to functional participation (Van Dyne et al., 1994) and job dedication (Van Scotter & Motowidlo, 1996) in the Western OCB literature. The dimension accounts for 55 items (or 15.3 percent of the total).

**Table 18.3. OCB Dimensions in the PRC**

**Common Dimensions**

<b>Definition</b>	<b>Sample Items</b>	<b>Corresponding Western OCB Dimension</b>
<p><b>Taking initiative (55 items)</b> Takes initiative in working overtime, taking on extra responsibilities, and being cooperative at work</p>	<p>-Volunteers for overtime work when needed. -Willing to take extra responsibilities (e.g., help solve customers' problems). -Shares creative ideas with colleagues.</p>	<p>Functional participation (Van Dyne, Graham, &amp; Dienesch, 1994) Job dedication (Van Scotter &amp; Motowidlo, 1996)</p>
<p><b>Helping coworkers (37 items)</b> Helps coworkers with job-related or personal matters</p>	<p>-Helps others with urgent and heavy work loads. -Loans money to co-workers who have financial difficulties.</p>	<p>Altruism (Smith, Organ, &amp; Near, 1983; Organ, 1988; Posdakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, &amp; Fetter, 1990) Helping (Van Dyne &amp; LePine, 1998)</p>
<p><b>Voice (28 items)</b> Expression of constructive/prohibitive challenges on behalf of organization.</p>	<p>-Makes recommendations to improve procedures. -Reminds coworkers not to do actions harmful to organization.</p>	<p>Voice (Van Dyne &amp; LePine, 1998)</p>
<p><b>Participation in group activities (35 items)</b> Discretionary participation on the part of the individual in activities organized by group of employees or organization</p>	<p>-Attends meetings that are not required. -Participates in activities organized by employees, such as family parties and sports.</p>	<p>Civic virtue (Organ, 1988; Posdakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman &amp; Fetter, 1990)</p>
<p><b>Promoting company image (23 items)</b> The promotion of the organizational image to outsiders</p>	<p>-Represents organization favorably to outsiders. -Introduces and expands business of organization to acquaintance and relatives using personal time.</p>	<p>Loyalty (Van Dyne, Graham, &amp; Dienesch, 1994) Loyal boosterism (Moorman &amp; Blakely, 1995)</p>

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*Table 18.3.—Continued*

<b>Extended Dimensions</b>	
<b>Definition</b>	<b>Sample Items</b>
<p><b>Self-learning (59 items)</b> Improves knowledge or working skills through self-learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Spends spare time in learning and improving skills.</li> <li>-Acquires work-related knowledge at one's own cost.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Social welfare participation (49 items)</b> Performs services that contribute to social welfare</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Participates in social welfare activities, such as donating money and planting trees.</li> <li>-Participates in community service, such as aiding elders in the community.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Protecting and saving company resources (26 items)</b> Saves company resources by either protecting company resources or making personal resources available for company use</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Saves company resources, such as electricity and water.</li> <li>-Provides organization with free personal resources, such as information and social network.</li> <li>-Protects factories against flood.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Keeping workplace clean (21 items)</b> Keeps workplace clean and neat</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Cleans up workplace using personal time.</li> <li>-Keeps workplace and archives in order.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Interpersonal harmony (16 items)</b> Maintains and establishes interpersonal harmony at work place</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Maintains good relationships with coworkers.</li> <li>-Helps resolve conflict and misunderstanding among coworkers.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Compliance with social norms (11 items)</b> Follows social norms and regulations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Is honest and credible in personal conduct.</li> <li>-Complies with social norms (e.g., does not spit).</li> </ul>

The second common dimension is *helping coworkers*, which refers to helping coworkers with organizationally relevant tasks or personal problems. This dimension is similar to altruism (Smith et al., 1983) or helping (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998) in the Western literature. However, helping coworkers in the PRC seems to be broader in scope than altruism in the West, where altruism is typically limited to organizationally relevant tasks. In China, this dimension includes helping coworkers with personal problems as well. Helping coworkers included 10.3 percent (37) of the OCB items.

The third common dimension is *voice*, which refers to raising constructive suggestions or speaking up to prohibit behavior harmful to an employing organization. Although we use the same label for this dimension as Van Dyne and LePine (1998), our voice dimension is somehow broader than the voice dimension of Van Dyne and LePine (1998). It includes not only constructive challenges intended to improve but also prohibitive challenges aimed at preventing others from doing harm to the organization. Voice included 7.8 percent (28) of the OCB items.

The fourth common dimension is *participation in group activities*, which refers to participation in activities organized by an employing organization or by special groups of employees. Participation in group activities included 9.7 percent (35) of the OCB items. This dimension is similar to civic virtue as described in the Western literature (Organ, 1988; Podsakoff et al., 1990), since both refer to participation in organizational life. However, civic virtue includes a broader scope of participation, such as keeping up with organization announcements, memos, and so on (Podsakoff et al., 1990). On the other hand, most of our items on participation in group activities refer to activities organized by employee groups, which is quite different from pattern described in the Western literature.

The fifth common dimension is *promoting company image*, which is similar to loyalty (Van Dyne, Graham, & Dienesch, 1994) and loyal boosterism (Moorman & Blakely, 1995) in the Western literature. It is also similar to a dimension called identification with company, found in Taiwan by Farh, Earley, and Lin (1997). Promoting company image includes 6.4 percent (23) of the items.

### 3.1.2. Extended Dimensions

The first extended dimension is *self-learning*, which refers to improving one's knowledge or working skills through self-learning. It includes 59 items (16.4%). This dimension is very similar to the concept of self-development as described by George and Brief (1992), which includes voluntary behaviors employees engage in to improve their knowledge, skills, and abilities. Despite George and Brief's (1992) call for research on self-

development, this dimension has not received any empirical confirmation in the citizenship literature (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000). This is why we treated it as an extended dimension.

The second extended dimension is *social welfare participation*, which refers to employees' participation in activities of a public welfare or community service nature. Forty-nine (13.6%) items were classified into this dimension. This dimension is clearly one that has not been discussed in the prior OCB literature.

The third OCB dimension in the PRC is *protecting and saving company resources*, which includes actions that save company resources, muster personal resources (e.g., money, information, social capital) to aid an employing company, and protect the company from disasters (e.g., a fire or flood). Katz (1964) argued about the importance of spontaneous actions on the part of individuals to protect systems, such as plant, equipment, and technology. George and Brief (1992) considered protecting the organization as a key dimension of organizational spontaneity. Like self-development, this dimension has not received any empirical confirmation in the Western citizenship literature. However, Farh et al. (1997) found it to be one of the two emic OCB dimensions in Taiwan. It includes 26 (7.2%) items.

The fourth extended dimension is *keeping the workplace clean*. Twenty-one (5.8%) items were classified into this dimension of OCB. Organ (1988) suggested that the extra effort needed to maintain and enhance cleanliness at workplaces is an often underappreciated form of conscientiousness in many organizations, and Van Dyne et al. (1994) included the item "keeps work area clean and neat" in their measure of obedience, a major dimension of OCB according to their conceptualization. Despite these suggestions, this dimension has not received any empirical confirmation in the Western citizenship literature.

The fifth extended dimension is *interpersonal harmony*, which refers to employee actions aimed at facilitating and preserving interpersonal harmony at a workplace. This dimension is also not found in the Western literature, but was one of the two emic dimensions of OCB discovered in Taiwan (Farh et al., 1997). It includes 16 items (4.4%).

The sixth (and the last) extended dimension is *compliance with social norms*, which refers to employees' compliance with prevailing norms in the society (e.g., honesty, keeping promises). There are 11 items (3.1%) that belong to this dimension of OCB. This dimension is clearly one that has not been discussed in the prior OCB literature.

### 3.2. Organization Type

Table 18.4 reports the number as well as the percentage of items classified into each of the 11 OCB dimensions. The table also shows the

percentage of items in each dimension by the type of organization a respondent worked at (state-owned vs. non-state-owned). These percentages inform us as to whether a dimension of OCB was mentioned more, less, or equally frequently by respondents from different types of organizations. As we mentioned before, the more frequently a form of behavior was mentioned, the more likely it was this form of behavior that our PRC respondents considered to be OCB. For example, if state employees reported more items on participation in social welfare activity than non-state employees did, it means that the former are more likely to regard participation in social welfare activity as a form of OCB.

The overall frequency distribution of OCB items across organization types (state-owned versus non-state-owned) was also compared using the Pearson chi-square test of association. It was found that the overall chi-square statistic of 74.25 was highly significant ( $df = 10, p < .001$ ). This finding suggests that the distribution of OCB items across the 11 dimensions for state-owned employees is significantly different from that for non-state-owned employees.

Table 18.4 shows the percentage of items in each OCB dimension by respondent organization type (state-owned vs. non-state-owned) and results of chi-square tests of the percentage difference for each dimension. For common dimensions, organization type had a significant effect on taking initiative and helping coworkers only. Specifically, PRC employees from non-state-owned organizations were likely to report more OCB items in taking initiative than were those from state-owned organizations (20.1% vs. 10.8%). PRC employees from non-state-owned organizations were also likely to report more OCB items in helping coworkers than those from state-owned organizations (14.4% vs. 6.5%).

For the extended dimensions, organization type had a significant effect on social welfare participation, protecting and saving company resources, and compliance with social norms. Specifically, PRC employees from state-owned organizations were more likely to report OCB items in social welfare participation (21.5% vs. 5.2%) and compliance with social norms (5.4% vs. 0.6%) than those from non-state-owned organizations. The opposite was found on protecting and saving company resources, where employees from non-state-owned organizations were more likely to report OCB items in that category than those from state owned organizations (10.9% vs. 3.8%). Thus, organization type had a significant influence on the frequency with which OCB items were distributed across the 11 dimensions.

#### **4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

We investigated the content domain of OCB in the PRC context. Drawing on over 480 behaviors listed by 99 employees from 40 different

**Table 18.4. OCB Item Distribution by Organization Type <sup>a, b</sup>**

OCB Dimension	Number of Items	Percentage of Items	Organization Type		
			State Owned	Non-state owned <sup>c</sup>	Chi-Square
<b>Common dimensions</b>					
1. Taking initiative	55	15.3	10.8	20.1	6.09*
2. Helping coworkers	37	10.3	6.5	14.4	6.11*
3. Voice	28	7.8	7.0	8.6	0.33
4. Participation in group activities	35	9.7	12.4	6.9	3.06
5. Promoting company image	23	6.4	6.5	6.3	0.00
<b>Extended dimensions</b>					
6. Self-learning	59	16.4	19.4	13.2	2.47
7. Social welfare participation	49	13.6	21.5	5.2	20.40**
8. Protecting and saving company resources	26	7.2	3.8	10.9	6.87**
9. Keeping workplace clean	21	5.8	4.3	7.5	1.65
10. Interpersonal harmony	16	4.4	2.7	6.3	2.80
11. Compliance with social norms	11	3.1	5.4	0.6	7.00**
<b>Total</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	

<sup>a</sup> With the exception of column 2, where the number of items for each dimension is reported, entries in the table are percentages. For example, the first entry in column 3 (i.e., 10.8) indicates that 10.8% of the OCB items listed by state owned employees were classified as “initiative” items.

<sup>b</sup> The number of items listed by employees of state-owned enterprises was 186, by those of non-state-owned enterprises, 174.

<sup>c</sup> Non-state-owned companies include collective, joint venture, and private companies.

\*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .001$

enterprises in the PRC, we identified 11 OCB dimensions. Five of the 11 dimensions are similar to the major OCB dimensions that have been investigated in the Western OCB literature. These are taking initiative, helping coworkers, voice, participation in group activities, and promoting company image. These five dimensions correspond to the Western dimensions of functional participation (also conscientiousness), altruism, voice, civic virtue, and loyalty. This correspondence suggests that these Western OCB dimensions may generalize across national boundaries. This does not mean that the specific behaviors that represent these dimensions are identical in the West and the PRC. For example, helping coworkers in the PRC includes non-work-related helping, which is generally not considered part of altruism in the West. This inclusion of non-work-related helping as part of OCB reflects the Chinese cultural tendency to mix the private with the public spheres of life. Future researchers who wish to study these etic dimensions of OCB across cultures need to be sensitive to these differences. Applying a standard instrument across cultures without modifications may lead to deficiency and contamination in construct measurement.

#### **4.1. Extended Dimensions of OCB in the PRC**

Among the six extended dimensions of OCB, self-learning, protecting and saving company resources, and keeping the workplace clean have been mentioned by authors who work in this area as potential forms of OCB, although they have not been empirically investigated in the Western OCB literature. Clearly, these three classes of behavior are not unique to the PRC. But why do they receive more attention in our PRC sample than in the Western literature? We suspect that the salience of these three OCB dimensions in the PRC as compared to the West may be related to the different stages of economic development. Since the PRC is at an early stage of economic development, organizational support for training and development and maintenance of a clean work environment are more limited than in the United States. Employees' willingness to invest in self-learning and to maintain a clean workplace are thus considered salient and important forms of OCB. Similarly, owing to the scarcity of resources in most PRC organizations, conserving resources such as office supplies and electricity and properly maintaining equipment are salient forms of OCB that cut costs and add efficiency. Future researchers should investigate the relative importance of these three OCB dimensions across societies.

Interpersonal harmony as a form of OCB has not been proposed in the Western literature. This dimension of OCB, however, was also found in Taiwan by Farh et al. (1997). The Chinese have long been well known for their emphasis on harmony and unity (solidarity) in social relationships and

within social groups. There is a good reason for the Chinese to cherish interpersonal harmony, because harmonious relationships foster the solidarity and integration of individual groups or organizations, which, in turn, lead to a stable social order (Yang, 1993). Although harmony sometimes may hamper creativity or innovation, the importance of interpersonal harmony would be clear if we understood the harmfulness of disputes in a Chinese context. Trompenaars (1996) differentiated cultures in which people engage others in *specific* areas of life from cultures in which people engage others *diffusely* in multiple areas of our lives. Using the case of a dispute described in the head office of a multinational company, Trompenaars demonstrated that, while Americans, with their specific culture, tried to discuss an important aspect of the consistency of a reward system, Italians, who are from a diffuse culture, viewed this discussion as a personal offence and felt angry toward their American coworkers. Trompenaars measured specificity and diffuseness in different national cultures and found that China was the most diffuse culture. Trompenaars's finding suggests that disputes in organizations in China would be more likely to develop into affective and personal conflict and cause serious problem than they would in the United States. It is thus not surprising that Chinese employees in the PRC as well as in Taiwan stress the importance of interpersonal harmony and consider it a major form of OCB.

Some of the six extended dimensions are probably unique to the PRC. Social welfare participation, which is associated with the legacy of a communist system, is one such dimension. Under the old central planning system, quotas for participation in state-sanctioned activities (such as blood donating, tree planting, and adhering to the one child policy) were allocated to organizations by the central government. Meeting these quotas was important to organizations because a good relationship with the government guaranteed supplies of scarce resources from the government and enhanced an organization's image. Organizations further allocated these quotas to divisions and eventually to employees. Because of organized dependency and the institutional culture of authority (Walder, 1983), employees would do what their organization told them to do in order to get resources otherwise not available outside of the organization. Nowadays, despite more than 20 years of reform, dependency on their employing organization is still high for employees in state-owned enterprises. Such dependency no longer exists for employees in non-state organizations. It is thus not surprising that participation in social welfare activities emerged as a form of OCB for employees in state-owned enterprises but not for employees in non-state-owned enterprises.

Compliance with social norms is also a dimension that seems to be unique to the PRC. According to Yang (1993), the Chinese have a strong and complicated tendency to be readily influenced by other people on both

psychological and behavioral levels. One of the manifestations of this tendency, called other orientation, is a deep concern about social norms. It was argued that in both traditional and contemporary Chinese societies, social norms and standards were and are more or less important insofar as they represent other people's consensus and provide major guidelines for behavior (Yang, 1993). Anyone who violates these norms will be criticized, blamed, or punished by others. As a result, Chinese people have become highly concerned about social norms in their everyday life. Although the primary reason for people to fulfill social norms is to avoid negative and receive positive reinforcement, employees' compliance to social norms contributes to organizational effectiveness.

## **4.2. Western OCB Dimensions Not Found in the PRC**

Three major dimensions of OCB described in the Western literature were not found in the PRC: sportsmanship, courtesy, and advocacy participation. Farh and his colleagues (1997) did not find any of these three dimensions in Taiwan either. Lam and his coauthors (1999) found that, in comparison with employees from Australia and the United States, employees from Hong Kong and Japan were more likely to consider sportsmanship and courtesy as in-role behaviors. It is possible that employees from the PRC (like those from Hong Kong) also consider courtesy and sportsmanship to be in-role behavior and thus did not list them as OCB. Future research should investigate why these behaviors were not considered part of OCB in a different cultural context.

Advocacy participation refers to behaviors targeted at other members of an organization and reflecting a willingness to be controversial (Van Dyne et al., 1994). By definition, this category of behavior reflects the potency of being controversial, which is less palatable to the Chinese, who favor interpersonal harmony (Yang, 1993). Therefore, it is not surprising that advocacy participation did not emerge as a form of OCB in the PRC.

## **4.3. Organization Type**

As expected, the respondent's organization type had a strong influence on the reporting of OCB in several dimensions. In comparison with employees from non-state-owned enterprises, employees of state-owned enterprises tended to report or observe more items categorized as social welfare participation or compliance with social norms. State employees also tended to report or observe fewer OCB items involving taking initiative, helping coworkers, and protecting and saving company resources than employees of non-state-owned enterprises. These findings are generally consistent with our expectation that employees of state-owned

enterprises tend to be influenced by the legacy of prereform policies of the Communist government. They tended to be less dominated by considerations of efficiency, to extend OCB beyond the workplace to include behavior in the community, and to be mindful of the importance of the social reputation of their firms.

#### **4.4. Limitations and Future Research**

Although we sampled 99 respondents from enterprises that differed on characteristics including ownership type and number of employees, all were sampled from only one major city in the PRC. We are not sure if the OCB dimensions identified in the study and the differences found between organization types can be generalized to other parts of China. Xie (1995) suggested that Chinese subgroups are remarkably heterogeneous when it comes to economic-political environment, values, communication patterns, personality, and even appearance. This heterogeneity might be due to the low population mobility in the PRC, which results in sharp regional differences. Future research should sample employees from different geographical regions in the PRC so that the sample is more representative.

Moreover, the construct domain of the organizational citizenship behaviors identified in this study needs to be examined in other cultural contexts. Previous Western research on OCB has not used an inductive approach to identify its construct domain. So the unique dimensions of OCB we found in the PRC may be influenced by differences in research methodology. Future research should also use an inductive approach to identify the construct domain of OCB in different national cultures so that we know which forms of OCB are truly universal or unique.

The immediate research agenda following our study is to develop a PRC OCB scale. Our research has demonstrated that the construct domain of OCB in the People's Republic of China diverges from those found in the Western literature. Use of a PRC-based OCB scale will help researchers better capture the construct domain of OCB in the PRC than will use of a translated Western OCB scale. The next research agenda is to develop a nomological net through systematic research that shows the antecedents, correlates, and consequences of OCB in the PRC. It would also be interesting to examine whether organization type influences the display of OCB in a way consistent with the influence of organization type on the reporting of OCB that we observed in this study.

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