Do managers need to distinguish the surface altruistic behavior

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ARTICLE DETAILS

ABSTRACT

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Good political skills can help subordinates disguise their ingratiation as organizational citizenship behavior. Few studies has told us what measures should be taken when the managers can't tell the difference between organizational citizenship behavior and ingratiation. In this paper, survey data were collected at two different time points from 338 subordinate and 128 their supervisors from 6 electronic manufacturing enterprises located in Beijing, china. The conclusion of this paper is that when the leaders make sure their subordinates trust in themselves and they can't make sure such kind of behavior is organizational citizenship behavior or ingratiation behavior, they should encourage such surface altruistic behaviors recurring, because their subordinates' behaviors are good for job performance and colleagues.

1. Introduction

Theoretically, the ingratiation and the OCB are extra-role behaviors that should not be counted in job performance evaluations^[1]. But in fact, when evaluating an employee's job performance, the leaders were affected by the extra-role behaviors, for example, ingratiation and the OCB. Sometimes, the subordinate try to improve the probability of being selected as candidates when their leaders prepare to offer good positions, they may take ingratiation as the best behavioral strategy. It is because that organizational citizenship behaviors and ingratiation behaviors are similar. The motivation of OCB is good and altruistic while the motivation of ingratiation is dirty and selfish. The managers can't regard all altruistic behavior of subordinates as OCB or as ingratiation, so what should managers do when they see subordinates' altruistic behavior. This research tries to give answers about two questions: *Question1*: Is it necessary for the managers to distinguish between ingratiation and OCB when the managers see subordinates' altruistic behavior? *Question 2*: what should the managers do when they see subordinates' altruistic behavior?

2. Theoretical Foundations and Hypothesis Development

2.1 Trust in supervisor and organizational citizenship behavior

OCB is largely discretionary, which are often described as behaviors that go beyond the requirements of duty^[2]. The link between trust in supervisor and OCB could use social exchange theory to explain. Social exchange is the reciprocal exchange of resources between two or more people during a repeated number of interactions. The outcomes of past exchanges can affect how individuals behave in future exchange relationships^[3]. Trust in supervisor is the result of long-term and competent interaction and dynamically adjust during the interaction^[4]. When the supervisor giving constructive feedback is more than subordinate' expectations, it can improve the level of the subordinate' trust in supervisor. According to social exchange theoretical, a higher level of trust in the supervisor can increase cooperation between the employee and the supervisor, improve the likelihood that information shared among subordinate, and reduce role conflicts^[5]. With a high level of trust in supervisor, the subordinate are more likely to make effort to accomplish tasks and show citizenship behaviors , trust-in-supervisor has been identified as a major antecedent of OCB^[6].

Hypothesis 1a: Trust in supervisor positively relates to organizational citizenship behavior

2.2 Trust in supervisor and Ingratiation

Ingratiation is defined as "a class of strategic behaviors illicitly designed to influence a particular other concerning the attractiveness of one's personal quality"^[7],which involves such behaviors as doing favor for the boss, flattery, praising the supervisor ,making the supervisor feel important, and opinion conformity^[7, 8]. The impression management theory can be used to explain the relationships between trust in supervisor and ingratiation. Impression management refers to "the process by which people attempt to influence the image others have of them"^[9]. The impression management has been regarded as a common phenomenon in job office. When the supervisor is trustworthy, this means that the subordinate involve confident positive expectations about supervisors' motive with respect to themselves in situations entailing risk^[10]. That is, the subordinates trusting in supervisor suffer less risk to take ingratiation those without trusting in supervisor.

Hypothesis 1b: Trust in supervisor positively relates to ingratiation

2.3 Organizational citizenship behavior and job performance

Organ define OCB as "individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and in the aggregate promotes the efficient and effective functioning of the organization"^[11]. Organ stressed spontaneous behavior and tells how each helps to increase efficiency in the organization^[12]. (1)Altruism contributes to team efficiency by improving individuals' performance^[12],for example, If subordinate help his colleagues "learn the ropes" ,it may help them to become more productive subordinate^[13];(2) Sportsmanship enhance the amount of time spent on constructive endeavors in the team^[12], for example, If subordinate exhibit sportsmanship, it help the manager to spend too little of his/her time dealing with trivial matters^[13]. These behaviors are likely to have positive effect on job performance; that is, high levels of employee participating in OCB, the organization are likely to benefit from job performance.Researchers have discovered positive relationships between OCB and job performance^[11]. Our hypothesis 2a is as follow:

Hypothesis 2a: Organizational citizenship behavior positively relates to job performance

2.4 Ingratiation and job performance

Jones defined ingratiation as "a class of strategic behaviors illicitly designed to influence a particular other concerning the attractiveness of

one's personal quality"^[14]. So we can regard ingratiation as strategically current resources invested by the apple-polisher. When the subordinates want to achieve their personal goals, ingratiation tactics used include: doing favors for the boss (e.g., working late, doing the boss's share of the work), opinion conformity, or making the boss feel important^[8]. Working late or doing the boss's share of the work mean that the worker do the extra work which is positive to the organizational performance; opinion conformity means that there are few conflicts between subordinates and leaderships. Some researchers have already discovered that the relationship between ingratiation and job performance is positive. For example, Cheng J, Chiu W, and Chang argued that the relationship between job performance and a one-year salary adjustment was greater among employees who frequently employ ingratiation than among those who do not^[15].

Hypothesis 2b: Ingratiation positively relates to job performance

3. Method

3.1 Sample and Procedure

The sample for this research was composed of 338 subordinate and 128 their immediate supervisors from 6 electronic manufacturing enterprises located in Beijing, China. The questionnaire surveys were separated into the supervisors' survey and their subordinates' survey. After matching the supervisor and their direct subordinates in the two round of data collection, 256 subordinates' questionnaires and 112 supervisors' questionnaires were left to test our hypothesis.

3.2 Measures

Trust in supervisor: Trust in supervisor was measured with the six item trust in supervisor scale developed by Wong, Wong & Ngo^[16]. The scale reliability coefficient for this sample was 0.89. *Organizational citizenship behavior*: OCB was assessed with 14 item which were changed by Hui, Law & Chen to adapt to Chinese environment^[17]. The Cronbach's alpha of this scale in the present research was 0.89. *Ingratiation*: The ingratiation scale was adopted from Bolino and Turnley^[18]. The Cronbach's alpha of this scale in the present research was 0.78. *Job performance*: The performance scale was adopted from Williams^[19]. The Cronbach's alpha of this scale in this research was 0.86. The control variables include age, gender, tenure, traditionality, and abusive supervision^[20]. We controlled tenure due to the potential effect of performance^[20]. Abusive supervision had a significant negative relationship with Trust in supervisor and traditionality.

Table1 the surface altruistic behavior in organizations(N=253)

	Ingratiation		OCB		Team performance			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6(8)	Model 7(9)	Model 8(10)
Control variables								
age	0.09 (1.28)	0.07 (1.10)	0.06* (1.91)	0.05* (1.76)	0.04 (1.01)	0.03 (0.89)	0.04 (0.92)	0.00 (0.08)
gender	0.13 (0.90)	0.14 (0.96)	0.04 (0.60)	0.04 (0.66)	-0.04 (-0.47)	-0.04 (-0.44)	-0.05 (-0.56)	-0.07 (-0.88)
tenure	0.00 (0.10)	0.00 (0.19)	0.00 (-0.2)	0.00 (-0.3)	0.01 (1.29)	0.01 (1.37)	0.01 (1.42)	0.01* (1.82)
traditionality	0.11 (1.38)	0.09 (1.22)	0.08** (2.43)	0.08** (2.27)	0.04 (0.90)	0.03 (0.77)	0.03 (0.64)	-0.01 (-0.33)
abusive supervision	-0.10 (-1.1)	-0.02 (-0.2)	0.17** (4.5)	0.14** (3.6)	0.21** (4.1)	0.18*** (3.43)	0.22*** (4.33)	0.10* (2.12)

	1)	2)	5)	2)	6)	)	)	
trust in supervisor		0.26** (2.90)		0.11** (2.66)		0.10* (1.92)		
ingratiation							0.08** (2.33)	
OCB								0.64** (8.79)
_cons	3.25** (4.15)	1.66* (1.76)	3.00** (8.68)	2.36** (5.64)	3.54** (7.90)	2.94*** (5.37)	3.29*** (7.21)	1.64** (3.65)
r2	0.04	0.07	0.17	0.20	0.13	0.14	0.16	0.34
r2_a	0.00	0.03	0.14	0.16	0.10	0.11	0.13	0.31
F	1.14	1.90	5.68	5.95	4.00	4.01	4.67	12.45

Notes: t statistics in parentheses *p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01

4. Empirical Analysis and Results

Table1 demonstrate the results of our OLS estimations. Model1, Model3, and Model5 estimate a specification including only control variables. In model 2 of Table 1, we added trust in supervisor to the regression model. As expected, trust in supervisor is positively and significantly associated with ingratiation ($\beta=0.26, p<0.01$), so Hypothesis 1b is supported. In model 4 of Table 1, we added trust in supervisor to the regression model. As expected, trust in supervisor is positively and significantly associated with OCB ($\beta=0.11, p<0.01$), so Hypothesis 1a is supported. In model 7 of Table1, we added ingratiation to the regression model. As expected, ingratiation is positively and significantly associated with team performance ($\beta=0.08, p<0.05$), providing support for Hypothesis 2b. In model 8 of Table 1, we added OCB to the regression model. As expected, OCB is positively and significantly associated with team performance ($\beta=0.64, p<0.01$), so Hypothesis 2a is supported.

5. Discussion

According to Yi-Jung Chen, the motives of organizational citizenship behaviors were divided into traditional motive and impression management motivators, identifying the motives behind organizational citizenship behaviors is vital, but few researchers have endeavored to solve this puzzle^[1]. The reason why this question hasn't been answered is that it is very difficult for us to get other people's real motivation which is change all the time. Yi-Jung Chen regard ingratiation motives as one dimension of OCB^[1]. This means that some scholars mix ingratiation and OCB together. The research of Long-Zeng Wu focuses on the effectiveness of ingratiation depending on both leaders' and subordinates' political skill. The results of Long-Zeng Wu is that "subordinates with high political skill are less likely to have their exhibited ingratiation behavior perceived by their supervisors; however, supervisors with high political skill are likely to perceive ingratiation behavior demonstrated by their subordinates". It is because that our research focuses on the effects caused by ingratiation and OCB. Firstly, to solve the question of Yi-Jung Chen, the finding is that real motivation of subordinates are less easily perceived by their supervisors, but the real motivations of supervisors are easily to be known by themselves and the subordinates' action are easily to be known, as well. For example, most of the supervisors hope that their subordinates can do well in job performance, the supervisors can't make sure that all their subordinates' motivations is to perform job well, these supervisors could see their subordinates' behavior. The results of this research show that no matter what is the real motivation of the subordinates, the ingratiation, OCB, or those two behavior mixed together has positive effect on job performance, when their subordinates trust their supervisors. Second, the results of this research is complemented with the research of Long-Zeng Wu, as we all known, we can hardly make sure that political skill of all the supervisors is better than their subordinates'. When the political skill of the supervisors is no better than their subordinates', they hardly perceive ingratiation behavior demonstrated by their subordinates. Although the supervisors may not perceive ingratiation behavior demonstrated by their

subordinates, those ingratiation behaviors have positive effect on the performance. So when the leaders see their subordinates' altruistic behaviors, they should encourage it take place again ignoring their motivation.

6. Limitations, and Future Research Directions

Like most studies, there are several limitations in this research. First, the constraint on the generalization of our findings is the sample from 6 enterprises located in Beijing, China. So the results of this research can't be generalized all over the world. Second, If the stuffs don't trust in their supervisors, it is still or not positive that the relationship between OCB and job performance and between ingratiation and job performance. Those limitations are the opportunities for the future research.

7. Conclusion

This research has addressed important issues regarding trust in supervisor, ingratiation, OCB, and job performance. This research provides initial evidence that there is no need for the managers to tell the difference between ingratiation and OCB when the managers see subordinates' altruistic behavior, because the two kinds of behavior are good for the job performance. If the managers see subordinates' altruistic behavior, they should express appreciation to it, no matter this behavior is ingratiation or OCB.

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