

Establishment of Japanese Organizational Citizenship Behavior Dimensions¹

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ABSTRACT

The present study sought to identify Japanese employees' behaviors that are considered organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). The authors presented the Japanese employees with a definition of OCB and asked them to list their behaviors that met the definition. On classifying those behaviors, seven Western dimensions and three Japanese dimensions were extracted. Although some of the Japanese dimensions seemed similar to the Chinese ones, upon close examination of the behaviors classified into the dimensions, it was revealed that they have unique aspects that reflect the Japanese culture. Some effects of the demographic factors on the employees' responses were also empirically revealed.

Keywords: organizational citizenship behavior, Japanese organization, *seken*

Research on organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) originally started with analyses of Western samples in the early 1980s. Assuming the multidimensionality of OCB, up to the mid-1990s, some of these Western researches tried to establish OCB dimensions or forms and concrete question items that could measure these dimensions. However, since then, their interest has shifted from developing new OCB dimensions to finding a new relationship between the previous OCB dimensions and other factors, assuming that the previous OCB dimensions were valid. In contrast, on viewing Asian OCB research, we see that Chinese OCB dimensions were developed using Taiwanese (Farh, Earley & Lim, 1997) and Chinese samples (Farh, Zhong & Organ, 2004). Some of these dimensions differed from the Western ones, for example, Chinese OCB included the dimension of interpersonal harmony but did not include two typical Western dimensions—courtesy and sportsmanship.

Although the Chinese OCB dimensions include some Asian features, Asian countries have their own institutional and cultural differences. There is no guarantee that the OCB

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dimensions that had been developed in the Chinese culture may also be effective in other Asian countries. For example, while Graham (1995) discussed the effect of moral judgment in determining what constituted OCB, Chung, Eichenseher and Taniguchi (2007) empirically identified that the national differences in the ethical perceptions within the common East Asian area were as large as those between the East Asian and Western cultures. Moreover, Movius, Matsuura, Yan and Kim (2006), and Wolfendale (2002) suggested that different techniques should be used in business dealings between Western firms and Chinese, Korean, and Japanese companies.

In view of the fact that Japanese business practices are quite different from Chinese ones, it is suggested that Japanese OCB researchers should establish their own usable OCB dimensions and not merely depend on Chinese OCB dimensions, despite them being neighboring countries. This paper aimed to establish Japanese OCB dimensions by adopting a method similar to that used by Farh et al. (1997).

Previous OCB Dimensions and their Usability in Japan

Typical Method of Extracting Western OCB Dimensions

While some OCB researches utilized only one OCB measure composed of multiple question items, many others assumed that OCB had several qualitatively different dimensions. They empirically established a set of multiple OCB dimensions, each of which comprised different multiple question items. Since the first two dimensions proposed by Smith, Organ and, Near (1983), namely, altruism and general compliance, a number of researchers have, on a whole, established nearly thirty OCB dimensions (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine & Bachrach, 2000). Table 1 shows a set of OCB dimensions that have been most frequently used by other researchers and the manner in which they were originally constructed. This information gives us a clue regarding their usability in cultural societies that are different from the Western culture.

According to Table 1, except for two of the earliest OCB studies by Bateman and Organ (1983) and Smith et al. (1983), these studies (1) initially referred to the conceptual studies such as those by Organ (1988), Graham (1989) and other earlier empirical studies (Smith, et al., 1983) as theoretical bases to establish their OCB concept, (2) then developed initial, hypothetical dimensions and their question items by themselves, or sometimes with other researchers or with the practical managers' opinions in mind, and (3) finally estab-

lished their OCB dimensions using factor analysis.

Recently, instead of using exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis has been utilized to strictly confirm the independent relationships among the OCB dimensions in the final process. Even so, their OCB dimensions were not necessarily guaranteed to be exhaustive enough to figure out all the practical and important contributive behaviors in any other management environment because initial, hypothetical dimensions were usually developed through the researchers' own ideas or referred to from the opinions of some practical managers in specific management environments. Even if the researchers validate their hypothetical dimensions using other samples, they cannot negate the possibility of some other behavior dimension that meets the basic conceptual definition of OCB.

Table 1
Representative Research on the Establishment of OCB dimensions

Studies	No of Dims (No of items)	Suggestion of Dims Conception	Development of Initial Dims/Items	Improvement of Initial Dims/Items	Final Velification of Initial Dims/Items
Bateman & Organ (1983)	1(30)	—	Authors	Management	EFA
Smith et al. (1983)	2(16)	(ex-post)	Authors	EFA	EFA
Williams & Anderson (1991)	2(14)	Smith et al. (1983)	Authors		
Van Scotter & Motowidlo (1996)	2(15)	Envisaged by Researchers	Authors		CFA
Podsakoff & MacKenzie (1994)	3(14)	Organ (1988, 1990)	Authors	Other Researchers	CFA
Van Dyne & LePine (1998)	3(16)	Smith et al. (1983)	Authors	EFA	CFA
Moorman & Blakely (1995)	4(19)	Graham (1989)	Authors	Other Researchers	CFA
Podsakoff et al. (1990)	5(24)	Organ (1988)	Authors	Other Researchers	CFA
Van Dyne et al. (1994)	5(37)	Graham (1991)	Authors & Employees	EFA	CFA
Farh et al. (1997)	5(20)	(ex-post)	Data from Employees	EFA	CFA

In fact, OCB dimensions have been able to continue to develop even in the Western society, and this has been observed from the fact that Dennis Organ, the guru of OCB researchers, also developed OCB dimensions from the initial two (Smith et al., 1983), to five (Organ, 1988), and then to seven (Organ, 1990). Taking a slightly malicious view, Smith et al. (1983), did not recognize the remaining three of five dimensions that were proposed by Organ (1988), and Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, and Fetter (1990) did not take into consideration Organ's (1990) dimensions of cheerleading and peacemaking, which he proposed was as important as the other OCB dimensions. Furthermore, the cultural differences could influence people's perspectives of contributive behaviors in an orga-

nization, as was discussed by Organ, Podsakoff and Mackenzie (2006).²

“Our review of the literature suggests that the majority of studies examining the antecedents of OCB have been conducted in the United States, although this has been changing in recent years. This U.S. focus to the literature raises several important questions for future research. For example, does OCB have the same meaning in other cultures, and are there different terms in other languages that describe the same phenomenon? Some evidence (Hui, Law & Chen, 2004; Lam, Hui & Law, 1999) suggests that the OCB dimensions of altruism, courtesy, civic virtue, conscientiousness, and sportsmanship captured by Podsakoff, et al. (1990) scale can be generalized to other cultures, including Australia, Hong Kong, Japan, and China. However, recent conducted by Farh et al (1997), and Farh et al. (2004) suggests that some culturally specific dimensions may exist as well.” (p.138)

Chinese OCB dimensions and their Applicability

When Jim-Lih Farh and his group first tried to analyze the relationship between OCB and satisfaction or leader fairness using a Taiwanese sample, they utilized a Chinese translated version of sixteen OCB question items of Smith et al. (1983), and obtained the similar altruism and general compliance dimensions as in the case of the Western sample (Farh, Podsakoff & Organ, 1990). However, Farh et al. (1997), was interested in “whether citizenship behavior has an etic (universal) meaning in cultures in which expectations for employees vary drastically” (p.421) and presented a broad definition of OCB to Taiwanese employees or managers and asked them to list 10 to 20 behaviors that met the definition. They collected more than 1,500 behaviors and, by carefully scrutinizing them, finally obtained five OCB dimensions and twenty question items. The original OCB dimensions were “identification with company” (four items), “altruism toward colleagues” (four items), “conscientiousness” (five items), “interpersonal harmony” (five items), and “protecting company resources” (three items). These are considered to be relatively exhaustive dimensions because the employees were stimulated to freely list as many behaviors as they could by only referring to a broad, abstractive definition of OCB.

Farh et al. (1997) played a pioneering role in Asian OCB research and their dimensions and question items have been used in many Chinese or Taiwanese OCB researches (Chen

² Their original forms of other papers were altered by the authors according to the American Psychological Association (APA) rule.

& Francesco, 2003; Chen, Aryee & Lee, 2005; Chen, Tsui & Farh, 2002; Cheng, Jiang & Riley, 2003; Chu, Lee & Hsu, 2006; Francesco & Chen, 2004; Hui, Law & Chen, 1999; Liang, Ling, & Hsieh, 2007; Snape, Chan & Redman, 2006; Wong, Ngo & Wong, 2006; Wong, Wong & Ngo, 2002; Wong, Wong, Ngo & Lui, 2005; Yang, Mossholder & Oeng, 2007; Yen & Niehoff, 2004) and even in a western research (Jung & Sosik, 2006). However, one may question whether or not these Chinese cultural dimensions are actually and unconditionally applicable in other Asian OCB research. Among the dimensions, interpersonal harmony and protecting company resources were regarded as specific to Asian OCB dimensions. According to them, “one of the most distinctive features of Chinese society is their family orientation.” (Farh et al, 1997, p.428) Therefore, protecting company resources becomes an important OCB dimension in the Chinese culture because assuming their family oriented collectivism or “familistic collectivism,” (p.429) they are usually tempted to use the companies’ resources for their family (such as taking the company supplies home).

Making personal telephone calls using the company telephone, which is formally prohibited, is sometimes observed even in the case of Japanese companies. However, personal use of the company’s resources by employees has not been considered to be a serious problem in most Japanese companies. Moreover, Japanese collectivism is not necessarily family based, and Japanese management is considered to be based on managerial paternalism. Under managerial paternalism, Japanese employees are sometimes implicitly permitted to use the company’s resources unless it is too much or beyond the common sense that they share in their society.

Further, with regard to interpersonal harmony, it was not clear whether it would be emphasized as an OCB in other Asian countries because Farh et al. (1997) merely explained that, “(t)he cultural root of interpersonal harmony in the Chinese citizenship behavior scale is a cherished cultural value of interpersonal harmony found in Chinese societies.” (p.430) The Japanese are actually considered to emphasize upon harmonious human relationships. However, the aspect of human relationships that is emphasized is not necessarily the same as that emphasized by the Chinese. For example, Alston (1991) compared different important aspects of personal relations in China, Korea, and Japan. According to his explanation, the Japanese emphasize a harmonious relationship within a group, while the Chinese stress upon a dyad relationship in which each member is fully committed to the other. (Koreans emphasize upon harmony between unequals.) Moreover,

as discussed later, Farh et al's (1997), interpersonal harmony dimension was strongly associated with avoiding selfish activities, which might not be considered as a sufficient factor to maintain harmonious relationships in the Japanese society.

From the above discussion, it is revealed that neither Western nor Chinese OCBs are necessarily appropriate in Japanese OCB research. It is quite important to investigate the kinds of behaviors that may actually be considered as the behaviors that meet the original definition of OCB and establish Japanese OCB dimensions. Therefore, this paper aimed to develop exhaustive OCB dimensions by adopting the method of Farh et al. (1997).

Data Collection Method

Sample

Questionnaires were distributed and data was collected from 234 professors and 221 clerical staff at a private university located in Tokyo, Japan in May, 2008. Universities are not business organizations, but some other OCB researchers have also collected data from universities (Bragger, Rodriguez-Srednicki, Kutcher, Indovino & Rosner, 2005; Bogler & Somech, 2005; Findley, Giles & Mossholder, 2000). This university is owned by a juridical person and has different schools ranging from elementary to graduate school. The staff was organizationally assigned to elementary school, junior and high school, university, or the general management division. However, we did not differentiate between the clerical staff depending on the schools because they did not have a sense of belonging to different organizations. Moreover, the juridical owner appoints teachers who teach in elementary or junior and senior high school. However, we assumed that there would be no serious bias even when we focused on only the university professors because their percentage was relatively high among the total educational staff ($234/364=64.3\%$).

Two different methods were adopted according to the data collected. The questionnaires given to the professors were distributed to each of their mailing boxes in the office building in the campus, and some small handmade boxes were also set there to collect the answered questionnaires. The questionnaires to the clerical staff were distributed and collected through the documents distribution system with the permission of all the members during a staff meeting. Two emails were sent to both the professors and the staff to encourage them to return the questionnaires before the closing date.

The 47 professors (the response rate was 20.1%) and 85 clerical staff members

(38.5%) responded to the questionnaires. One of the possible reasons why the response rate for the professors was lower was that most of them had had no opportunities to answer the questionnaires about their working life or that they might have felt awkward to do so. From among all the respondents, 69 respondents were male while 59 were female; 52 respondents were under 30 years old and 79 were aged 30 or above.

Method

The professors and clerical staff were presented the following broad OCB definition and asked to list the concrete behaviors that they considered to meet the definition.

“At your office, numerous behaviors including insignificant ones are performed, which contribute to the organization’s goal achievement, improve working conditions, and help coworkers (and students), although they are not included in your formal job. These voluntary behaviors, which are called OCB (organizational citizenship behavior), have been paid significant attention in the Western academic society. Please list the concrete behaviors that you may perform, which you deem important at your office, no matter how many there are.”

Two important points need to be highlighted in the above definition. First, “formal job” might be interpreted differently by each of the respondents. However, because we thought that their perception of a “formal job” might also affect their judgment of OCB, we concluded that they could decide the range of their formal job themselves, instead of concretely explaining what we meant by “formal job.” Secondly, we presented some examples of OCB at a university, such as behaviors that “contribute to the organization’s goal achievement, improve working conditions, and help coworkers (and students)”. Farh et al. (1997) claimed that they tried not to make the respondents refer to past OCB dimensions or items when they asked them to determine concrete OCB behaviors. Although our method might have contributed to the respondents’ bias in perceiving their voluntary behaviors, we were afraid that the response rates would have been much lower had they been proposed only in view of the academic OCB definition, which would be difficult for the layman person to understand.

The questionnaires included demographic details such as their jobs (professors or clerical workers), gender, generations (six categories, originally), and designations (five categories for professors, three categories for clerical workers). These items were used to determine whether there were some differences in the responses according to the respondents’

demography.

Results

Overall View

Two-hundred and seventy one behaviors were obtained from one-hundred thirty two respondents, thereby implying that each respondent provided an average of 2.1 behaviors. This number might not be large, and it was possible that the respondents may have found it difficult to point out those behaviors because most of them were done unconsciously.

After we confirmed the definitions of seven typical Western OCB dimensions (see Table 2), each of us first independently tried to classify all the behaviors into one of the seven dimensions. Only if we found no appropriate OCB dimension to classify a behavior were we permitted to create a new dimension. After each of us classified all the behaviors, we continued to discuss appropriate dimensions until we reached a consensus.

Although some of the typical Western OCB dimensions were not extracted using Taiwanese or Chinese samples (Farh et al., 1997; Farh et al., 2004), each of the seven Western OCB dimensions had some listed behaviors as a result of our classification. Moreover, three new OCB dimensions were created for the behaviors that could not be classified into any of the seven Western OCB dimensions (Table 2).

Table 2
Japanese OCB dimensions

<Typical Western OCB Dimensions> Altruism (23.25%), Civic Virtue (17.34%), Supporting Students (6.64%), Courtesy (5.90%) Conscientiousness (5.54%), Sportsmanship (3.69%), Self-Development (2.21%)
<Japanese Specific OCB Dimensions> Maintaining a harmonious environment (23.25%), Mutual Understanding (9.23%) Cleaning Workplace (4.80%)
Unclassifiable (3.69%)

Dimensions Similar to the Western Ones

Altruism (48 behaviors, 17.71%) was the behavior associated with helping other coworkers. The exemplary behaviors were “help others with their job matters depending on

the circumstances,” and “talk to the coworker who is in trouble.” Altruism is considered to be a rather universal OCB dimension. However, although Chinese workers also regarded helping others with non-work matters as one of the OCBs (Farh et al., 2004), we did not find any such behavior, and Japanese altruism was considered to be a little closer to Western altruism.

Civic virtue (47 behaviors, 17.34%) was associated with identifying with an organization and actively involving in its political, governmental activities. This form included the behaviors that were close to “voice” or “advocacy participation” such as “consider the factors that are necessary to improve one’s organization” and “give advice on risk management to other departments,” and the behaviors that were related to “identification with company” or “promoting company image” such as “advertise our organization to friends and acquaintances.” Moreover, “involve in the area cleaning activity” was also classified into this category because this behavior was considered to be one of the demonstrations for the people who live in the area around the organization.

Supporting Students (18 behaviors, 6.64%) became one of the OCBs because data was collected from a university—an educational institution. This is not unusual; several other researchers who had collected data from an educational institution obtained similar results. There were two ways of supporting students—one was to provide additional educational services such as “give advice to any student even if s/he does not belong to my research laboratory” and the other was the behaviors beyond direct educational service such as “become an advisor of students’ extracurricular activities” and “give students my email address to advise them on various things in their life.” The latter is related to daily life guidance, which was particularly important in junior or high schools. However, nowadays, even a university might be required to provide students with such extra services even though it is not yet a formal duty.

Farh et al. (1997), and Farh et al. (2004), did not find “courtesy” and “sportsmanship” when they tried to make Chinese OCB forms using a Taiwanese or Chinese sample. However, using a Japanese sample, some listed behaviors were classified into Courtesy (16 behaviors, 5.90%) or Sportsmanship (10 behaviors, 3.69%). Courtesy implies the behaviors that are preliminarily done to reduce problems faced by coworkers, such as “fill up copy papers or a toner cartridge in a copy machine for the next users,” “erase a blackboard for the next professor,” and “prepare a procedural manual for the next operator.” Sportsmanship includes “not grumbling or complaining,” “creating a positive atmosphere

at an office,” “or preventing the supervisor from using his/her time to respond to these complaints.” The exemplary behaviors were “not bring one’s (irritating) emotions to the workplace” and “not blaming a clerical worker who has made a mistake.”

Courtesy and sportsmanship are motivated not by seeing the person who is in trouble in front of a performer but by expecting that there may be someone who might be negatively impacted in the future in society. These OCBs were determined on the basis of the employees’ morality in view of a wide, abstractive society around them. The fact that Taiwanese and Chinese employees did not exhibit these kinds of OCBs might imply that their morality is more necessary for a smaller, concrete world like a blood-tied family.

Conscientiousness (15 behaviors, 5.54%) was the behavior that involved maintaining the order of the workplace by following the in-house rules. “Come to work earlier than others,” “handle a problem promptly,” and “even accept an unpleasant job,” were the exemplary behaviors in this category. Conscientiousness as one of the OCBs was controversial. Podsakoff & MacKenzie (1994) did not consider conscientiousness when they tried to confirm the OCB dimensions because the distinction between conscientiousness and formal jobs was just a quantitative one when compared to other OCB forms that differed qualitatively from formal jobs. However, in the horizontally egalitarian Japanese society, bravery and a strong will is required to carry out something like formal jobs more actively and with more initiative than others; thus, conscientiousness should be considered as one of the important OCBs when the Japanese employees’ behaviors are analyzed.

Finally, Self-Development (6 behaviors, 2.21%) was also seen, although its percentage was rather small. The examples were, “a voluntary workshop with other professors” and “collect information about one’s business industry on a regular basis.”

Japanese Specific OCB Dimensions

Maintaining a harmonious environment (63 behaviors, 23.25%) is associated with the behavior that is performed in order to establish a good human relationship and improve the atmosphere in an office. Interpersonal relationships were one of the typical OCBs using Chinese samples. According to Farh et al. (1997), interpersonal harmony was defined as “discretionary behavior by an employee to avoid pursuing personal power and gain with detrimental effects on others and on the organization,” (p.429) and three of four questions items regarding this dimension were related to avoiding “personal influence and gain” (p.428). These descriptions indicate that the Chinese considered interpersonal harmony to

be maintained by avoiding selfish activities. However, instead of the behaviors trying to avoid selfish activities, we found many behaviors that were related to trying to look amiable in the office surroundings. The important feature of this kind of behavior is that most of them are performed not in front of any specific person but in the general surroundings. Therefore, we preferred maintaining a harmonious environment to Chinese interpersonal relationships in order to describe this kind of behavior more precisely.

In a Japanese office, in particular, even when the staff works independently, they tend to have a sense of belonging to the team within the surroundings; thus, looking amiable or friendly becomes quite important to improve human relationships at work. Examples of such behaviors include “take a souvenir to the office after a personal trip” and “sometimes take some sweets to the office.” In fact, a souvenir and sweets are not necessarily worthwhile to everyone. However, they become an important symbol they may convey that the giver is always considerate to the other workers. Coworkers eat those sweets thanking the giver for remembering them even during his/her personal trip.

Another example was greeting such as “greeting with smile” and “always smiling.” Greeting is a good way to be friendly, but many Westerners might believe it to be too easy or trivial to be considered an OCB. However, in Japanese society, many people are not used to greetings, and it takes some courage to greet others. Furthermore, the behaviors related to planning a social event, such as “plan a party” and “organize a club,” were also considered to contribute to improving relationships within an organization.

Mutual Understanding (25 behaviors, 9.23%) might be considered as one of the formal jobs because employees have to know each other and each others' situations when they work as a team. However, the behaviors that were classified into this category were not only the ones involved in performing formal jobs, but were also those involved in understanding the others' human nature to maintain a good relationship. “Attempting direct conversations, without depending too much in an email” and “understanding others' jobs as important information” were typical examples.

Western researchers might find it difficult to understand the importance of such behaviors in the Japanese or East Asian context. For example, Farh et al. (1997) proposed the question item of “willing to coordinate and communicate with colleagues,” for the altruism to coworkers dimensions, but Organ, et al. (2006), doubted its validity and said that “(it is) somewhat general and does not explicitly indicate that the coordination or communication relates to an organizational relevant task or problem” (p.290). However, although we agreed

that this kind of behavior is not necessarily appropriate in measuring altruism, we believe that daily communication with coworkers can facilitate mutual understanding between each other and improve their general human relationship, in turn, positively affecting job performance.

Cleaning Workplace (13 behaviors, 4.8%) was also considered to be one of the Japanese OCBs, and was similar to the Chinese samples. However, they may differ in their implications. Japanese offices are usually quite clean, and many offices including this university employ many professional cleaners. Even so, the respondents listed “maintain order in an office,” and “clean up litter in the office kitchen,” as important OCBs because those behaviors have some significance in valuing the property common to all the workers, and, again, they are effective in maintaining harmonious human relationships among coworkers.

Demographic Factors Affecting OCB Dimensions

We also confirmed whether or not there were significant differences in the reported OCBs depending on the differences in the respondents' job, gender, and age. First, civic virtue and self development were significantly more highly rated by the male employees than by the female employees ($p < 0.05$). When the reported behaviors are simply reclassified into interpersonal OCB or OCBI (composed of maintaining a harmonious environment, altruism, mutual understanding, courtesy, and sportsmanship) and impersonal OCB or OCBO (composed of civic virtue, clean workplace, and conscientiousness) it was found that the male employees tended to list more impersonal OCBs than the females ($p < 0.05$). When the sample was divided into two—the young or the old—the older employees had a slightly stronger tendency to describe civic virtue as an OCB than the younger ones ($p < 0.1$). Moreover, professors pointed out more “supporting students” OCBs than the clerical workers ($p < 0.01$).

Table 3
OCB differences by Demographic Factors

	Male(n=69)	Female(n=59)	<30 (n=53)	30(n=79)	
Civic Virtue**	0.5362	0.1356	Civic Virtue*	0.2075	0.443
Self Development**	0.087	0	Professors		Clerical Workers
Impersonal OCB**	0.7536	0.3559	Supporting Students***	0.3191	0.0353

***: $p < 0.01$, **: $p < 0.05$, *: $p < 0.1$

We have to consider whether these tendencies were specific to this organization or common to any educational organization, or any kind of organization. It is considered rather universal in universities that professors are more partial than clerical workers toward “supporting students.” However, we should not readily conclude that the clerical workers do not support students on the basis of this result alone. Many clerical workers such as those at the Student Services actually support students on the campus, but they believe that this is part of their formal jobs. In other words, our results implied that professors did not tend to regard supporting students behaviors as formal jobs, instead, they considered them OCBs, while this was not really the case of the clerical workers, even in the case where both kinds of employees did something for students on a regular basis.

The reason why more civic virtue was supported by the older or male employees was considered to be related to the fact that its question items included positive statements at meetings, and, in a Japanese hierarchical organization, it is much easier for them to exhibit this kind of behavior. Most Japanese universities, including the one surveyed, do not have any formal gender segregation, so whether or not this different tendency is due to implicit different expectations of men and women in a Japanese society may be debatable. The fact that impersonal OCB was also larger for male employees than for female ones might have also reflected this different expectation. Finally, it would be unwise to conclude that male employees indulged more in self-development than females because the number of behaviors classified into this dimension was rather small. We should collect data from a larger sample to determine whether it still has the same tendency.

Discussion and Conclusion

Although Western OCB research is still ahead of the pack, OCB is a universally important concept from the fact that no organization can specify all the employees’ behaviors in advance so as to attain its goal. However, the kinds of behaviors that meet the general definition of OCB are considered to vary depending on institutional or cultural differences between countries. This study aimed to establish Japanese-specific OCB dimensions by proposing the broad definition of OCB to Japanese employees and asked them to list their behaviors that they felt met the definition.

As a result of classifying the data, several distinguishing aspects of Japanese OCBs were found. First, the typical Western OCB dimensions were observed even in a sample of Japanese employees. Japanese employees picked out the behaviors related to Organ’s five

basic dimensions but also included other dimensions such as self-development and supporting students, which had also been considered important OCB dimensions. In particular, unlike their Chinese and Taiwanese counterparts, Japanese employees regarded courtesy and sportsmanship as one of the OCBs. Second, Japanese OCBs also include the dimensions that emphasize harmonious human relationships. These are apparently similar to Chinese interpersonal harmony. In these two regards, Japanese OCBs might be placed somewhere between the Western and Chinese OCBs. However, Japanese employees emphasized on looking good to the people around them, rather than avoiding selfish activities, which Farh et al. (1997), emphasized upon, and they listed a number of behaviors that could improve the air, or atmosphere, implicitly produced by the reaction of those people to their behaviors.

This result is consistent with the description of the Japanese culture, or the Japanese perceptions of human relationships. The Japanese are said to always worry about how they are perceived by hypothetical people around them when they behave in society. These hypothetical people are called *Seiken* (Abe, 1995, 2004), which means other people around but which is also hypothetical. No Japanese person can specify the boundary of *Seiken* or who actually belongs to his/her *Seiken*. However, they have been taught that they always have to consider the *Seiken*'s observations and responses to their behaviors. In view of such ambiguity and pervasiveness, the Japanese always tend to attend to the air or atmosphere around them. They try to create a positive atmosphere around them instead of directly controlling how the *Seiken* observes them. Perceived positive environment gives them relief from being talked about behind their backs.

Considering the Japanese sensitiveness to *Seiken*, a different explanation from that of Western OCBs might be necessary and effective in explaining their dimensions of courtesy and sportsmanship. In a culture of individualism, courtesy and sportsmanship are exhibited on the basis of pure consideration of others who might suffer from their negative behaviors in the future. In contrast, Nakane (1970) pointed out that no Japanese person has his/her own absolute criteria of judging between right or wrong and tries to find the truth among other people. In other words, what others believe to be true also becomes the truth to him/her. Japanese employees might exhibit such behaviors because they try to avoid any behavior that might be perceived as wrong by the *Seiken* even if they do not think of how their behaviors will finally affect others.

In the Japanese society, adapting oneself to the other people around is quite important

and required. When a situation changes, opponent behaviors might be required to share the common atmosphere with others. For example, as part of sportsmanship, subordinates should “not complain about their work assignments” (Konovsky & Organ, 1996) otherwise the management would have to expend his/her energy and time to deal with such complaints. In other words, when they perform this sportsmanship, they believe it is objectively right or it should be avoided for their management and organization. However, in a Japanese society, employees are required to alter their behaviors depending on the situations around them. When s/he hears coworkers complain about it in an izakaya or Japanese bar after work, s/he is expected to complain about it in a similar manner. If s/he is not in tune with these coworkers, s/he might be looked down upon because the absence of such a behavior implies that s/he recognizes that s/he is in a better position than them. This might be regarded as a wrong behavior against the implicit rule of *Seken*.

Although this study is the first attempt to establish Japanese OCB dimensions, as far as we know, it is still preliminary. Most Western researches have confirmed the appropriateness of their OCB dimensions using other samples. Our sample was from one small private university, and whether or not employees of other Japanese organizations also consider OCBs in a manner similar to this study should be empirically confirmed. However, while the Japanese are considered to emphasize upon a harmonic relationship with others, in a manner similar to other Asian people, the fact that they listed many behaviors that aid in improving the surrounding atmosphere, rather than a dyad relationship to a specific other, was an important finding in future Japanese OCB research.

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