

# Gender and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

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**Abstract.** As organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) becomes a hot and interesting topic, there are some contradictory opinions towards different groups displaying OCB. The most controversial one is about gender. Some people believe that females tend to manifest more OCB, while others argue that men are inclined to display more OCB. There is also a belief that there is no difference in different genders engaging in OCB. Due to this contradictory phenomenon, this article aims at exploring the gender differences in displaying OCB in private sectors based on Chinese culture and have found out that males are inclined to manifest more OCB than females in all OCB dimensions.

**Keywords:** *organizational citizenship behavior, gender differences, helping behavior*

## 1. Introduction

Since many enterprises failed after the financial crisis in 2008, the human resource management field has experienced an increasing interest in organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), which is defined as employees' voluntary behavior of contributing additional efforts to their work. Due to the belief that OCB positively influences organizational profitability and performance, employers are inclined to recruit employees with a higher level OCB. However, a contradictory phenomenon exists in employers' preference for different genders who engage in OCB [1]. Some research has argued that men tend to engage in more OCB because they have more ambitions in career development; while other studies have believed that females are more likely to display OCB because they are traditionally regarded as a "helper".

Research related to OCB is mostly conducted base on the western context and public sectors [1]. Nevertheless, private organizations face more problems in its survival. Moreover, OCB varies across cultures [1], so the western theory and practice about OCB cannot be applied in the eastern world. Thus, this article aims at exploring gender differences in displaying OCB in the private sector of China.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Concept of Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Organ is the first person concretely defining OCB as a discretionary behavior which is not directed related to the reward system, and that plays an important role in promoting the organizational effective functioning [2]. His study has provided a basis for future OCB research and succeeding definition of OCB given from other researchers share similar meanings with Organ's definition. For example, Niehoff and Moorman have referred OCB as a not formally required behavior of employees' job role in the workplace [3]. OCB positively influences organizational functioning by enhancing productivity, employee work performance and coordination among colleagues [1].

### 2.2 Dimensions of Organizational Citizenship Behavior

With the development of the OCB definition, Organ has officially developed five dimensions of OCB, namely, altruism, conscientiousness, courtesy, civic virtue, and sportsmanship [2]. Altruism is a voluntary helping behavior toward colleagues and it positively impacts performance evaluations and affectivity within an enterprise [2,4]. Conscientiousness means going beyond minimal work requirements such as working overtime and it plays a significant role in increasing workers'

productivity [1,2]. Courtesy refers to avoiding problems, mitigating risks and also preventing problems caused by coworkers [2,5]. courteous behavior has a positive influence on reducing conflicts between colleagues and making teamwork more efficient [4]. Civic virtue refers to staff participation in enterprises' management such as attending non-required meetings in the company, which may improve organizational performance, the level of service, and thus reduce customer complaints [1,2]. sportsmanship means tolerance without complaints in the face of suboptimal organizational situations and it reduces employee turnover rate [2,5].

Considering the cultural difference, Farh has developed another five OCB dimensions based on Chinese contexts such as altruism, conscientiousness, identification with the company, interpersonal harmony, and protection of company resources [6]. The Chinese altruism is defined the same as the western concept of altruism referring to voluntary helping behaviors towards colleagues in the workplace. The Chinese conscientiousness is also defined the same as its western concept referring to the discretionary behavior that performs exceeding the formal requirement of jobs. The definition of identification with the company is similar to the western concept of civic virtue and also include the behavior of spreading good news and providing constructive suggestions for companies. Interpersonal harmony and protecting company resources are unique dimensions in Chinese culture and they root from Chinese collectivism. Farh have defined interpersonal harmony as the prevention of interpersonal negative impacts or harmful speech towards other colleagues. Protecting company resources refers to the prevention of abusing company resources for personal use [6].

### **2.3 Gender and Organizational Citizenship Behavior**

Research has discovered that women are more likely to engage in OCB in all dimensions including altruism, conscientiousness, civic virtue, courtesy and sportsmanship [7]. In contrast, Another study conducted by Bahrami has suggested that men tend to perform more OCB overall [8]. Farrell and Finkelstein have claimed that females tend to perform more altruism [9]. However, another study has shown that males are inclined to engage in more helping behavior [10]. Moreover, Kidder and Parks have indicated that men tend to display more OCB in civic virtue dimension because men are commonly considered as goal-oriented and assertive so that they dare to speak out and give constructive suggestions [11]. Another related study has indicated that females are inclined to perceive OCB as in-role behavior on the dimensions of civil virtue, protecting company resources and interpersonal harmony, while males are more likely to manifest OCB concerning with altruism [12]. Nevertheless, there is a study which has claimed that OCB has no relationship with gender [13]. Due to these contradictory phenomena, this article aims at exploring gender differences in engaging in OCB based on Chinese private sector context.

## **3. Methodology**

This study was conducted by the qualitative method using questionnaires. These questionnaires were generated by Chinese survey platform called "wenjuanxing" and were sent through Chinese social networking websites. A total of 186 respondents from different private companies contributed to this study and their personal information was kept confidential. The questionnaire was comprised of two parts. The first part was participants' basic information such as gender. The second part was 13 questions used to measure respondents' OCB level in each OCB dimensions. Considering the cultural issue, the OCB measurement was Farh' Chinese five-dimension OCB scale including the dimensions of altruism, conscientiousness, identification with the company, interpersonal harmony, and the protection of company resources [6]. Additionally, a rating scale called Likert scale was adopted to measure participants' agreement degree to each OCB related questions using five items from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The rating scores were given from 1 to 5 respectively. The arithmetic mean of rating scores was used to estimate OCB level of different gender groups and they were compared for the purpose of identifying the differences among different genders in engaging in OCB in different dimensions. The data analysis method of calculating the mean was completed by the Chinese survey platform, "wenjuanxing".

#### 4. Results and Discussion

Gender information of participants are shown in Table 1

Table 1. gender information of participants

Gender	Number	percent
Male	85	45.7%
Female	101	54.3%

OCB levels of different genders in each dimension are presented in Figure 1.

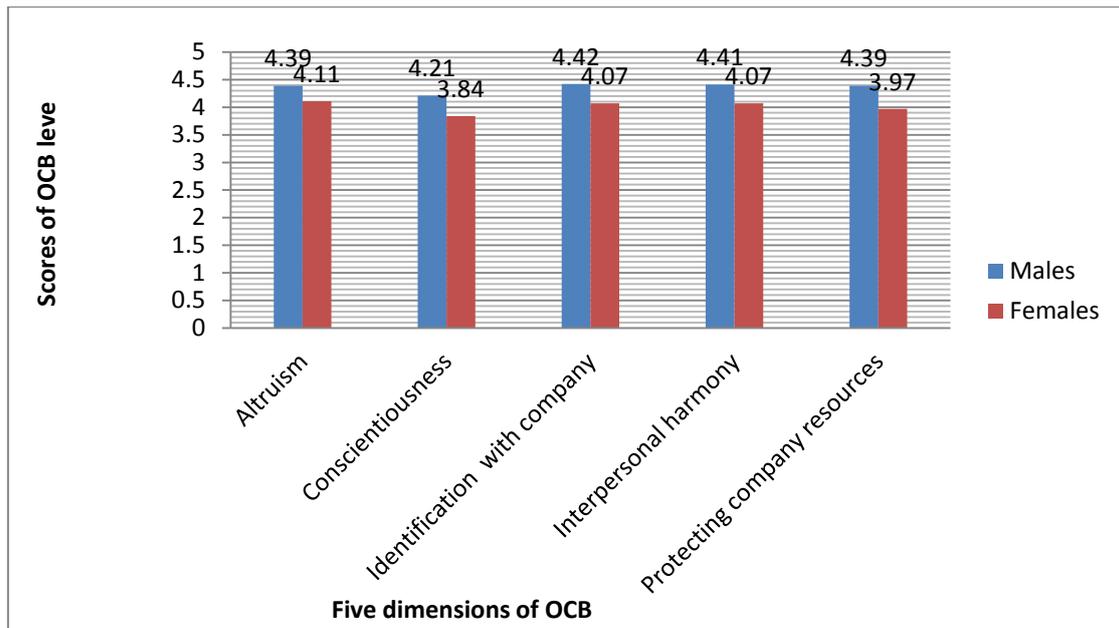


Figure 1. OCB levels of different genders in each dimension.

The result has shown that men are inclined to perform more OCB in all OCB dimensions (altruism, conscientiousness, identification with the company, interpersonal harmony, and the protection of company resources). This discovery is inconsistent with the finding that there is no difference between different genders in manifesting OCB [13]. It also conflicts with the research finding that females tend to display more OCB than males across all dimensions [7]. Nevertheless, that research was based on the context of Romania and their participants were selected from senior managers. While this study was conducted in China and respondents were managers and common employees as well. A study has indicated that owing to gender bias towards females, women have to perform better than males for the purpose of getting fewer rewards in the workplace[14]. Thus, it is understandable that in that study female employees who have ultimately been promoted to be leaders perform a higher level of OCB than their counterparts. Additionally, The measurement of OCB in that study is different from the OCB scale in this study because of cultural differences. Therefore, the different type of participants and different contexts may cause contradictory findings. However, the finding of this study is consistent with conclusion made by Bahrami and his colleagues that men tend to perform more OCB than women in general [8]. Moreover, This finding conflicts with the statement that female are more likely to manifest helping behaviors [9] but support the work of Ehrhart and Godfrey [10]. An interesting phenomenon is that both men and women tend to help opposite sex [1]. Thus, the gender of the individual being offered help is of significance to consider. The finding of this article also conflicts with the claim that females are inclined to perceive the keeping interpersonal harmony and saving company resources as in-role work [12].

## 5. Summary and Future Research

This article aims at exploring the gender differences in displaying OCB across all dimensions and has found out that men tend to engage in more OCB than women across all dimensions including altruism, conscientiousness, identification with the company, interpersonal harmony, and the protection of company resources. However, these findings are not supposed to be regarded as reasons for discrimination toward women in the job market. On the country, as for this phenomenon, the reasons behind it are worth exploring. Whether the existing discrimination towards women leads to this or men are pushed to display more OCB because of traditional belief. Thus, for future research, the reason for the gender differences in engaging in OCB is an interesting direction. Moreover, some other demographic factors such as age, job position and educational background can also be included in future research instead of just gender information.

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