
The Effects of Nationality, Work Role Centrality, and Work Locus of Control on Role Definitions of OCB

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In this study of 116 Chinese managers of state-owned businesses in Shanghai and Tianjin and 109 American managers attending an Executive MBA program, nationality, work role centrality, and work locus of control were examined as possible reasons for why an individual might include behaviors typically characterized as organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) as in-role job behaviors (role definition). Nationality was found to be directly related to role definition. Chinese managers were more likely to define OCB as part of their job than were the American managers. Work locus of control was also found to mediate the relationship between nationality and role definition. However, work role centrality did not mediate the relationship between nationality and role definition as had been hypothesized. Implications for management and further cross-cultural research are discussed.

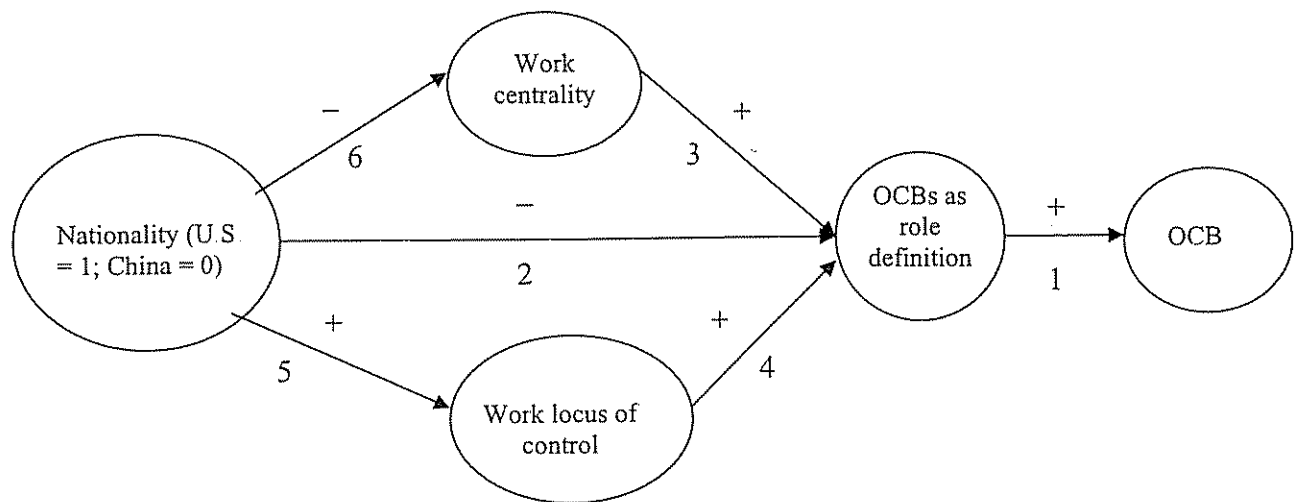
In an effort to understand why some employees perform organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) while others do not, recent research has turned to an explanation rooted in the different ways employees may define their roles (Coyle-Shapiro, Kessler, & Purcell, 2004; Kidder, 2002; Morrison, 1994; Morrison & Phelps, 1999; Tepper & Taylor, 2003; Zellars, Tepper, & Duffy, 2002). Drawing on the original definition that OCB are those behaviors that are volitional on the part of the individual and not required by the formal job description nor rewarded by the organization (Bateman & Organ, 1983; Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983), several studies have suggested that if employees define their roles loosely so that behaviors normally thought of as OCB were instead deemed "in-role," those employees would be

more likely to perform those OCBs. Evidence from these studies supports this role definition effect and suggests that researchers may gain a greater understanding of the antecedents of OCB performance by examining factors that may influence role definitions.

The purpose of the present study is to assess potential relationships among a number of variables that help explain why an employee may define OCB as part of his or her job. Our intent is to go beyond examining whether there is a role definition effect, and instead examine what factors may cause an individual to classify a behavior, normally consistent with Organ's (1988) definition of OCB, as in-role rather than extra-role. Although the extent to which OCB varies across cultures continues to be an under-researched area and scholars have called for more research in this area (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bacharach, 2000), of special interest in this study is the possible effect of nationality on role definitions. Several studies have examined the extent and nature of OCB performance in different nations, most notably in Asian cultures like China (Farh, Earley, & Lin, 1997; Hui, Lee, & Rousseau, 2004; Lam, Hui, & Law, 1999; Wong, Wong, & Ngo, 2002). However, those studies typically have linked dimensions of culture directly to OCB performance itself. Our interest here is not in whether cultural differences affect OCB directly, but whether it does so through its effects on role definitions. Given the increasing global importance of the Chinese economy, a second focus of this study is on U.S. - China comparisons in mechanisms that lead to role definitions in the two countries. The conceptual model is shown in Figure 1. The development of various hypotheses is discussed below.

Figure 1

Conceptual Model*



* Path numbers correspond with hypothesis number

Role Definition and OCB

Recent research suggests that a critical factor in predicting an employee's OCB performance is that employee's perspective about whether the behaviors are viewed as in-role or extra-role (Morrison, 1994; Tepper, Lockhart, & Hoobler, 2001). Thus, it is important to understand whether an employee performs a particular behavior because he or she sees it as part of the job along with the corresponding inducements and incentives versus behaviors that more closely correspond to the original conceptualization of OCB and are truly volitional. As first argued by Morrison (1994), the more broadly employees define their jobs (role definitions) the more likely they are to perform behaviors that would otherwise be classified as extra-role or OCB. Consistent with Morrison's hypothesis, a number of researchers have found that employees are more likely to perform OCB when they are viewed as in-role rather than extra-role (Coyle-Shapiro, Kessler, & Purcell, 2004; Kidder, 2002; Morrison, 1994;

Morrison & Phelps, 1999; Tepper & Taylor, 2003; Zellars, Tepper, & Duffy, 2002). Although an examination of causes of role definitions is the central focus of this study, we included a hypothesis about the relationship between role definitions and OCB for model completeness. Thus, based on the preceding, the following is hypothesized.

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between role definitions and OCB such that employees who define OCBs as part of the job are more likely to perform those OCBs.

Nationality Differences in Role Definition

Although China has undergone a dramatic transformation in recent years, the United States and China still differ considerably in their economic, legal, political, and educational systems. For example, the political and economic systems are completely different though China has undertaken the path of economic liberalization over the last two

decades. And although there has been dramatic growth in the private sector, the public sector continues to be the main employer in China (Lu, Fan, Liu, & Yan, 2002). Further, the education system is much more competitive in China because of the large population (Tang, 1999)

Perhaps more central to the present study are cultural differences between the United States and China. One way in which the cultures of China and the United States differ is in their respective values of individualism and collectivism. Hofstede (1980) defined individualism as a focus on rights above duties, a concern for oneself and immediate family, an emphasis on personal autonomy and self-fulfillment, and the basing of one's identity on one's personal accomplishments. Individualism-collectivism (IC) is a bi-polar construct where an individualist (1) would consider his/her personal interests more important than the interests of a group, (2) would look out for him/herself, and (3) would consider the attainment of his/her personal goals of primary importance (Earley, 1989; Wagner & Moch, 1986). On the other hand, a collectivist would allow the interests of the group to take precedence over those of the individual. A collectivist would greatly value membership in a group and would look out for the well-being of the group even at the expense of his/her own personal interests (Wagner, 1992; Wagner & Moch, 1986).

Although individualism/collectivism varies among individuals within countries, certain nationalities such as Chinese are more collectivistic while other nationalities such as Americans are more individualistic (Hofstede, 1980). Work by Hofstede (1980) and others has suggested this dimension as a fundamental distinction between cultures. Some cultures (like the U.S.) develop citizens who are primarily individualistic and others (like China) develop citizens who are decidedly collectivistic. Therefore, a collectivistic society is characterized by citizens who seek to support the goals of the group and protect the group welfare, while an individualistic society is characterized by citizens who seek to promote their own interests. As an example of support for this cross-cultural view, Earley (1989; 1993) found cultural differences in social loafing, which were consistent with the distinction between an individualistic and a collectivistic

culture. In their meta-analysis of individualism-collectivism, Oyserman, Coon, and Kimmelmeier (2002) concluded that Americans were higher in individualism and lower in collectivism than were the Chinese. In the Moorman and Blakely (1995) and Van Dyne, Vandewalle, Kostova, Latham, and Cummings (2000) studies, respondents who were more collectivistic performed more OCB than did those who were individualistic.

A second way in which the cultures of China and the United States differ is in the value of power distance. In high power distance societies, power is expected to be used unilaterally. Employees are thought to accept hierarchy and power differences and comply quickly and automatically with the decisions of the powerful (Hofstede, 1980, 1986). Studies have supported the idea of greater acceptance of hierarchy in East Asia than in low power distance, Western countries (Bond, Wan, Leung, & Giacalone, 1985; Schwartz, 1994; Westwood & Everett, 1987). Following the logic of Lam, Hui, and Law (1999), managers in high power-distance nations such as China are likely to have more authority than managers in relatively low power-distance nations such as the United States. Thus, in China, we would expect to see managers demand more from employees and define their work roles more broadly. Yang, Chen, Choi, and Zou (2000, p.115) cited a study (Chinese Culture Connection, 1987) across 23 countries that showed China ranking first on "willingness to subordinate oneself for a purpose" whereas the U.S. was 17th.

Finally, the Chinese concept of *biaoxian* (employee performance) includes several job behaviors that would, in Western cultures, be considered extra-role (Farh, Zhong, & Organ, 2004). Thus, because Chinese employees are more collectivistic, higher in power-distance, and consequently more likely to subordinate themselves for a larger purpose, we expect that Chinese employees define their work roles more broadly than do American employees.

Hypothesis 2: Compared to American employees, Chinese employees are more likely to define OCB as part of their jobs.

In addition to nationality, a critical question is what other factors determine whether an employee defines behaviors as in-role or extra-role. Although there are a number of possible

reasons why an individual may define work to include those behaviors typically characterized as OCB, in this paper we propose two variables that have typically not been included as antecedents to role definition. They are work role centrality and work locus of control.

Work Centrality and Role Definition

Work centrality is the degree of importance of work in one's life (Paullay, Alliger, & Stone-Romero, 1994). How central work is in one's life has been found to be positively related to organizational commitment (Hirschfeld & Feild, 2000; Mannheim, Baruch, & Tal, 1997) and job satisfaction (Mannheim et al., 1997). Diefendorff, Brown, Kamin, and Lord (2002) found limited support for a direct relationship between work centrality and OCB. In their study of the relationship between job involvement and OCB, Diefendorff et al. included work centrality as a control variable, which they found was not related to OCB performance itself. However, instead of this direct effect, work centrality may affect OCB by enlarging a person's role definition. Individuals who view their work as central in their lives may be more apt to define their work broadly than those who hold their work to lesser importance. Those to whom work is central may be more likely to include the entire breadth of the job in their definition of what their work is. They may thus be more likely to include OCB in their definition of what is included as part of their job (Hirschfeld & Field, 2000). Thus, the following is hypothesized:

Hypothesis 3: Work centrality will be positively related to role definitions such that employees who consider work to be more central to their lives are more likely to consider OCBs as part of their job roles.

Work Locus of Control (WLOC) and Role Definitions

A sense of psychological control is regarded as an important dispositional factor for workplace behaviors (Hoffi-Hofstetter & Mannheim, 1999; Withey & Cooper, 1989). Much of the earlier research used Rotter's (1966) concept of locus of control according to which

individuals differ in terms of their beliefs about whether they control the outcomes in their lives (i.e., internal locus of control) or the outcomes are controlled by factors such as luck and other people (i.e., external locus of control). Building on the argument of Paulhus and Christie (1981) that there might be generalized perceptions of control for various spheres of an individual's life, Spector (1988) formulated the work locus of control (WLOC) scale. Blau (1993) found that because of its specificity to work domain, WLOC was a stronger predictor of work related behaviors than Rotter's (1966) locus of control scale. Consequently, we focus on WLOC.

People with a higher internal locus of control are more likely to show pro-social behaviors, as found by Hoffi-Hofstetter and Mannheim (1999) in their study of managers of Israeli organizations in a stage of recovery. As Withey and Cooper (1989) argued, people with a higher internal locus of control believe that their actions make a difference and thus are more likely to take initiative and display a wider set of work behaviors than what is specified by the job. Extending their arguments to WLOC, employees with an internal WLOC are not likely to be constrained by rigid job roles in order to retain control over events in the work place. Such employees are likely to include whatever it takes to be in charge of the situation as part of their expected job role.

Hypothesis 4: Work locus of control is related to role definitions such that employees with a higher internal WLOC are more likely to consider OCBs as part of their job roles.

Nationality Differences in Work Locus of Control and Work Centrality

Although we hypothesized a direct effect of nationality on role definitions, we believe that there is also an indirect relationship between nationality and role definitions via work locus of control and work centrality. According to Spector et al. (2002), individualism is an expression for the need of independence and self-sufficiency whereas collectivism is an expression of the need for affiliation. In collectivist societies since individuals give primacy to group goals over personal goals, it

may be considered appropriate to grant power to the group (or social institutions) for actions and outcomes in one's personal life. In a study comparing the U.S. and Japan, another collectivist society, Weisz, Rothbaum, and Blackburn (1984) found that individuals in Japan were likely to form alliances with powerful people so as to be better assured of outcomes. In such a society, a feeling might generate among individuals that their fate rests in the hands of powerful others rather than in their own hands.

Hypothesis 5: Employees in the U.S. are likely to have a higher internal work locus of control compared to employees in China.

Collectivist societies tend to be homogeneous because people have common heritage going back several centuries causing the perception of the society to be that of a big family (Earley & Gibson, 1998). Triandis et al. (1988) use the terms *idiocentric* and *allocentric* to refer to people in individualist and collectivist cultures, respectively. *Idiocentric* people have a self-concept independent of others whereas *allocentric* people have an inter-dependent self-concept. While in individualist societies the concept of kinship refers to the immediate family (spouse and children), people in collectivist societies extend the concept of kinship to distant relations, neighborhood, and other institutions of the society. Thus, workplace enjoys a more central focus in the lives of Chinese employees. As Yang et al. (2000) argued, work in China might be seen as something for which the family must be ready to sacrifice because it is for the collective good of the society. On similar lines, Spector et al. (2004) argued that Chinese consider work to be more important than leisure.

Hypothesis 6: Employees in the U.S. are likely to consider work less central to their lives compared to employees in China.

Method

Sample

The Chinese sample used in this study consisted of middle- and senior-level managers from a variety of Chinese government and state-owned enterprises (e.g., Baoshan Steel, Shanghai Airlines, TEDA, Tianjin Finance

Bureau, Shanghai Municipal Government) who attended a management development program, either in Shanghai or Tianjin, conducted by faculty from a large American university. The questionnaire, which had been translated into Chinese and back-translated into English (Brislin, 1980), contained measures of OCB, role definitions, work centrality, and work locus of control. The questionnaires were handed out to trainees at the start of the training session. Anonymity was guaranteed. Of the 232 managers who attended the training sessions, 155 completed the questionnaire for a response rate of 67%. After questionnaires with missing data were eliminated, there were 116 usable responses. The sample consisted of 54 individuals from Shanghai and 62 from Tianjin. Sixty-nine percent of the sample was male and the average age was 37.2 years with a standard deviation of 7.64.

For the U.S. sample, 144 surveys were distributed to Executive MBA students at a large public university. The respondents were employed as full-time managers in government and a variety of industries (e.g., banking, pharmaceutical, chemical, education, healthcare). Anonymity was guaranteed. A total of 136 responses were received for a response rate of 94%. After questionnaires with missing data were eliminated, there were 109 usable responses. Fifty-three percent of the respondents were male and the average age of the U.S. sample was 29.53 years with a standard deviation of 6.92.

In cross-cultural research, it is important to survey people who are representatives of that country's culture. All our respondents in the U.S. sample were U.S. citizens. Similarly, there were no foreigners in the Chinese sample. Public sector managers are good representatives of managers in China because public sector organizations are the biggest employers in China. Similarly, the assortment of various industries and the government in case of American managers make them fairly good representatives of the population of managers in the U.S. It may be noted that the U.S. managers in our sample were younger compared to the Chinese managers by nearly eight years. However, the younger average age of American managers may not be a cause for concern. This is because the age differences are theoretically

not much relevant for individual traits and values as these are fairly stable characteristics that distinguish one person from another. As reported in the meta-analysis of antecedents of OCB (Organ & Ryan, 1995), organizational tenure, a variable closely related to age, has a weak relationship (ranging from .026 to .062) with different dimensions of OCB.

Measurement Equivalence

In cross-national research, it is important to ascertain whether a survey item has the same meaning for respondents from different countries (Cheung & Rensvold, 1999). As a first step, it is important to maintain conceptual equivalence of the measures across two cultures and two languages. We translated the English version to Chinese and back translated to English with the help of two independent, bilingual graduate students (Brislin, 1980) to ensure consistency (in word and interpretation) across the two versions. The format and response options of the surveys were identical for the English and Chinese surveys.

One of the methods to verify measurement equivalence of scale items is factorial invariance. Factorial invariance exists when the factor loadings of scale items in relation to the underlying latent constructs are not significantly different between the two groups (Cheung & Rensvold, 1999). If certain items are not factorially invariant, then one recommendation is to drop these items from subsequent analysis. The remaining items then constitute a scale that is measurement invariant. In this examination of measurement equivalence, we used all data for which we had complete responses for the particular scale. Thus, for WLOC our sample consisted of 292 (156 Chinese managers and 136 American managers) respondents. For OCB our sample consisted of the 225 respondents reported earlier. We did multi-group analysis in EQS following the recommendations of Byrne (1994). Accordingly, we dropped seven items from the work locus of control scale because they were not factorially invariant. In addition, one more item was dropped because dropping this item significantly raised the reliability coefficient for the two samples considered separately. As a result of lack of factorial invariance, two items were dropped from the

OCB scale, and the same two items were dropped from the "OCBs as role definition" scale because this scale was derived from the OCB items.

Measures

Organizational Citizenship Behavior

OCB was measured with the 21-item scale developed by Moorman and Blakely (1992, 1995), which was based on Graham's (1989) dimensions of OCB, but also included items that referenced Organ's (1988) dimensions. Responses were made on a five point scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree). The four dimensions included interpersonal helping, individual initiative, loyal boosterism, and personal industry. Interpersonal helping (six items) focuses on helping co-workers when such help is needed. Individual initiative (five items) focuses on communications to others in the work place to improve individual and group performance. For example, one of the interpersonal helping items is "always goes out of his/her way to help co-workers with work-related problems" and one of the individual initiative items is "always encourages hesitant or quiet co-workers to voice their opinions when they otherwise might not speak-up." Loyal boosterism (five items) focuses on promoting the organization's image. Personal industry (five items) focuses on task performance above and beyond normal role expectations. For example, one of the loyal boosterism items is "shows pride when representing the organization in public" and one of the personal industry items is "never misses work even when he/she has a legitimate reason for doing so." After dropping two items in order to ensure factorial invariance, Cronbach's alpha for the Chinese sample was .81, for the American sample it was .91, and for the combined sample it was .88.

Role Definitions

Role definitions were measured by using the same 21-item OCB scale except that respondents were asked to indicate to what extent the particular behavior was part of their job. Responses were made on a five point scale (1=definitely not part of my job to 5=definitely part of my job) and respondents made this assessment right after they recorded the degree

to which they performed the OCB item. After dropping two items in order to ensure factorial invariance, Cronbach's alpha for the Chinese sample was .88, for the American sample it was .94, and for the combined sample it was .92

Work-Role Centrality

Work-role centrality was measured with a three-item measure adapted from Harpaz (1985; Harpaz & Fu, 1997). The questions reflect the importance of the work-role relative to other life roles. The concept was derived from the meaning of working project (MOW-International Research Team, 1987). Respondents were asked how important and significant work is in their life on a scale from 1 (one of the least important things) to 5 (one of the most important things). A second question asked whether the respondent would continue working if he or she won the lottery. Finally, respondents were asked to allocate 100 points across five life domains, with a higher number signifying greater importance. The number of points assigned to "work" comprised the third item. Because Cronbach's alpha for this measure was very low (.53 for the Chinese sample and .40 for the American sample), we used only the third item as the measure of work role centrality. The use of this single item as the measure of work-role centrality is consistent with other recent research (Peterson & Ruiz-Quintanilla, 2003). This item used the constant sum scaling method (Guilford, 1954; Torgerson, 1958). The respondents were asked to rate the relative importance of the following five domains in their lives: leisure, involvement in community activities, work, religion, and family. The respondent distributed 100 points across these five domains with the higher score indicating that the particular domain is more important in the life of the respondent.

Constant sum scaling method forces the respondent to indicate the relative importance of the items in the pool. It is a ratio scale where a score of 40 implies that the item is twice as important compared to an item that gets a score of 20. Compared to a Likert-type interval scale, constant sum scale makes the respondent think more before responding and the chances of a mechanized response to questions are reduced. This scale also helps the researcher capture a wider variance across the sample of respondents

as compared to interval scale items. It works very well when the respondents are relatively well educated because of the requirement of allocating a fixed number (100 in most cases) across various categories (Zikmund, 1984). In our sample, the respondents were in managerial positions and enrolled in executive education programs. Therefore, they were quite capable of comprehending the question, and indicating the relative importance of items through allocating the 100 points.

Work Locus of Control

Work locus of control was measured with the 16-item scale developed by Spector (1988). Responses were made on a six-point scale anchored from "disagree strongly" to "agree strongly." A sample item is "Promotions are given to employees who perform well on the job." Even though eight items were dropped as a result of lack of factorial invariance (including one item as a result of reliability analysis), the remaining eight items captured the scale dimensions of internal control, powerful others, and luck, thereby preserving the content validity of this scale. With the reduced scale, Cronbach's alpha for the Chinese sample was .60, for the American sample it was .69, and for the combined sample it was .72. Although coefficient alpha for the reduced scale of work locus of control for both the American and Chinese samples is lower than the conventional cut-off of .70 (Nunnally, 1978), it is not out of line with a substantial portion of cross-national research. In their meta-analysis of individualism-collectivism, Oyserman et al. (2002) found that about half of the available cross-national research studies were based on Cronbach reliabilities of less than .70.

Nationality of Managers

In line with prior comparative research across nations (e.g., Spector et al., 2004; Yang et al., 2000), we did not directly measure the complex socio-cultural differences but instead relied on past findings of country differences (Hofstede, 1984; Spector et al., 2002) to capture the nationality differences through a dichotomous measure. Similarly, in their meta-analysis of individualism-collectivism, Oyserman et al. (2002) found that country was used as a proxy for individualism-collectivism in

several of the studies they reviewed. The justification for using a dichotomous variable to capture cultural differences is as follows. As Oyerman et al. (2002) note, a major (debatable) assumption in using the direct assessment approach (i.e., using scales of Individualism-Collectivism) is that "cultural frame is a form of declarative knowledge (e.g., attitudes, values, and beliefs) that respondents can report on rather than some set of more subtle and implicit practices and social structures that respondents cannot report on because these practices are deeply woven into everyday life and are a normal part of living" (p.7). On similar lines, Peng, Nisbett, and Wong (1997) argued that even a small amount of individualism in the Chinese context would stand as an outlier and might be given the highest possible rating on a Likert-type scale by a Chinese respondent. Thus, the comparison of scaled scores of individualism-collectivism between the U.S. and China might be misleading. Ping et al. (1997) found that the method of using a scale of cultural values to measure differences between the Chinese and the Americans had low convergence with the cultural difference assessed by independent experts. Accordingly, we relied on a large body of previous research

that has used diverse methods and measures to conclude that the American managers tend to be much more individualistic than the Chinese. Therefore, we used a dichotomous variable to indicate the cultural contrast between the two countries.

In the present study the U.S. managers were coded as 'one' and the Chinese managers were coded as 'zero'.

Results

Table 1 gives the descriptive statistics and correlations between variables for the overall sample. Table 2 and Table 3 report the descriptive statistics and correlations between the variables for the Chinese and American samples, respectively. The zero order correlation between nationality and OCB was non-significant. However, to establish the mediating effect of nationality differences on OCBs, a zero order correlation between the two is not essential (James & Brett, 1984; Kenny, Kashy, & Bolger, 1998; MacKinnon, Lockwood, Hoffman, West, & Sheets, 2002) in contrast to the norms set by Baron and Kenny (1986).

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations between Variables (N = 225)

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Nationality (dichotomous variable: U.S. = 1)							
2. Work centrality#	1.61	.82	-.46***				
3. Internal work locus of control	4.27	.58	.27**	-.09	<u>.72</u>		
4. OCBs as role definition	3.76	.67	-.07	.06	.16*	<u>.92</u>	
5. Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB)	3.81	.50	-.12	.12	.00	.50***	<u>.88</u>

Note. The diagonal elements are the scale-reliability estimates, where applicable.

*** p < .001 (2-tailed) ** p < .01 (2-tailed) * p < .05 (2-tailed) # Work centrality was transformed by dividing the score by 20.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations between Variables for Chinese Sample (N = 116)

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Work centrality#	1.97	.85	-			
2. Internal work locus of control	2.84	.44	.03	.60		
3. OCBs as role definition	3.80	.53	.21*	.02	.88	
4. Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB)	3.86	.37	.13	.12	.65***	.81

Note. The diagonal elements are the scale-reliability estimates, where applicable.

*** $p < .001$ (2-tailed).

** $p < .01$ (2-tailed).

* $p < .05$ (2-tailed).

Work centrality was transformed by dividing the score by 20.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations between Variables for American Sample (N = 109)

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Work centrality#	1.22	.59	-			
2. Internal work locus of control	3.15	.61	-.11	.69		
3. OCBs as role definition	3.71	.80	-.14	-.08	.94	
4. Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB)	3.74	.61	.04	.03	.43***	.91

Note. The diagonal elements are the scale-reliability estimates, where applicable.

*** $p < .001$ (2-tailed).

** $p < .01$ (2-tailed).

* $p < .05$ (2-tailed).

Work centrality was transformed by dividing the score by 20.

We used structural equation modeling to assess the significance of the hypothesized paths and also to assess the direct and indirect relationships between nationality and role definitions. In a recent paper, Bing et al. (2002) argued that compared to multiple regression, structural equation modeling is a more appropriate technique for testing mediation. Accordingly, we tested our hypothesized model in Figure 1 through structural equation modeling using EQS. Single indicators of latent variables (not shown in the Figures) were used in the case of WLOC, role definition, and OCB to account for the measurement error in the respective scales (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1988). Factor loadings were set equal to the square root of the reliabilities and the error variances of these

variables were fixed at $(1-\alpha)$ times variance (Loehlin, 1998).

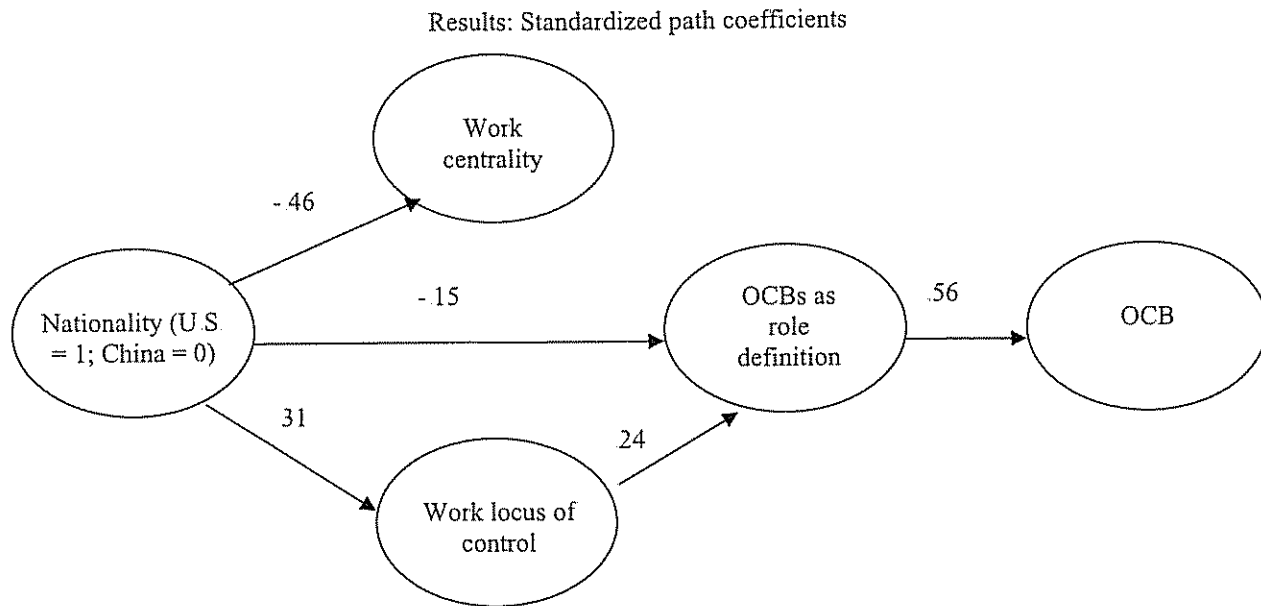
The conceptual model (Figure 1) had a good fit with the data. The fit indices were: Chi square = 4.78, $df = 4$, $p > .05$; NFI = .97; CFI = .99; RMSEA = .03. Similar to the correlation results, the path from work role centrality to role definitions was not significant. For the sake of parsimony, this path was dropped and the new model had the following fit indices: Chi square = 5.01, $df = 5$, $p > .05$; NFI = .97; CFI = 1.00; RMSEA = .00. Dropping any other path significantly deteriorated the model fit.

As shown in Figure 2, significant paths were found in support of hypothesis 1, which predicted a positive relationship between role definition and OCBs, and in support of hypothesis 2, which predicted that Chinese

managers were more likely to consider OCBs as part of their role definition. Significant paths also supported hypothesis 4 that work locus of control was related to role definition. Finally, we found that nationality could explain differences in internal work locus of control as well as in work centrality. American managers scored higher on internal work locus of control

definitions. Therefore, the only other possibility was to interchange OCB and role definitions in the conceptual model. However, the fit indexes deteriorated and the paths from nationality and work locus of control to OCB were not significant.

Figure 2



compared to their Chinese counterparts, thereby supporting hypothesis 5. Chinese managers considered work to be more central to their lives compared to the U.S. managers, thereby supporting hypothesis 6.

The significant paths in support of hypotheses 4 and 5 suggest that work locus of control may serve as a partial mediator of the relationship between nationality and role definition. However, since we found no support for a relationship between work centrality and role definition, we cannot forward work centrality as a potential mediator.

While considering alternative models, it was theoretically not possible to vary the roles of nationality, work centrality, and work locus of control because nationality is an exogenous variable and work centrality and work locus of control being stable individual characteristics,

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine potential reasons why employees may differ in whether they define OCBs as either extra- or in-role. We are interested in this because past research has suggested that employees who define OCB as part of their jobs are more likely to perform OCBs on a regular basis.

Consistent with past research (Coyle-Shapiro, Kessler, & Purcell, 2004; Kidder, 2002; Morrison, 1994; Morrison & Phelps, 1999; Tepper & Taylor, 2003; Zellars, Tepper & Duffy, 2002) and our hypothesis 1, the results of this study suggest that OCB performance may be influenced by whether those OCBs are defined by employees as being either in-role or extra-role. Based on our structural equation results summarized in Figure 2, we found a positive and significant relationship between whether

subjects viewed an OCB as in-role or extra-role and their assessment of their own citizenship behavior performance. While OCB has been formally defined as extra-role, how employees actually perceive the place of OCB in their roles may ultimately affect whether they are performed. This result continues to support suggestions by Tepper and others (Tepper & Taylor, 2003; Zellars, Tepper & Duffy, 2002) on how managers need to understand how subordinates come to understand their roles. The process of role-making continues to have significant influence on later decisions to perform OCB (Morrison, 1994) and, indeed, may predict whether employees perform OCB even in the face of forms of injustice or other reasons that, in theory, discourage OCB performance.

However, what was more interesting to us was our effort to understand what might affect the subjects' decision to define OCB as part of their job. This study explores possible reasons why employees might perceive OCBs as in-role or extra-role by examining how variables such as nationality, work centrality, and work locus of control may directly and indirectly influence role definitions.

We hypothesized (hypothesis 2) that nationality may affect role definitions. Based on the cultural differences of individualism-collectivism and power distance, and because of *biaoxian*, we suggested that Chinese employees would be more likely to define OCB as part of their job. Our results showed a significant relationship between nationality and defining OCB as part of the job. Chinese employees were more likely to perceive OCB as in-role and, for this reason, may be more likely to perform OCB without the presence of other OCB predictors. It may be the case that, while attitudes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and perceived fairness may be instrumental in driving OCB performance in a US sample, such attitudes may not be so important in predicting OCB performance in a Chinese sample. Their OCB performance may simply be based more on their job definitions and not their current job context or job attitudes.

Interestingly, this direct relationship between nationality and role definitions may be affected by possible indirect relationships mediated by two variables that we suggested

could be related to role definitions themselves. For example, we found support for hypothesis 4 that work locus of control was positively related to role definitions and for hypothesis 5 that the U.S. employees would have higher internal work locus of control. Taken together, these two hypotheses suggest that the direct relationship between nationality and role definitions could be offset by competing relationships between nationality and work locus of control. The direct relationship suggests that Chinese employees would be more likely to perceive OCB as part of their jobs, but the indirect relationship between nationality and role definition through work locus of control suggests a way in which the U.S. employees could also view OCB as in-role. Our findings imply that while Chinese employees may view OCB as in-role more so than the U.S. employees, that difference may be lessened when the U.S. employees also have increased internal work locus of control. These results suggest that the U.S. managers might be able to increase the likelihood that the U.S. employees perceive OCB as part of the job by seeking employees who have increased internal locus of control.

We also hypothesized (hypothesis 6) that nationality would be related to work centrality such that US employees would consider work to be less central to their lives compared to Chinese employees and that (hypothesis 3) work centrality would be positively related to role definitions. Support for both these hypotheses would support the view that Chinese employees may also define their jobs as including OCB because they considered work so central to their lives. Unfortunately, we cannot support this indirect relationship because, while we found support for a significant relationship between nationality and work centrality, work centrality was not related to role definitions. In our data, those who held work as central were not more likely to define OCB as part of their jobs. It may be due to the relatively weak measure of work centrality that we used in our analysis. Secondly, it is possible that job involvement, a concept related to but narrower in scope than work centrality, may be a better predictor of role definitions (Diefendorff, Brown, Kamin, & Lord, 2002).

Taken together, our significant results suggest that 1) how employees define their jobs

may predict their OCB performance, 2) our Chinese sample was more likely to see OCB as part of their jobs, and 3) the U.S. employees may also see OCB as part of their jobs if they held an internal work locus of control. A more fine-grained analysis of the effect of nationality on role definitions should consider the theory linking each of the components of OCB with nationality.

For the U.S. managers supervising / collaborating with Chinese employees in a joint venture or in a subsidiary, it is useful to know the differences as well as similarities of Chinese employees vis-à-vis the American employees. Training managers before they leave for expatriate assignments abroad is an important activity undertaken by most large U.S. companies and our study adds to the knowledge on individual characteristics as well as role definitions where Chinese employees might differ from American employees. Assuming our results are replicated by future research, the implication for managers is to expect the Chinese employees to be likely to define their jobs more broadly and be willing to perform tasks that American managers might consider beyond their formal responsibilities. Chinese managers are likely to be more committed to their work because it occupies a more central place in their lives. On the other hand, Chinese managers are likely to exhibit a lower internal locus of control and that might mean less preference for autonomy and greater resistance to new work processes – common effects reported in locus of control literature. It might be beneficial for American managers to explicitly consider internal work locus of control as a desired attribute in selecting new employees in China (Spector et al., 2002; 2004).

This research is not without its limitations. We did not measure cultural dimensions directly, but relied on the generalization that Chinese respondents would, on average, be more collectivistic and have greater power distance than the U.S. respondents. Although this method has been used in other research (Oyserman et al., 2002), conducting the analysis with direct measurement would have provided yet another means of comparison. Given the scope of our sample, all our data is self-report. Although we sought to diminish the problems associated with common methods, those

concerns cannot be ruled out. For example, we conducted the Harmon one-factor test, which Podsakoff et al. (2003) suggested to verify if there was a common factor running across all the items. We did not find any such overarching (method) factor thereby making it less likely that the observed relations are due to common method variance. Moreover, our results are consistent in direction and magnitude with past research in this area. Similarly, since our data is cross-sectional, we cannot rightly make inferences about causality and causal direction. Also, work centrality scale in our study had low reliability and consequently we used a single item for this measure. Similarly, work locus of control scale had a low reliability in the Chinese sample. Further, we did not measure any contextual variables (e.g., autonomy, role stress) which may play an important role in the study of role definitions. Finally, we were also not able to collect information on the demographic characteristics and job positions of individual respondents. Overcoming these limitations would be an important agenda for future research.

Even with these limitations, we believe there is value in our evidence that employee nationality may be a significant predictor of role definitions and subsequent OCB performance. Thus, U.S. companies setting up operations in China might expect employees to go above and beyond the formal job description. We also believe that an important result of this study was that while the direct relationship between nationality and role definitions may suggest that the U.S. employees are less likely to view OCB as in-role, their increased work locus of control may offset this effect. Thus, different nationalities may utilize different methods when determining just what behaviors may rightly constitute their role.

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