

Measurement Dilemmas in Organization (Mis)Behavior Research

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Abstract

By adapting Porter, Lawler, and Hackman's framework and our own research, this paper focuses on the dilemmas researchers face when observing intentional acts by organization members that intentionally defy the organization's norms of proper conduct. We discuss the difficulties inherent in measuring sensitive and low base issues and offer a methodological layout in which Organizational Misbehavior (OMB) should be approached, observed and understood. This effort complements both mainstream Organization Behavior (OB) and Organization Citizenship Behavior (OCB) research traditions, thus contributing to the comprehension and management of the full range of behaviors in organizations.

Introduction

The present paper is part of an ongoing effort among scholars to explore and better understand the "dark side" of organizations and organizational life [e.g., 1, 2, 3, 4]. Despite some early work two decades ago, the dominance of the orthodox philosophy among organization behavior theorists and writers, as well as their preoccupation with "order" and "objectivity," has resulted in an uneven amount of attention paid to how people "ought" to behave as opposed to how they *actually* act at work [see reviews in [5], [6]. Recently, Vardi and Kim [7], in relation to the study of organizational careers, discussed a similar bias that needs to be rectified. On balance, in the management studies and organization behavior literature, much more attention is given to the "normative" than to "unconventional" organizational behavior phenomena. This bias is ever more intriguing in light of the undeniable prevalence of a large variety of manifestations of organizational misbehavior (OMB).

Inherent Measurement Difficulties

One reason for the scarce and sparse literature and research on organizational misbehavior is its inherent nature, one that is often hidden and concealed, and thus fraught with observational and measurement difficulties. Secondly, the focus on the desired aspects of work behavior may have resulted from the tendency to treat negative behaviors as a sign of managerial lack of control and leadership weakness. Management may have signaled its lack of desire to deal with it, and academic gatekeepers may have directed research resources elsewhere. Furthermore, employees themselves are not typically forthcoming in discussing openly their misdeeds [8] and researchers find that publishing their "dark side" work is somewhat less appealing and perhaps more difficult [9].

A further confounding factor is the lack of an agreed upon, unified, definition of the phenomenon of organizational misbehavior [3]. Indeed, one of the features of organizational misbehavior that makes the field so intriguing, and frustrating at times, is the general absence of the “right answer”, one that neatly identifies and solves problems of organizational life. In addition to being a sensitive topic, OMB is also rife with methodological and ethical problems, which affect its research [10]. Unquestionably, organizational members are leery about sharing their improper conduct and their causes with outsiders. It goes without saying that without reliable and valid measurement we cannot undertake sound scientific research. Moreover, practitioners too have a responsibility to base their actions, decisions and recommendations on the solid measurement of the phenomenon at hand, grounded in relevant conceptual frameworks.

Our main conclusion from the literature review is that in order for OMB research to progress into a well-established discipline, and to catch up to the mainstream organization behavior and management studies fields, scholars need to address such dilemmas. How one should go about studying a specific organizational issue depends on the particular approach to the analysis organizational misbehavior the researcher selects. The scholar has to accurately identify the focus of his or her research in order to adopt an appropriate and relevant research strategy. This is a crucial issue, especially if we consider the numerous designations and appellations academicians have chosen for misbehavior at work – e.g., workplace deviance, antisocial behavior, counterproductive behavior, dysfunctional behavior, insidious behavior, and organizational misbehavior – and their varied definitions [11, 1, 12]. Consider, for example, a recent paper published in the widely esteemed *Academy of Management Journal*. Using the term "workplace deviance" the authors reviewed the literature [13]. This very thorough review totally neglects other similar constructs pertaining to phenomena similar to what they measured. This “bias”, we feel, is the result of the terminology the authors chose to use.

Approach Dilemmas

In line with Porter, Lawler and Hackman’s [14] typology of scientific approach dilemmas in OB research, this paper deals with some of the major issues confronting those researching OMB. We have explored the extensive literature to reveal the major dilemmas that characterize the field of organizational behavior, quandaries which may be viewed as bipolar dimensions that describe the central analytical issues of organizational behavior.

Theoretical vs. Empirical

The first dilemma, relevant to any scientific endeavor, is the choice between an empirical and a theoretical approach. In organizational behavior, the tendency has been to focus on empirical research rather on theoretical issues. Perhaps one of the reasons for the emphasis on empirical research is that this field has its roots in the discipline of industrial psychology [14, OB reviews in the *Annual Review of Psychology* 1979-1995]. Industrial psychologists focused mainly on empirical testing, aimed at developing instruments to be used in the selection of employees and their placement in organizations, and tended to thoroughly deal with research methodology. Organizational psychology, the heir apparent of industrial psychology, still puts high priority on rigorous measurement because of the need of practicing

psychologists to rely on precise data to make decisions about their clients [15]. Nonetheless, the importance of developing conceptual frameworks for organizational behavior has been widely recognized as evidenced, for example, by the status a theory-oriented periodical such as the *Academy of Management Review* has achieved during the past two decades.

In their survey of the literature, Randel and Gibson [16] found that of 94 empirical studies, examining the beliefs and ethical behaviors of employees, 64% did not present any theoretical framework serving as a basis for their research, and 75% of the studies did not propose any hypothesis to be examined. They therefore call for special effort to improve research methodology. A solid theoretical basis enables us to predict the type of behaviors we may expect to find under varying conditions, to develop a rigorous research design, aimed at examining our assumption and/or the predictions, and the findings may then be interpreted in the light of the specific theory; if the need arises, the theory can be reformulated. Indeed, some important insights regarding organizations may be obtained when predictions based on theory are rejected. The development of good and sound OB theory should have a number of considerations:

- A strong organizational behavior theory is interdisciplinary, combining both micro and macro levels of analysis [17]. Daft and Lewin [18] share this view and maintain that the science of organizational behavior must develop and maintain interdisciplinary research. They point out that environmental, technological and economic changes create new organizational realities to which previous explanations may not be relevant. Thus, continuous theory construction is required if we are to better comprehend such realities.
- Collecting empirical data is critical for the evaluation of the validity of theory. A theory indicates what is supposed to be taking place, and empirical information demonstrates to what extent these relationships do in fact exist [14]. According to Bacharach [19] one of the critical criteria for the evaluation of theoretical building is *empirical adequacy*: “If a theory is operationalized in such a way as to preclude disconfirmation, then it is clearly not falsifiable” (p. 506). Therefore, on the one hand, for the measurement to be valid, it is essential that the instrument used be based on at least a tentative theoretical model, guiding the development of the scale [20]. On the other hand, without proper measurement we cannot accept or reject a theoretical interpretation of the phenomenon.
- Premature adoption of a theory should be avoided [21]. That is, a theory may constitute a useful tool, but in order to be a truly efficient one it ought to be based on conceptual and empirical studies. These invariably supply the best raw materials for the construction of a theory. One of the main problems of the models in the field of organizational behavior is the dearth of adequate terminology. In his study of the complexity of organizational models and of the language used to report the observations conducted in organizations, he found a low variance in the terminology used, leading him to conclude that only simple quantifiable relationships had been examined. He also points out that there is a need for a greater variety and specificity of the

terminology used for the definition of phenomena, in order to enable researchers to analyze more complex organizational models.

A solid theoretical base and sound empirical research are of critical importance for the development of the scholarly study of organizational *misbehavior*. Although misbehaviors constitute an integral component of the variety of behaviors in the workplace, the science of organizational behavior lags behind with regard to the collection of empirical data, and the development of a broad theoretical framework. Both are necessary in order to understanding the phenomenon and to pave the way for future research and theory building. Bennett and Robinson [20] convincingly draw our attention to the conceptual confusion we face when we use the terms deviance, antisocial behavior and aggression. In addition, and perhaps related to this confusion, the measurement of misbehavior is rather difficult [22]: firstly, the commonly used instruments cannot adequately capture manifestations of “invisible” misbehavior, such as loafing or making negative impressions. Secondly, the measurement may not reflect the actual frequency of phenomena such as theft by employees (for instance, inventory shortages may be due either to errors done on purpose or to theft). Thirdly, determining the level of employee theft by the number of employees caught stealing or by those who willingly admit stealing, does not reflect the real extent of the phenomenon. It is always difficult to determine the ratio of those whose misbehavior remains concealed.

During last two decades we have witnessed a significant development in our knowledge about misbehavior at work in theoretical and in empirical terms. A number of researchers have developed theoretical frameworks with different emphases. For example, Griffin et. al. [2] proposed a process model for describing dysfunctional workplace behavior; Vardi and Wiener [6] proposed a motivational approach to misbehavior using a deductive approach (building upon previous theories and constructs); Robinson and Bennett [23], using an inductive methodology, generated an influential typology of employee deviance; Sackett and Devore [24] systematically surveyed the emerging knowledge and developed a comprehensive framework for the understanding of counterproductive work behavior. Following their model, Bennett and Robinson [20] developed a research instrument measuring organizational misbehavior. They maintain that, in spite of the extent of the phenomenon and its cost, our current understanding of misbehaviors is still limited and there is a need for extensive empirical research. Such research is possible only if a valid measure of deviance in the workplace were available. They indeed provide an instrument of great importance for future studies in the field (this and other instruments are discussed later).

On the empirical side, studies have attempted to assess organizational misbehaviors and account for their variance. Here is just a random sampling of these: Greenberg [25] examined the relationship between employees’ sense of having been treated unfairly and thefts in the workplace, Ashton [26] related misconduct to personality traits, Vardi and Weitz [27] studied the relationship between job autonomy and misbehavior; Kurland [28] and Vardi and Weitz [29] used the model of reasoned action for the prediction of misbehaviors. Aggressive behavior at the workplace has been extensively explored by Baron and Neuman[30] with particular attention to abusive supervisory behavior by Tepper [31].

Descriptive vs. Prescriptive

The second dilemma facing the researcher is whether to undertake a descriptive or a prescriptive study. But, in reality, the relationship between description and prescription can be a symbiotic [14]. In fact, both approaches are essential for an in-depth analysis of organizational life. Those who formulate prescriptions are in need of insights and information gleaned from descriptive studies, i.e., adequate descriptions that provide the basis for any prescription. Researchers dealing with organizational behavior are greatly tempted to move from describing the phenomenon over to prescribing to the organization as to what is “best” for it and for its employees. We are often quick to assert how much better it would be “if the employee had more autonomy,” “if only supervisors were more considerate”. While it is usually quite easy to arrive at a consensus regarding “how things ought to be,” we believe ready-made prescriptions should be used sparingly, if at all. We have, for instance, found that both consideration and autonomy might actually increase the intention to misbehave [27, 29]. When solid theoretical grounding is lacking, recommending interventions may be premature and, at times, risky. Moreover, even after conducting an empirical study that has applicable elements, recommendations based on such findings must be given with utmost caution and awareness of the limitations of any OB research.

Finally, OB models and conceptual frameworks that advocate person-environment fit raise several important questions in regard to the sole desirability of states of congruence: Are they indeed functional for the organization? Are states of incongruence necessarily dysfunctional for the organization? Will states of congruence necessarily lead to functional behavior? Researchers of misbehavior should assume that states of both congruence and incongruence may lead to proper behavior and to misbehaviors. Just think about how unchallenging a job to which one fits perfectly could be and how creative a person can become when some friction and uncertainty do exist. Furthermore, before offering sweeping recommendations as to what is desirable we need to ascertain that misbehaviors we wish to control are indeed dysfunctional for the organization and its members.

Macro vs. Micro

The third dilemma facing researchers is whether to focus the macro or the micro levels [14]. The macro level of organizational behavior has its origins in sociology, political science and economics, and it deals with organizational structures, planning, and activity within the general social context. The micro level has its origins in psychology and social psychology, and it deals with individuals and groups and how they affect and are affected by the organizational system. Macro researchers are interested in broad theories explaining the functioning of systems, common features of organizations as well as the differences among them. They often use descriptive empirical studies with relatively little attention to practical implications and application. Micro level studies mostly ascertain commonalities and differences among individuals and groups using survey and experimental methods for precise hypothesis testing [14]. Vardi and Weitz [3] discuss antecedents of misbehavior making a distinction between levels of conceptualization and measurement: Organization (macro) and group, task and individual (micro). Sackett and Devore [24] offer a similar classification of antecedents in regard to counterproductive behavior. It is our recommendation that research of OMB utilize multilevel, interactive designs when data to fit such designs are available. This allows for better control of

demographic background and organization setting characteristics in multivariate analysis.

Structure vs. Process

The fourth dilemma facing the researcher is whether to adopt structural or process perspectives. Structure comprises the type of arrangements between the various components of the organization, and the relationship between them. Since formal organizations may be viewed as structured social systems, clearly their structure is man-made and is not inherent in a certain set of circumstances; structures are a matter of choice and may therefore be changed. A study with emphasis on structure will typically deal with the way the various components form part of a coherent framework, and how they affect individual and group behavior. Emphasis on process aspects is found in studies focusing on dynamics and activities such as socialization, communication, leadership and careers. While from the analytical point of view it is essential to emphasize structure as opposed to function an approach combining the two generally provides the best explanation of organizational behavior.

Our research on organizational structures and their effects misbehavior has dealt such questions concerning the relationship between occupational status (temporary/permanent) and misbehavior [32], the role of organizational (ethical) climate [33] and the influence of job autonomy on misbehavior [10]. Using a macro historical perspective, DeVries and Vardi [34] examined the bank stocks regulation affair in Israel using a system and organizational levels of description and analysis. The system level of analysis dealt with the mechanisms and processes pertaining to the social, cultural, political and economic environment in which the banks operated. At the organizational level, they examined the influence of structure and organizational culture on the misconduct patterns of the bankers and managers involved.

A process perspective on misbehavior can best be exemplified by Andersson and Pearson's [35] investigation on incivility at work. They posit a spiraling effect of uncivil organizational behavior and maintain that, while an accidental expression of incivility may not strongly affect what goes on in the organization, a spiraling process may lead to significant manifestations of aggressiveness.

Formal vs. Informal

Another dilemma involves the decision whether to focus on the formal or informal aspects of organizational life [14]. Complex organizations involving people at work constitute structured social systems. They are usually called formal organizations, since they include specific and well-defined relationships and functions. However, any formal organizational system generates an informal system of behaviors and relationships that reflects the dynamics emerging as a result of the social and interpersonal interactions among members. Metaphorically, one can view the formal aspects of an organization such as size, form, rules as the observable tip of an iceberg and the informal relationships, the value systems, the interactions and dependencies – as the voluminous part below the water.

In the past, studies of organizational behavior tended to focus on the formal organizational structure. They mostly dealt with ways the organizational structure can be made more efficient and rational. In the 1930s researchers pointed out that

focusing on the formal organizational structure is not the only means of explaining organizational behavior, or of changing it. The now famous Hawthorne studies were the first to incorporate the informal dimension within organizational research, including group influence, social status, informal communication, norms, etc. Since then, there is an increasing tendency to focus on the informal features of work organizational life. Porter et al. [14] maintain that researchers of organizational behavior encounter a great variety of structures, relationships and actions, requiring research combining both the formal and informal. OMB researchers should look at formal codes of ethics, rules and regulations, and management control systems, on the one hand, and the dynamics of behavior, such as social loafing, impression management, retaliation or undermining, on the other hand. Eventually, we should be able to combine both perspectives to more viable accounts of why individuals misbehave.

Objective vs. Subjective

The choice between a subjective and an objective observation is also an important dilemma [14]. Researchers go to great lengths to produce reliable and valid knowledge that can be validated and expanded. While, to many, science strives to be as objective as possible, this does not reduce the importance of subjectivity (the eye of the beholder) as a source of valid information. After all, the organizational behavior of individuals stems, to a significant degree, stems from their subjective world which is formed by perceptions, intellect, values, predispositions and attitudes.

Our OMB perspective and research indeed originated from the idea that misbehavior is internally motivated by both cognitive and affective-subjective processes. The so called real and actual features of the situation are not those that influence the specific behavior; it is the way we see them, interpret them and are influenced by them, which lead us to action. In fact, this very gap between objective circumstances and the individuals' perception of that reality is an important source of unexpected behaviors. In many types organizations (hi-tech, hospitals, law firms to name a few) work itself, objectively speaking, is loaded with stressful elements. Yet, individuals working under such conditions perceive them very differently. For some these are considered challenges and opportunities (e.g., Type A's, workaholics), for others they are source of personal tedium, anguish and strain even affecting their personal well being (e.g., burnout, physical symptoms). Thus, to really comprehend misbehavior we need both phenomenological observations and hard objective data. Conclusions based on just one aspect are bound to lead to erroneous and lopsided conclusions.

Cognitive vs. Affective

The seventh dilemma is the choice between cognitive and affective focused research. The former relates to the individual's thought processes such as decision and choice making, the latter refers to the individual's emotional world. Both are frequently expressed in organizations emanating from inside and outside the person. For example when things seem under control or have little direct effect on the individual h/she might rely on cognitive, rational processes. But, when the individual senses pressure or is directly affected by the events we can expect more affective reactions. In any case, individuals in organizations both think and feel. Behavior is the result of either cognition or affect, or both. Unquestionably, research of organizational misbehavior activity must account for both. We have shown that OB literature presents promising cognitive and affective models that can be utilized in OMB

research (e.g., [36] as an affective model and the reasoned action theory as a cognitive model [29]). Certainly, models that include both cognitive and affective variables will make better explanation of misbehavior variance than either of them separately.

Direct vs. Indirect

Our eighth research dilemma is the choice between direct and indirect measurement. The ideal way is to measure every form of misbehavior objectively, but argue Sackett and Devore [24] the Achilles' heel of this type of research is the existence of visible, easily measurable behaviors, such as absences, as opposed to a variety of concealed behaviors that the employees do not wish to reveal, such as theft and sexual harassment. Basically, the instruments at our disposal are either direct, such as self-reports, or indirect, reports about others. There are difficulties in interpreting both direct and indirect reports. For example, the data in self-reports may be biased due to the effect of social desirability, and ranking by superiors may be affected by halo effect. Both these problems will be discussed in detail later; here we merely point out that neither strategy is ideal.

Although there is evidence supporting the validity of self-reports in general, and although they provide accurate assessments of deviant behavior in particular, this method is not without limitations. Firstly, there is the respondents' tendency to try and create a more positive impression of themselves, possibly distorting the results. Secondly, there is significant evidence that correlation between admission of the misbehavior and the actual behavior is high. Therefore the researchers believe that self-reports can serve as a valid instrument for the assessment of a great variety of misbehaviors in the workplace, especially when the respondents' anonymity is assured. Salora [22] designed a study to determine the rate of employee deviance concluded that the use of anonymous surveys may be efficient in determining the base rate of deviance. The high response rate and the frequency of admitting misbehavior in the direct questionnaires reveal that employees are willing to report their own deviant actions. She points out that the number of employees who admitted to deviant behavior is surprising, considering the incriminating nature of such surveys.

If the research objective is to understand what employees feel and perceive, and how they respond, the method of self-reports may indeed be very effective. This conclusion stems from the difficulty in obtaining solid and more objective data on criteria such as delinquent behavior, theft and damaging organization's property, while the respondents are still employed there.

In spite of the advantages of self-reports, most of the researchers emphasize its limitations. Lee [10] points out that this method leads to incomplete reports. The respondents' tendency to report less misbehavior than actually occur may stem from their fear of being found out, and also as a result of social desirability [37]. Distorted responses may result in research reports of false relationships between variables. This may have a significant effect on research, since incomplete reports may reduce the range of the variable, and weaken the correlation of the relationship examined. These shortcomings may have a detrimental effect on the reliability of the information obtained by means of self-reports questionnaires.

The second strategy aimed at determining the level organizational misbehavior relies on information obtained from relevant others in the organization, from those

responsible for the work, or co-workers. Social projection denotes the projection of individuals' personal attitudes onto others around them. This method is based on the (somewhat naïve) assumption that others feel or respond the same way as they do. As was recently shown by Ferguson [11] in her work on OMB and social contagion, individuals tend to be affected in their thinking by false consensus, to perceive their own judgment and behavior as common to everyone, and therefore to reject alternative answers which may seem to be atypical. People tend to deem their own behavior as acceptable and widespread, otherwise it would be deviant. We used both direct and "projective" questionnaires to obtain data on OMB (see Vardi and Weitz [22]). As a rule, the measures are intercorrelated but since the average correlation in four different studies was 0.35, it is methodologically justified to employ methods.

Qualitative vs. Quantitative

The final dilemma concerns the choice between qualitative and quantitative methods. Quantitative measurement is the assignment of numbers to qualities or properties of people, objects or events, based on a given set of rules. Spector [21] posits that the field of organizational/industrial psychology tends to be a statistical science, i.e. the type of data gathered makes the use of statistical methods possible. When hundreds and sometimes thousands of observations take place, there is a need for a variety of statistical methods and tests in order to draw sensible conclusions. These tests make it possible to determine whether variables are indeed related and, in some cases (e.g., a strong theoretical basis, a longitudinal design) - infer causality.

There is a multitude of statistical tests but relatively only a few are commonly used in the field of organizational behavior. As in other scientific disciplines, tests are used frequently for the right reasons, but at times they are misused. Frequently, a particular statistical method becomes fashionable and is used because it increases the prospect of the study's publication, rather than being chosen as a result of a careful examination of its appropriateness as the tool best able to provide the answers to the research question. Moreover, there is a tendency towards excessive reliance on the analysis of complex data as a means of overcoming a weak research design, which sometimes leads to erroneous interpretations of complex statistical findings, while the use of a simple approach would provide a clear answer to the research question. The statistical methods commonly used in the field of organizational behavior include correlational analysis, multiple regression, various analyses of variance, and factor analysis (see review by Aguinis et al.[15]).

As Kunda [38] has demonstrated, qualitative research is more suitable than quantitative for the description and analysis of social processes such as the manipulative effects of organizational culture. Hence, whereas the qualitative approach is better able to analyze a complex event, a quantitative approach is more appropriate for the analysis of social structures. The quantification of measures and the analysis of the relationships between variables may shed light on only a small part of the overall picture, as in organizations the total picture is greater than the sum of the elements composing it. Undoubtedly, dark side social relationships have deep underlying complexities and nuances, which may elude research using the analytical method.

Qualitative research methods include use of participant observation, non-participant observation, interviews, and archival research [5]. Qualitative measurement has also been applied for the observation of organizational misbehavior.

Dabney and Hollinger [39] used interviews in a study of the illegal use of drugs by pharmacists. The data were collected by means of interviews with 50 pharmacists, recovering from the misuse of drugs. The researchers' position is that the interviews provide firsthand information about the attitudes and behaviors of the pharmacists using drugs. The face-to-face interviews were planned in order to examine the personal histories of a random sample of pharmacists. The material was recorded and a thematic analysis was carried out.

The second method used in qualitative research is the use of unobtrusive observations of individuals going about their normal practice. Typically, one or more observers are instructed on how and what to look for in the workplace setting or it may be completely unstructured. An alternative method is participative observation, facilitating the documentation of behavior in the most natural setting possible [5]. Although ethnographic methods are used more in anthropological research, this method can also be used in organization research, in order to assess employees' behavior without the observer's presence affecting the subjects' behavior [see 38]. Because of ethical considerations and the need to safeguard the rights of the individual employees, the use of this method is mostly limited to behavior in public research sites.

When the goal of the researcher is to examine the underlying processes leading to sensitive and controversial misbehavior, the participant-observer approach offers appropriate tools and techniques which may yield explanatory insights. Using such methods, whether overtly or under cover, has the potential of generating rich, first hand impressions. Analoui and Kakabadse [5] implemented a qualitative, long term, research design making use of direct observations in a particular service organization. The researchers emphasize the great importance of choosing the method and instruments of data collection. They posit that subtle forms of unconventional behavior, such as when subordinated cheat on their supervisor, cannot be studied the same way as other behaviors such as unauthorized strikes and absences. The dilemma is this. Any attempt to question the participants or asking them to describe and explain their motives by means of common research methods such as questionnaires and structured interviews, we actually call for less than honest replies. Just the simple labeling of certain behaviors as unconventional or deviant, would make sharing innermost thoughts with an outsider – undesirable. Analoui and Kakabadse, therefore, opted for participative observation with one of them spending about 6 years posing as a regular employee, all the while taking notes about incidents where he suspected some misconduct was involved. It enabled them to overcome problems of physical access to information with no disruptions in the work environment. The collected data, about rank and file as well as supervisory personnel, was then carefully analyzed, and theoretical propositions to explain them were put forward.

Historical archival research is another type of qualitative study. Historical analysis is clearly an important method of investigation of organizational misconduct at both the individual and organizational levels. In such studies questions on past phenomena are answered by means selected facts, organized in explanatory patterns that emerge from the data. Obviously, a historical perspective attempts to view the past through the eyes and representations of those who lived and acted at the time. It thus depends on the quality and extent of evidence left behind. One advantage of a historical investigation lies in the ability of the scientist to anchor the observations in a larger

picture, the social, cultural and economic conditions prevailing at the time. Another advantage lies in the possibility of examining and analyzing behavioral processes and phenomena without relying neither on the faulty memory of subjects, nor on their tendency to tell what they want you to know.

The conclusions drawn from the qualitative material collected by means of interviews, observations and historical records and case writing, depend on how well they are content analyzed. Content analysis is a basic technique aimed at drawing inferences by means of systematic and objective identification of defined attributes and messages embedded in written material. Berelson [40] defines content analysis as a research method aimed at describing objectively, systematically and quantitatively the contents of communications. The objectivity emphasized in both definitions relates to analysis carried out on the basis of explicit rules, enabling, in principle, other researchers to replicate the analysis. Content analysis enables us to logically interpret large volumes of data derived from archival records and documents, letters, diaries newspaper articles, protocols of meetings and so on. Although very tedious, such effort often yields fascinating depictions of intricate relationships and trends.

In Conclusion

We propose that researchers of OMB consider the following: First, due to the sensitive nature of organizational misbehavior, the unwillingness of management to let academicians research the phenomenon, and the reluctance of employees to divulge information regarding it, it is advisable to use both direct and indirect methods of measurement. Integrating both methods within one study is frequently invaluable – it contributes to both construct validity and reliability of the data. Second, one of the effective methods for the study of misbehaviors is the implementation of qualitative research by means of systematic observations. Participant observation proved efficient in revealing behaviors people usually prefer not to report. Posing as just another member of the organization, the researcher has a far better chance to identify manifestations of misbehavior without encountering apprehension or attempts to conceal or distort them. Thirdly, experimental research designs and longitudinal studies may reveal causal relationships. The more commonly used non-experimental, cross sectional research designs, while providing higher external validity, usually lack internal validity, tend to produce limited variance data, and do not allow straightforward tests of causality.

This paper, then, seeks to offer a conceptual framework for organization (mis)behavior research and describes the major methodological concerns and potential problems in measuring OMB. We discuss some of the key issues, and address phenomena like experimenter effects, the mechanism of projection, the issue of social desirability and impression management, problems with computerized measurements, with cross-cultural and cross language research, as well the issue of measurement of low base rate phenomena.

The dilemmas, the conceptual mapping and the problems outlined above, all point to the model we propose for measuring organizational misbehavior and offer a four-step process. We posit that the researcher needs to adopt the proper definition that fits his/her theory base and research methodology. The researcher needs to distinguish between intentional and unintentional workplace behaviors. For

intentional acts one naturally seeks to explore issues such as stimulus-response, cause and effect. For unintentional acts, only outcomes are may be of interest. The researcher must distinguish between antecedent and behavioral manifestations of OMB. The researcher needs to consider the proper level of analysis – the micro, individual, group and mezzo, or macro, organizational level. Most importantly, the researcher needs to select a suitable and appropriate research methodology – qualitative, quantitative, historical, or some combination of these.

Finally, we propose a set of recommendations for future research of OMB. These, taken in conjunction with the theoretical model, have immediate, important and practical implications. Despite the inherent problems and difficulties in measuring OMB, these are not insurmountable, and, we argue, researchers can and should conduct robust research in this sensitive field of organization inquiry.

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