

# Chapter 1

## Chapter 1

### **Introduction: Organizational Citizenship Behavior and Counterproductive Work Behavior: Cross-cultural Comparisons between Turkey and the Netherlands**

*The current research project explores cultural determinants that facilitate positive employee behavior. In the literature, this behavior is identified as organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). The dissertation also focuses on factors related to counterproductive work behavior (CWB). CWB is defined as behavior that explicitly runs counter to the goal of the organization (e.g., breaking organizational rules). The studies were carried out in Turkey and the Netherlands. These two countries are different in several cultural aspects, among which are the values of individualism and collectivism and social beliefs (Smith, Bond, & Kâğıtçıbaşı, 2006). These differences may have relevance for OCB and CWB. Most organizational behavior theories have been developed and empirically tested among western samples. However, western-based organizational theories may be insufficient to explain many organizational phenomena in non-western cultures. This introductory chapter therefore aims to highlight the importance of cultural factors that may influence organizational processes. The chapter focuses on why we need a cross-cultural approach in organizational research, how we need to operationalize culture, aspects of Turkish and Dutch culture, and the importance of culture factors in OCB and CWB. Finally, the chapter provides a global introduction to the four empirical studies carried out within this research project.*

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Although people from different cultures have been in contact with each other since ancient times (Gelfand, Erez, & Aycan, 2007), the influence of culture on organizational phenomena only began to receive attention in the late 1970s and in the 1980s (Barrett & Bass, 1976; Hofstede, 1980). Prior to that, organizational research was mostly conducted on western samples, as a result of which, generalizations and conclusions were based on western findings. However, organizational theories that have been developed and tested in western cultures are not necessarily sufficient to explain organizational phenomena in other cultures, such as Turkey. For example, research in the Northern American context has defined “continuance commitment” as an employee’s calculation of costs and benefits of remaining in the organization. Wasti (2002), however, showed that underlying reasons of continuance commitment in Turkey included not only a calculation of costs and benefits of leaving the organization but also norms of loyalty in the Turkish culture. Because employment relationships are more personal and long-term-oriented in collectivistic cultures such as Turkey, employees form obligatory bonds that result in increased commitment to their organizations (Wasti, 2002). Hence, more attention has recently been paid to investigating the cross-cultural relevance of western theories in organizational research (Aycan et al., 2000; Aycan, 2006; Wasti, 2002; Wasti, 2003). However, there are still many organizational issues that need to be analyzed from a cross-cultural perspective. This dissertation is concerned with the effects of culture on two particular organizational processes. More specifically, the focus is on positive behavior, also known as organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and negative work behavior described as counterproductive work behavior (CWB) across Turkey and the Netherlands, respectively.

## **1.1 Turkey and the Netherlands**

According to the United Nations, large numbers of people live in countries other than those in which they were born, and the main reason people migrate is economical (United Nations Human Development Report, 2009). Consequently, developed regions of the world such as Europe receive more migration than less developed regions such as Africa (United Nations Human Development Report, 2009). The Netherlands is one such developed country, with 19% of its population composed of ethnic minorities (both

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western and non-western ethnic minority groups; see Myers et al., 2008). Turkish people began to arrive in the Netherlands in the 1960s as guest workers. Today they form one of the country's largest ethnic minority groups, equaling 2.1% of the total Dutch population (Myers et al., 2008). Moreover, in Turkey an increasing number of Turkish-born individuals choose to study and work abroad (i.e., 52000 students; UN, 2009) because of the better conditions. For example, the number of Turkish students that come to the Netherlands to further their studies has doubled since 2000 (CBS, January 15, 2009). Further, according to recent reports from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey (2008), Turkey and the Netherlands are increasingly in contact with each other as a result of globalization and commercial trading. These figures show that Turkish and Dutch cultures are increasingly in contact with each other. Despite this, however, studies have also demonstrated that these cultures remain different in many respects (Fikret-Pasa, Kabasakal, & Bodur, 2001; Hofstede, 1996; Javidan & House, 2001; Leung et al., 2002). Differences concern values and social beliefs that may have implications for people's work behavior.

Below, we will first discuss the reasons to take into account the impact of culture in examining organizational phenomena in more detail, in particular OCB and CWB. We will then briefly introduce each empirical study in this dissertation.

## **1.2 Does culture really matter for organizational phenomena?**

Since the 1960s, there have been efforts to unravel cultural and non-cultural factors that influence organizational structures and practices. Some theories, such as the Contingency theory (Scott, 1992), have been put forward, which give non-cultural explanations for organizational phenomena. The Contingency theory asserts that organizations become similar to each other with the rise of industrialization (see also: Harbison & Myers, 1959). Organizations in increasingly industrialized societies become more specialized, grow in size, and become more complex in structure. As a consequence, the management style of leaders in these organizations will become more formal. According to this theory, the cultural context has little influence because organizations undergo the same stages of

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development due to industrial and technological developments (Harbison & Myers, 1959).

Another non-cultural approach is expressed by the political economy theory (Groenewegen, 1987). This theory states that the same socioeconomic systems - either capitalism or socialism - have the same influences on organizational processes across countries. This theory assumes that they will have similar organizational aims when characterized by the same socio-economic systems, even if two organizations are located in different parts of the world. Nevertheless, non-cultural theories have been criticized because they seem to underestimate the role of culture on organizational processes. Tayeb (1988), for instance, found that industrialization and technological developments affect formal aspects, such as centralization and specialization, but that interpersonal characteristics, such as communication styles, are influenced by culture. Various studies have reported differences between Japanese and US cultures and work contexts (for notable examples, see Takaku, 2000; Gelfand et al., 2002). Although industrialization stages and socio-economic systems affect organizations' formal structures, the way formal rules are applied differ across countries. When informal characteristics of organizations such as interpersonal relationships are considered, culture may have a considerable impact (e.g., Holt & DeVore, 2005). Accordingly, when people from different cultures interact with each other, their cultural differences will present new challenges to them. This is illustrated by the example below.

## ***Zeynep works in The Netherlands***

*Zeynep came to the Netherlands from Turkey to work for an international company. Jan van der Linden became her supervisor. Zeynep began to call her supervisor Mr. van der Linden. Some time later, Jan van der Linden asked her to call him just "Jan". During the time that Zeynep was working on her project, other tasks were also allocated to her. After a while, however, Zeynep was no longer able to cope with her extra workload, mainly because she was not able to say "no" to the extra work. The other Dutch employees, in contrast, were calculating how much work they were supposed to do and refused to work on more projects. Zeynep became less productive and her projects were delayed. Her supervisor Jan noticed this, and asked her what the problem was. Zeynep tried to explain*

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*about her work load. When Jan understood the reason, he asked why she had waited so long to talk to him. Zeynep said she thought it would be perceived as “laziness” if she had refused to take on the extra tasks. Jan said “You should speak up and talk about how you feel openly before the problem gets bigger and bigger. I will be very happy if you are open and honest with me the next time.”*

The example above shows that Turkish culture accepts and acknowledges a social hierarchy, whereas work relationships in the Dutch culture are relatively egalitarian (Smith et al., 2006). Furthermore, people in the Turkish culture customarily use an indirect communication style and expect others to “read their minds” (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). However, in the Dutch culture, in contrast, people use a direct communication style and feel free to talk about what bothers them before the problem becomes more serious (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Such cultural differences will result in different forms of behavior. Zeynep’s behavior would be perceived as normal in Turkish society, whereas in the Dutch culture it would be regarded as subassertive. Certain behavior is appreciated in some social contexts, yet may be interpreted as negative in others. If people who work in culturally diverse work settings focus on a single behavioral instance without taking into account the cultural background of that particular colleague or supervisor, the reasons behind certain behavior may never be understood. Hence, cross-cultural research focusing on Turkey and the Netherlands is highly important for intercultural awareness and communication in the workplace and in international organizations where these cultures meet.

### **1.3 What is culture?**

The concept “culture” has been defined in many ways: for instance, as the “man-made” part of human environment that is learned by socialization (Herskovits, 1948). Triandis (1972) stated that culture includes both subjective and objective elements that are created by human beings. Rohner (1984) viewed culture as interpreting the world similarly. Culture was also seen as the “collective programming of the mind” (Hofstede, 1996). Almost all of these definitions highlight the fact that culture is shared and passed on to generations (Triandis, 1994). In this dissertation, we refer to culture as people’s shared

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interpretations and identify it as *cultural orientations*. Specifically, we focus on values of individualism and collectivism and social beliefs (social axioms) as people's cultural orientations to explain their work behavior. Studies have shown that Turkish and Dutch cultures have different value systems and social beliefs (Hofstede, 2001; Leung & Bond, 2004). We argue that these dissimilarities may have implications for people's work behavior. We also aim to investigate the extent to which cultural orientations are able to provide insights into several psychological and organizational processes such as leadership styles and employee behavior.

## **1.4 Organizational citizenship behavior and culture**

Positive employee behavior that supports the social and psychological fabric of the organization is known as organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), and has been extensively investigated (Hoffman, Blair, Meriac, & Whoer, 2007; Podsakoff, Whiting, Podsakoff & Blume, 2009). OCB is important for organizations to function effectively, because it influences several individual-level (e.g., employee performance and reward allocation decisions) and organizational-level factors (e.g., productivity, efficiency, costs, customer satisfaction; Podsakoff et al., 2009). Owing to globalization, the workforce is becoming increasingly multicultural. Therefore it is important to determine whether antecedents of OCB are comparable across cultural groups. To date, however, few studies have taken into account any potential effect of cultural orientations and culture-related factors as determinants of OCB.

Individualistic cultures such as the Dutch have been described as those where individuals view themselves as having separate identities, whereas collectivistic cultures such as the Turkish have been described as those where individuals see themselves in terms of their on-going group memberships (Smith et al., 2006). This dissertation focuses on **individualistic and collectivistic cultural orientations** because several studies have demonstrated that these had an influence on various aspects of work behavior (Oyserman, Coon, & Kimmelmeir, 2002). For instance, within in a Turkish sample Wasti (2003) showed that satisfaction with the supervisor was an important determinant of organizational commitment for employees with a collectivistic orientation. However, for

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those with an individualistic orientation in Turkey, satisfaction with the content of their work was the main determinant for commitment. As mentioned earlier, the research on OCB has mostly been conducted in western cultures and has resulted in the identification of several important predictors of OCB. Among these are leadership styles. For instance, it has been shown that transformational leadership behavior had a strong effect on OCB (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000). Although the concept of transformational leadership is universal, it has been concluded that there may be considerable differences in the expression of leadership styles across cultures (Den Hartog, House, Hanges, Dorfman, & Ruiz- Quintanilla, 1999). Therefore, in the present context of work in which cross-cultural interactions are becoming commonplace, it is important to assess whether antecedents of OCB, such as leadership styles, are comparable across countries. To this end, the present dissertation aims to examine **leadership styles** (i.e., a paternalistic vs. an empowering style) and the way these relate to OCB.

Numerous studies have highlighted the positive consequences of social relationships at work for OCB (Anderson & Williams, 1996; Kamdar & Van Dyne, 2007). We will further investigate cross-cultural differences in employees' **relational identification with their supervisor** (RI; Sluss & Ashforth, 2007) as a potential antecedent of OCB.

In addition to value orientations, leadership styles, and RI, we will also investigate **social axioms** (Leung & Bond, 2004; Singelis, Hubbar, Her & An, 2003). Social axioms yield information about people's behavior. For instance, reward for application, which is one of these social beliefs, represents a general belief that hard work and careful planning has positive consequences. Although studies have shown that employees' social world views may predict their work-related behavior and attitudes (Andersson & Bateman 1997; Singelis, et al., 2003; Youssef & Luthans, 2007), only one study has looked into social beliefs as determinants of OCB (Kwantes, Karam, & Kuo, 2008). They found that employees who scored high on social cynicism considered OCB (particularly conscientious behavior) more as extra-role than intra-role behavior, whereas the reverse was true for employees who scored high on religiosity beliefs. Hence, we aimed to further examine social beliefs as antecedents of OCB.

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## 1.5 Counterproductive work behavior and culture

Employees may also engage in **counterproductive work behavior** (CWB). These forms of behavior have detrimental effects on organizations, on its members or on both (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Examples of this behavior are lying and stealing. Negative feelings such as anger and stress have been identified as antecedents of CWB (Fox & Spector, 2002; Spector et al., 2006) in western cultures. However, it is equally important to examine how individuals feel *after* they have engaged in CWB because feelings may prevent CWB from occurring or reoccurring. For instance, feelings such as shame and guilt may act as mechanisms for social control in most cultures (Hui & Triandis, 1986). We therefore argue that it is important to examine the effects of CWB on feelings such as shame and guilt.

## 1.6. Overview of chapters

In a nutshell, the present dissertation examines the extent to which cultural orientations (i.e., beliefs and values), leadership practices (i.e., paternalistic and empowering leadership styles), and relational identification with the supervisor (RI) have consequences in facilitating positive behaviors: namely, OCB. Furthermore, this dissertation aims to study the effects of CWB on feelings of shame and guilt, because these feelings may prevent CWB. To achieve these goals, four empirical studies have been conducted. These studies will be briefly introduced below. Each chapter in this dissertation describes a separate empirical study and can be read independently of the other chapters.

In **Chapter 2**, a survey research is presented that examined social beliefs and relational identification with the supervisor (RI) as determinants of OCB among Turkish blue and white collar employees. Two research questions are dealt with. First, we investigated how employees' (a) social beliefs and (b) relational identification with their supervisor related to their OCB. Second, we also investigated whether these relationships were comparable in magnitude and significance across blue- and white-collar workers in Turkey.



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**Chapter 3** describes a survey study in which social beliefs and relational identification with the supervisor were examined among Turkish-Dutch white-collar employees in the Netherlands and Turkish employees in Turkey. We investigated the same research questions as in Chapter 2, but now compared Turkish-Dutch white-collar employees in the Netherlands with their Turkish counterparts in Turkey. That is, we investigated whether among Turkish-Dutch workers the same cultural characteristics as among Turkish employees in Turkey still had an effect on their OCB, or whether they had transformed and adapted to the Dutch culture. This type of comparison had not been done in earlier studies.

**Chapter 4** presents an experimental study that investigated effects of individualism and collectivism and leadership styles on OCB. More particularly, we investigated whether different types of leadership styles (i.e., paternalistic vs. empowering style) had different effects on OCB among Turkish respondents (in Turkey) and Dutch respondents (in the Netherlands).

**Chapter 5** describes a study into the effects of CWB on Turkish and Dutch students' feelings of shame and guilt. In this experimental study, we examined whether violations of interpersonal and work regulation norms affect feelings of shame and guilt differently in the Netherlands and in Turkey.

Finally, **Chapter 6** summarizes the findings of the previous chapters and discusses important theoretical, methodological, and practical issues. We present a general discussion in which research findings, strengths, weaknesses, and implications are integrated with recommendations and suggestions for future research.