

Perceptions of Organizational Politics Influences on Feedback Avoidance Behavior: The Effect of Impression Management Motive and Emotional Intelligence

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Abstract

Feedback Avoidance Behavior in the organization is very common but existing research on its formation mechanism is not very clear. Based on the view of Conservation of Resource Theory, we focus on relationship between Perceptions of Organizational Politics and Feedback Avoidance Behavior. The empirical research is based on 290 samples, according to research group of political perception significantly enhanced feedback avoidance; employees' emotional intelligence reversely adjusts the influence of the Impression Management on Feedback Avoidance Behavior. At the same time, Impression Management Motive plays an intermediary role. To some extent, the results will enrich and deepen the existing research of POP and FAB; there will be implications for management practice.

Keywords

Perceptions of Organizational Politics, Feedback Avoidance Behavior, Impression Management Motive, Employees' Emotional Intelligence

1. Introduction

We often find this kind of phenomenon, in the enterprise when the employee performance is poor, they try to avoid communicating with leader, such as “arranging themselves go out to avoid regulators”, “when encountering the managers choose another route to avoid meeting him” or “asking for leaving or finding a reason to stay at home to avoid the negative news of administrators” and so on. These behaviors are *feedback avoidance behavior (FAB)*. Some studies have

found that feedback avoidance can seriously impair performance or even external performance [1]. Why would there be feedback avoidance behavior, and are there methods to reduce this behavior? Through literature review, we found that previous studies about FAB and the result from the empirical level is discussed, but there are some deficiencies: 1) the research mainly focus on leadership and situational level, but lack of organization atmosphere, such as Perceptions of Organizational Politics; 2) there limitations of the formation mechanism of feedback avoidance behavior from the perspective of resource preservation.

Based on the theory of resource preservation [2], this paper studies the relationship between organizational political perception and feedback avoidance behavior. At the same time, the introduction of impression management motive [3] and employees' emotional intelligence [4] explore organizational political consciousness and feedback circumvention, we want to know if there are mediating and adjusting relationships between them. This study aims to achieve the following objectives: first, understanding the relationship between organizational political perceptions and feedback avoidance behavior, and whether organizational politics can promote the feedback avoidance behavior. Second, finding out whether clear impression management motive in political organization and feedback plays an intermediary role between avoidance. Third, the emotional intelligence of the staff plays a role in regulating the process, and if so, how to regulate the relationship between them. This paper hopes to control the feedback avoidance behavior of employees by understanding their relationship and mechanism, thereby reducing the negative impact on organizational performance.

2. Literature Review and Research Hypotheses

2.1. The Role of POP in FAB

Based on characteristic of the human social environment in China, the management practices of many organizations produce the phenomenon such as power standard, Guan-xi [5] affects the relationship between leaders and subordinates. *Perception of Organizational Politics (POP)* is caused by the evaluation of employees on negative Organizational environment [6]. This reflects the organizational consciousness of the environmental impact is widely known by people. Conservation of the Resource Theory believes that individuals have instinct of making efforts to obtain and maintain their own resources, when individuals perceive they may lose some resources, or they have already lost some, they will feel stress and insecurity. When individuals perceived they may lose some resources, there was insecurity. POP is employees' subjective perception of losing resources because of organization political behavior. COR can not only explain this kind of motivation, but also provide behavior analysis of resource conditions, predicts the behavior of employees in the situation of limited resources [7]. When employees have strong political consciousness, they will make certain emotional reactions according to the environmental awareness [8], if members of the organization feel that they are losing resources, they will produce organi-

zational political behavior, and reduce the loss of emotional resources by controlling their own environment [9]. At this time, employees produce feedback avoidance behavior to avoid bad impression. So we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: Employee's perception of organizational politics significantly improves feedback avoidance behavior.

2.2. Intermediary Effect of IMM

Influenced by the peculiarly implicit culture in China, employees in political atmosphere tend to manage others' impression of self-presentation [10]. *Impression management motivation (IMM)* consists of two dimensions: the defensive impression management motivation and the positive impression management motivation [11]. In this research, we focus on the avoidance of negative impression dimensions in impression management motivation. When perception of organizational politics occurs, employees will assess the situation. In organizations with strong political atmosphere, resources are mainly concentrated in leaders. Dealing Theory thinks that people are more easily to manage their own impression facing with who have power, high position and attractive people [12]. Employees try to make their behavior consistent with the expectations of their superiors. When superior leader has more power, employees want to be more motivated to manage their impression of superiors. Some studies have found that impression management has certain predictive effects on the behavior of members [13]. Defensive impression management avoids a negative impression to others, the employee feedback avoidance on superior is just the embodiment of impression management. According to the above analysis, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Impression management motive plays an intermediary role in the employee's organizational political consciousness and feedback avoidance behavior.

2.3. The Mediating Role of Employees' Emotional Intelligence

In 1990, Salovey, a psychologist at Yale university and Mayer, a psychologist at the university of New Hampshire firstly proposed the *Emotional Intelligence (EI)*, it is defined as the ability to percept, assess, manage and control themselves or others' emotions [14], Antonakis thinks the positive role of Emotional Intelligence is mainly manifested in the pressure situation. In situation faced with pressure, individuals with high emotional intelligence can control the mood swings, take appropriate actions to cope with stress. On the contrary, individuals with low emotional intelligence prone to feel pressure, which is not conducive to excellent results in the workplace [15] [16]. There are studies found that emotional intelligence mediates the relationship between customer unfair behavior and antiproduative behavior [17], thus we can further consider whether emotional intelligence can play a regulatory role between feedback avoidance behavior and impression management behavior. Emotional intelligence has a signifi-

cant positive correlation to positive employee behavior such as organizational citizenship behavior [18], which suggests that to a certain extent, emotional intelligence affects the negative behavior. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3: Employees' emotional intelligence negatively mediates the relationship between the management motivation and the feedback avoidance behavior.

The theoretical model is as **Figure 1**.

3. Research Methods

3.1. Study Samples

The samples in this study are from random sample. The recipients are employees who have subordinate relationships in the enterprises. The questionnaire has indicated that it is only used for research, and we commit that it is completely confidential without disclosing any employee's personal privacy. A total of 302 copies of questionnaires were collected and the blank and at last, 290 copies of valid questionnaires were obtained. We selected 7 control variables of samples' information. The details of information are as **Table 1**.

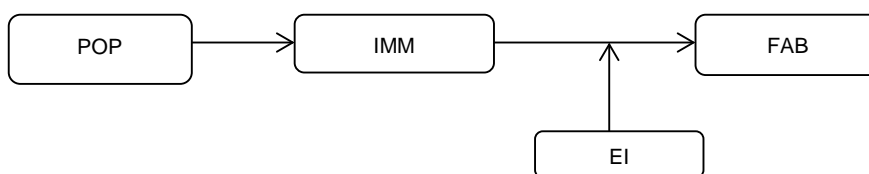


Figure 1. Theoretical model.

Table 1. The details of samples' information.

Characteristics	value	Frequency (N = 290)	Frequency (%)	Characteristics	value	Frequency (N = 290)	Frequency (%)
Gender	male	158	54.5	years of working	Less than 2 years	182	62.8
	female	132	45.5		2 to 5 years	68	23.4
Age	Younger than 21	34	11.7		6 - 10	30	10.4
	21 - 30	234	80.7		More than ten years	10	3.4
	31 - 40	20	6.9	type of enterprise	State-owned enterprises	90	31.0
	41 - 50	2	0.7		The private sector	104	35.9
Older than 50	0	0.0	other		96	33.1	
Schooling	Junior high and below	10	3.5	scale of enterprise	Less than 100 people	88	30.3
	High school or junior college	60	20.7		100 - 500 people	76	26.2
	Undergraduate course	74	25.5		500 - 1000 people	48	16.6
	Master and above	146	50.3		More than 1000 people	78	26.9
Position	Ordinary employees	176	60.7				
	Primary management	76	26.2				
	Middle manager	30	10.3				
	Top management	8	2.8				

3.2. Measurement of Variables

Each variable measuring tool are Likert scale, respondents according to employees' feeling of POP, FAB, IMM and EI make their choices from "1—totally agree" to "7—completely disagree".

This study adopted the scales which come from mature scales developed by scholars. In order to meet effective principle, before the formal investigation, the researchers invited English experts translated in double-blind and two-way on foreign scale, and then we modified this scale. After the questionnaire design, the experts and workers were invited to conduct the pre-test, finally the questionnaire was determined by comprehensive suggestions.

1) POP: the domestic scholars Ma Chao, *et al.* developed the 16 items of the questionnaire, such as "managers communicate with subordinates to improve their image", "within the company, I should be carefully considered with which people can't resist", (1 is completely agree, 7 is completely disagree) the results of the survey of Cronbach Alpha is 0.914.

2) FAB: We use the scale which Moss *et al.* compiled by the 6 projects [19], such as "when my performance is not good, I will turn on the other side if I see my boss". The Cronbach Alpha is 0.934.

3) IMM: the internal consistency of the survey results is 0.849.

4) EI: the Wong and Law developed 16 items of the questionnaire, such as "I can well understand my emotions", "I can always judge their mood from a friend's behavior" (1 is completely agree, 7 is completely disagree). Cronbach Alpha is 0.904.

In addition, in the measurement, the main control variables are gender, age, level of education, job level, working years, type of enterprise and the enterprise scale. Among them, the men is "1", women is "2". There are five levels of age. There are four levels of education, position and working years. The type of enterprise is divided into three categories. Enterprise scale is divided into 4 categories.

3.3. Scale Validity Analysis

This study used spss 20.0 to describe the descriptive statistics of the data, the alpha reliability analysis of the scale, and the correlation analysis between variables. At the same time, the main effect, the mediation effect and the regulation effect are examined. Due to the variable measurement using self-report scale, items were filled out by the same person. We use Harman single factor analysis of each variable to analyze the problem of common method bias. According to the results of the first element which is not rotated explains only about 24.49% of all measurement variance, there is no problem of common method biases.

The scales used in this study are all mature variable measurement scales. Therefore, these scales have good content validity. Generally speaking, the criterion of good performance of the scale is the factor loading is more than 0.5, and the main factor explains that the total variation is greater than 50%. The results of the KMO index and Bartlett spherical test are shown in the **Table 2**.

The test results shows that EI, POP, IMM, FAB scale's KMO index is above 0.7, they achieved the level of significance, so the scale is suitable for factor analysis.

4. Data Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

4.1. Correlation Analysis of Variables

The correlation analysis of the valid data was obtained through SPSS20.0, and the data of **Table 3** were obtained, including the mean of the main variables, the standard deviation and correlation coefficient between variables. The value of POP and FAB is around 3, indicating that the respondents have certain POP and FAB. At the same time, the analysis of data results showed that there was a significant positive correlation between POP and FAB ($r = 0.72$, $p < 0.01$), and hypothesis 1 was initially supported.

4.2. Regression Analysis of Variables

In order to accurately determine the causal relationship between independent variable and the strength of the relationships, in this article, we test the causal

Table 2. The KMO and Bartlett spherical test of the scales.

variables	Bartlett spherical test				explanation
	KMO	The approximate chi-square	df	Sig.	Total variance
FAB	0.86	1593.05	91	0.000	71.55%
POP	0.92	1248.52	55	0.001	54.50%
IMM	0.85	1089.77	66	0.002	65.68%
EI	0.88	1083.51	15	0.003	75.24%

Table 3. The main relationships of major variables.

	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. gender	1.45	0.50											
2. age	1.97	0.46	0.04										
3. schooling	3.23	0.90	0.02	0.35**									
4. position	1.55	0.79	-0.03	0.17*	0.11								
5. years of working	1.54	0.82	-0.02	0.42**	-0.29**	0.31**							
6. type of enterprise	2.02	0.80	0.05	-0.15	-0.34**	-0.15	0.10						
7. scale of enterprise	2.40	1.18	0.04	0.13	0.307**	0.12	-0.01	-0.26**					
8. POP	3.15	1.14	0.187*	0.13	0.08	0.05	0.00	-0.02	0.20*				
9. IMM	2.38	0.89	0.05	0.24**	-0.05	0.07	0.23**	-0.01	0.09	0.43**			
10. FAB	3.41	1.31	0.19*	0.31**	0.06	-0.03	0.18*	0.04	0.21*	0.72**	0.59**		
11. EI	2.43	0.82	0.38**	0.05	-0.09	-0.05	0.03	0.04	0.04	0.42**	0.30**	0.40**	

Note: through double-tailed test, *indicates that the correlation is significant at 0.05 level; **indicates that the correlation is significant at 0.01.

relationship between the variables through the regression model. In the process of inspection, we control seven possible interference variables, and on this basis, the strength of the causal relationship between the variables was studied. The details are as **Table 4**.

From the M3 of **Table 4**, we can see that IMM has a very significant positive effect on the feedback avoidance behavior. The effect of EI on FAB is positive, and the effect of M4 on the IMM is still positive, but the significance is weakened. It is worth noting that in M5, the interaction of EI and IMM influence on FAB shows a significant negative impact. At the same time, the method of data normalization reduces the value of VIF and reduces the effect of multiple co-linear, H3 is supported by data.

For testing the intermediary role of IMM, we also use the regression equation to do further inspection, on the basis of previous studies (Baronr *et al.*, 1986), can be through four steps. The results is as **Table 5**.

As can be seen from the M3 in **Table 4**, the positive effect of impression management motivation on feedback avoidance behavior is significant ($r = 0.54$, $P < 0.001$). Meanwhile, from the M6 in **Table 5**, it can be seen that the positive effect of perception of organizational political on impression management motivation is also significant ($r = 0.42$, $P < 0.001$). From **Table 5**, M7 shows that the

Table 4. Regression results: EI and IMM influence on FAB.

Variable Step 1 (control variable)	FAB				
	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5
gender					
age	0.16*(0.20)	0.05(0.21)	0.14*(0.17)	0.08(0.18)	0.07(0.17)
schooling	0.30**(0.29)	0.26(0.28)	0.17*(0.24)	0.16(0.24)	0.18(0.23)
position	-0.06(0.15)	-0.01(0.15)	-0.02(0.13)	0.04(0.13)	-0.02(0.12)
years of working	-0.10(0.14)	-0.09 (0.13)	-0.11(0.12)	-0.10(0.11)	-0.08(0.11)
type of enterprise	0.07(0.17)	0.08(0.16)	0.02(0.14)	0.03(0.14)	0.05(0.13)
scale of enterprise	0.09(0.14)	0.09 (0.13)	0.09 (0.11)	0.09(0.11)	0.11(0.11)
variable	0.22**(0.09)	0.20*(0.09)	0.17*(0.08)	0.16(0.08)	0.17(0.07)
Step 2 (main effect)					
EI		0.31*** (0.13)		0.16*(0.12)	0.17*(0.09)
IMM			0.54*** (0.10)	0.49*** (0.10)	0.45*** (0.09)
Step 3 (regulation effect)					
EI * IMM					-0.24*** (0.07)
VIF	≤1.8	≤1.8	≤1.8	≤1.8	≤1.8
R ²	0.18	0.26	0.45	0.47	0.53
ΔR ²	0.14***	0.22***	0.41***	0.43***	0.48***
F	4.41***	6.08***	13.61***	13.01***	14.41***

Note: the values in the table are normalized regression coefficients, and the brackets are standard error. *P < 0.05, **P < 0.01, ***P < 0.001.

Table 5. Regression results: the mediation effect of IMM.

variable	M6:IMM	M7:FAB	M8:FAB
Step 1 (control variable)			
gender	-0.13(0.13)	0.05(0.15)	0.06(0.13)
age	0.17(0.19)	0.02(0.20)	0.14(0.19)
schooling	-0.13(0.10)	-0.03(0.11)	0.01(0.10)
position	-0.01(0.09)	-0.14(0.10)	-0.13(0.09)
years of working	0.13(0.11)	0.13(0.12)	0.09(0.11)
type of enterprise	-0.03(0.09)	0.06(0.10)	0.07(0.09)
scale of enterprise	0.02(0.06)	0.09(0.07)	0.08(0.06)
Step 2 (independent variable)			
POP	0.42*** (0.06)	0.68*** (0.07)	0.55*** (0.07)
Step 3 (mediation variable)			
IMM			0.30*** (0.08)
F	5.89***	25.71***	30.56***
R ²	0.26	0.60	0.67
ΔR ²	0.21***	0.58***	0.65***
df	279	279	278

Note: the values in the table are normalized regression coefficients, and the brackets are standard error. *P < 0.05, **P < 0.01, ***P < 0.001.

positive effect of perception of organizational political on feedback avoidance behavior is significant ($r = 0.68$, $P < 0.001$). When the IMM and POP in equation at the same time, positive effect of POP is still significantly (see M8, $r = 0.55$, $P < 0.001$), and the role of IMM is also significant ($r = 0.30$, $P < 0.001$). At the same time, the third step of the regression coefficient is less than the second step ($r_3 < r_2$), it shows that IMM plays partial Intermediary role between POP and FAB. H2 is supported.

5. Results Discussion

This article discussed the relationship between organizational political consciousness and feedback circumvention, the analysis supports the POP has positive effect to the FAB, enriching the research of FAB. It shows that the atmosphere in the organization can lead to FAB. At the same time, the emotional intelligence of the employees decreases the generation of feedback avoidance behaviors. According to related research findings, feedback avoidance behavior has a significant negative effect on performance. At the same time, this paper finds that impression management motivation plays an intermediary role in POP and FAB. This paper explains the mechanism of perception of organizational politics on feedback avoidance behavior. The explanation is that when POP makes employees feel that their resources are at stake, the employees will directly act out

the feedback avoidance behavior through the impression management motivation.

At the same time, this paper finds that emotional intelligence has positive effect on the feedback avoidance behavior, but as a regulation variable, the regulation effect of the IMM and FAB is negative. The findings reveal the boundary conditions where POP plays a role in FAB, and employees with high emotional intelligence may avoid feedback to superiors in order to preserve their resources. But when employees manage their own impression because of the organization's long-term development, high emotional intelligence tends to feedback to employees and superior communication, so as to make benefits to the entire organization rather than individual behavior.

This study found that in the random samples, there are serious POP, so companies can adopt more appropriate management methods, create harmonious and friendly corporate atmosphere. The results suggest that the enterprise should pay attention to cultivate trust among the members of the organization and maintain it, encourage support staff feedback behavior. We should also focus on measuring the impression management motive and emotional intelligence of employees and maintaining the sustainable development of enterprises.

6. Conclusion

The analysis supports the POP has positive effect to the FAB, explains the mechanism of perception of organizational politics on feedback avoidance behavior and the regulation effect of EI in the IMM and FAB is negative. This study has the following shortcomings: firstly, the limitations of the scale. The scale of this research are mostly come from foreign countries, future research can design scale according to the situation of employees in China. Secondly, this paper uses a cross-sectional study design; this design can only reflect the correlation in certain time point between variables. Thirdly, IMM and POP in the study aren't divided into several dimensions, such as the difference of impression management motive between positive and negative two aspects. Future studies can refine these two constructs to clarify the relationship.

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