

Punishment for Noncompliance and Reward for Compliance: A Comparison of Japanese and American Workers

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Abstract

In a recent series of articles, Kobayashi and Grasmick have applied an extended model of deterrence and rational decision-making to a comparative study of Japanese and American workers' violation of workplace rules. These previous studies draw from control theory in the sociological study of deviance and focus on the costs of noncompliance. The present paper, building on differential association/social learning theory, adds a new dimension—the rewards of compliance—to this comparative project. In workplace settings, decisions by workers to comply or not comply with rules are based on perceptions of punishment associated with noncompliance and on perceptions of rewards associated with compliance. A review of the literature on socialization in Japan compared to the United States leads to two hypotheses: (1) Japanese workers, compared to their American counterparts, perceive greater punishment for noncompliance, and (2) Japanese workers, compared to their American counterparts, perceive lower rewards for compliance. Analysis of survey data collected from hospital employees in Japan and in the United States provides strong support for both hypotheses.

Introduction

Noncompliance with rules in the workplace is a form of norm violation—and sometimes law violation—that can be studied from the perspective of sociological and criminological theories of deviance. In sociology, interest in the topic of workplace crime and deviance typically centers on crimes committed by corporations, called “corporate crime,” and crimes committed by high ranking executives in the course of their occupation or business enterprise, called “occupational crime” or “white-collar crime” (see Braithwaite 1984; Clinard and Yeager 1980; Geis 1982; Jesilow et al. 1993; Simon 2002; Simpson 1993; Simpson and Simpson 1999; Sutherland 1940, 1949).

While the transgressions of the business elite are extremely costly, not only to individual corporations but also to the whole economy, the same is true of violations committed by lower ranking participants in the organization in the course of doing their jobs, often called “employee deviance.” Employee sabotage, theft of company property, working while under the influence of alcohol and drugs, misrepresentation of hours worked, misuse of sick leave, etc. affect corporate profits and have ramifications throughout the economy. Such forms of employee deviance certainly have been of concern to employers and corporations (see Marx 1999), but compared to corporate and white-collar crime, employee deviance has been a relatively neglected topic of research in sociology and criminology (for exceptions, see Hollinger and Clark 1982, 1983; Parilla et al. 1988; Tucker 1999).

In a series of recent articles, Kobayashi and Grasmick (Grasmick and Kobayashi 2002a, 2002b; Kobayashi and Grasmick 2002; Kobayashi et al. 2001) have extended ideas from theories of criminal deterrence and of rational decision-making (see Cornish and Clarke 1986; Grasmick and Bursik 1990) to the study of employee deviance. They have done so from a comparative perspective, analyzing comparable samples of workers in Japan and the United States. A key question has been whether “culture” matters—i.e., are processes of employee compliance and noncompliance with

workplace rules similar for Japanese and American workers.

In the early 1990s, Grasmick and his colleagues (e.g., Grasmick and Bursik 1990; Grasmick et al. 1991; Grasmick et al. 1993) argued that traditional deterrence theory had directed attention to only one potential cost of noncompliance—punishments imposed by the State in the case of law violations, or punishments imposed by management in the case of workplace deviance. Drawing from Etzioni's (1961) account of compliance processes in organizations, Grasmick argued that two other potential punishments can serve as deterrents to noncompliance with rules and laws—threats of embarrassment and threats of shame. Embarrassment is a socially-imposed punishment when peers react negatively to a person's transgression, while shame is a self-imposed punishment when persons behave contrary to their moral beliefs or self-concepts. From the perspective of employee deviance, threats of managerial sanctions and threats of embarrassment are external constraints, or controls, against workplace rule violations, while the threat of shame is an internal constraint. The recent research by Kobayashi and Grasmick has applied this theory to a comparison of Japanese and American workers to determine if (1) differences between the two in levels of noncompliance with workplace rules can be explained by differences in perceptions of these threats and (2) whether the three threats have similar effects on compliance and noncompliance in Japan and the United States.

Punishment for Noncompliance and Reward for Compliance

To date, however, Grasmick's theory and the extension of it by Kobayashi and Grasmick to employee deviance have focused on the "costs" to the employee of noncompliance—costs in the form of sanctions from management, embarrassment from the reactions of peers, and shame from the reactions of oneself. But there is an issue that has been neglected. Rational actors, in this case employees, should be expected to take into account not only potential costs of noncompliance but also potential rewards of compliance with workplace rules.

The extension of deterrence theory by Grasmick was tied to the emergence of more general "control theory" as the dominant paradigm in the study of deviance. By the 1970s and, in fact, continuing today, the idea that deviance is best understood by considering constraints against it has dominated the sociological perspective on deviance (see Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990; Hirschi 1969; Sampson and Laub 1993; Tittle 1995). In his initial presentation of his social bond theory, Hirschi had argued effectively that asking why people violate rules is the wrong question. Instead, theory should be directed to the question of why they do not. Hirschi's own social bond theory (1969) attempted to answer that question by identifying constraints, or social bonds, that create potential costs for noncompliance. Individuals having such bonds comply because they have much to lose if they do not; individuals lacking such bonds, on the other hand, are free to deviate from the norms and laws. Hirschi's social bond theory was by far the most dominant paradigm in the study of deviance throughout the 1970s and 1980s (Junger and Marshall 1997). It would not be challenged in this position until the early 1990s, but the challenge would come from other control theories (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990; Sampson and Laub 1993; Tittle 1995) that also directed attention to costs, or punishments, for noncompliance.

Throughout this domination by control theory, the major alternative has been the social learning theory of Ronald Akers (1985, 1994) who has been a critic of control theory in general and of Hirschi in particular. Social learning theory has its roots in Edwin Sutherland's (1939) differential association theory. According to differential association/social learning theory, criminal and other deviant behavior is learned. While for some behaviors that learning includes the techniques of committing the act, more important is the relative balance of the "definitions" favorable and unfavorable to deviance and conformity. From primary groups, and from institutions, individuals receive messages that shape attitudes

about and anticipated rewards and punishments for compliance and noncompliance. Some of these messages are favorable toward noncompliance; others, unfavorable toward noncompliance; others, unfavorable toward compliance; and still others, favorable toward compliance. The balance of definitions of and anticipated punishments and rewards for compliance and noncompliance determine whether an individual will be compliant or noncompliant with norms and laws.

In effect, traditional control theory generally draws attention only to messages unfavorable toward noncompliance—the potential costs or punishments people would experience should they be noncompliant. However, in the study of employee deviance from a rational-choice perspective, the breadth of differential association/social learning theory is important. Employees potentially have something to gain from compliance, in addition to something to lose from noncompliance. Compliance with workplace rules perhaps increases one's job security, leads to increases in pay, contributes to promotion, etc. By focusing on the costs of noncompliance, Grasmick, and more recently Kobayashi and Grasmick, have examined only half of the equation. Rational actors, deciding whether or not to comply with workplace rules should be expected to consider not only the costs of noncompliance (managerial sanctions, embarrassment, and shame) but also the rewards of compliance.

In a recent article, Colvin et al. (2002, see also Colvin 2000) have clearly articulated the distinction between attempts to extract compliance through “coercion” (i.e., the threat of punishment for noncompliance) and through provision of “support” (i.e., the offer of rewards for compliance). The authors, in fact, use the concepts of coercion and support to assess a variety of recent theoretical developments in the study of crime and deviance, and they propose useful propositions for developing and testing a theory that integrates the concepts of coercion and support. One suggestion Colvin et al. offer is that “nations and communities that provide greater social support tend to be less coercive” (2002: 27).

Our major objective in what follows is to incorporate the potential rewards of compliance into the comparative study of employee deviance initiated by Kobayashi and Grasmick. While there might be important cultural differences between Japan and the United States in the various costs of noncompliance (see Kobayashi et al. 2001), an equally important issue is whether Japanese and American workers differ in the extent to which they focus on the punishments for noncompliance or the rewards for compliance. In the terminology of Colvin et al. (2002), we raise the possibility that the cultures of Japan and the United States differ in the extent to which they are coercive and supportive. In the following section, we draw from the literature concerning socialization in Japan, compared to the United States. That literature leads us to predict that, compared to American workers, Japanese workers will perceive higher costs, in the form of managerial sanctions, for noncompliance. At the same time, Japanese workers compared to their American counterparts will anticipate a lower level of rewards for compliance. Coercion, we suggest, is more characteristic of compliance strategies in Japan, while support is more characteristic of such strategies in the U.S.

Punishment and Reward: Cultural Differences between Japan and the U.S.

We propose that individualism-collectivism and looseness-tightness explain differences in perceived levels of formal punishment for noncompliance and formal reward for compliance between Japanese and American workers. Several scholars (e.g., Gudykunst and Kim 1997; Hofstede 1980; Hofstede and Bond 1984; Markus and Kitayama 1991a, 1991b; Triandis 1994, 1995; Weldon 1984), in their observations about the United States and Japan, have noted the stronger “collectivistic” and “tighter” orientation of Japanese culture. These scholars suggest that Japanese, much more so than Americans, merge themselves into collectivities (family and co-workers) so that their self-concepts and identities do not

allow for deviation from collective norms.

Triandis (1994, 1995) argues that the looseness-tightness dimension is closely related to individualism-collectivism in many cultures. Specifically, collectivistic cultures tend to be tight cultures and individualistic cultures tend to be loose cultures, a distinction that has implications for Japanese to focus more on negative and less on positive consequences of their behavior. Triandis describes that tightness is particularly high in the collectivistic Japanese culture due to their Confucian teachings, island geography, and cultural homogeneity (similarity among people). A majority of the Confucian teachings, tied to Buddhism and Shinto, advocate the importance of “correct behavior.” Deviation from normative behavior is not tolerated, and severe punishments are imposed on those who deviate. Thus, Japanese should be socialized to focus more on failures and perceive higher levels of formal punishment threats because these failures cause more distress for them.

We propose that collectivism and perceived formal rewards for compliance co-vary inversely. Because of their stronger ties to the group and the horizontal nature of the society (Triandis, 1994, 1995), Japanese are more likely to believe that “sticking out” is an embarrassment than is the case for Americans (Markus and Kitayama 1991b; Yamaguchi 1994). To support this claim, Yamaguchi has reported that scores on a scale measuring collectivism correlated negatively with the need for uniqueness ($r = -.43$). In contrast, highly individualistic Americans often feel offended if an experimenter suggests to them that they are “average” (Kashima and Triandis 1986; Markus and Kitayama 1991a; Triandis 1995; Weldon 1984). They would prefer to be distinguished and to “stick out.” Thus, Americans should be socialized to show greater sensitivity to success situations and estimate higher levels of formal rewards because these successes make them more distinct.

Hypotheses

The arguments above lead to the following two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Japanese workers, compared to American workers, perceive a higher threat of punishment from superiors for noncompliance with workplace rules.

Hypothesis 2: Japanese workers, compared to American workers, perceive a lower level of reward from superiors for compliance with workplace rules.

On the surface, it might appear that the two hypotheses are contradictory. Perhaps it is the case that the people who perceive high threats of punishment for noncompliance also perceive high levels of rewards for compliance, producing a strong positive correlation between the two. If so, then we could not expect Japanese workers to score lower on one and higher on the other than American workers. However, the argument we have presented concerning cultural differences in emphases on punishment and reward implies these can be at least orthogonal dimensions in framing decisions to comply or not comply with rules. In fact, the proposition of Colvin et al. (2002) that nations vary in the extent to which compliance is based on coercion or on support, coupled with our argument concerning cultural differences between Japan and the United States, raises the possibility of a negative correlation between perceived threat of punishment for noncompliance and perceived level of reward for compliance. In any case, we propose that Japanese and American workers will frame the decision to comply or not to comply differently. Japanese workers will be more attuned to the costs, or punishments for noncompliance, while American workers will be more oriented toward the rewards for compliance. In addition, we will examine the relationship between perceived punishment for noncompliance and perceived reward for compliance.

Below we describe the data collected in the larger project from which the present research is drawn. Because of

significant differences between the samples of Japanese and American workers in certain demographic variables, tests of these hypotheses must include controls for sex, age, and education.

Methods

Sample

The data to test the hypotheses were collected in sites in Japan and the United States in the summer of 1997. A self-administered questionnaire was completed by a sample of employees of two university hospitals, one in the northeastern part of Japan and the other in the southwestern part of the United States. Since both samples were drawn from hospitals, the workers are employed in comparable settings.

We excluded doctors from the sample because their work requirements are different, and the dependent variables measuring compliance with rules that are described below do not necessarily apply to them. The Administrative Officers of the two hospitals granted the researchers permission to distribute questionnaires to a sample of employees, and data collection procedures guaranteed anonymity.

The workforce in the Japanese hospital included about 850 employees spread over five medical divisions, and the sample was stratified according to the size of the divisions, with names drawn from lists provided by division supervisors. The workforce in the U.S. hospital included about 1,000 employees, and the U.S. sampling frame was a list of all of them. A total of 275 Japanese and 1,000 English self-administered questionnaires were distributed to the employees in the Japanese and the U.S. hospitals, respectively, along with a cover letter indicating that participation was voluntary, that the research was being conducted by people outside the organization, and that all responses were anonymous. The respondent's name was not included on any of the material distributed or collected. Completed questionnaires were returned to a central location in sealed envelopes. A total of 256 Japanese and 340 English questionnaires were returned. To control for the possible effect of ethnic differences among the U.S. respondents (which do not exist among Japanese respondents), 68 non-white respondents from the U.S. were eliminated from the analysis. This restriction, along with a few cases with missing data, yields an N of 269 for the U.S. sample and 255 for the Japanese sample.

The Japanese sample differs significantly from the U.S. sample in percentage male (15.7 percent in the Japanese sample, 27.9 percent in the American sample), mean age (36.3 in the Japanese sample, 41.4 in the American sample), and mean education (14.6 in the Japanese sample, 15.6 in the American sample). Tests of our hypotheses concerning punishment and reward include controls for these three socio-demographic variables.

Measures

Organizational Rules: Punishment and Reward. The workplace rules considered are the same as those used in Hollinger and Clark's (1982) research on deviance in the workplace: (a) taking a long lunch or break without approval, (b) coming to work late or leaving early without approval, and (c) using sick leave when not really sick. Opportunities for these three forms of workplace deviance are readily available to workers, and the behaviors do not require any special skills or expertise (Harper and Hirokawa 1988; Hirokawa and Miyahara 1986; Hollinger and Clark 1982). In fact, Hollinger and Clark (1982) report that these three are the most common forms of employee deviance—at least in U.S. work environments. For each of the three, we measure (1) respondents' perceptions of the threat of punishment from superiors should they engage in the behavior and (2) respondents' perceptions of the level or reward from superiors should they refrain from the behavior.

To measure perceived threat of punishment for noncompliance, respondents were asked “Do you think you would get caught if you...?” The question was asked separately about each of the three violations, with answers given on a four point scale ranging from “definitely would not” (coded 1) to “definitely would” (coded 4). The questions tap the perceived *certainty* of punishment for noncompliance with rules.

But, as Grasmick and Bursik (1990) have noted, the threat of punishment is a combination of its certainty and severity. To measure perceived magnitude of punishment, we adopted the subjective measure proposed by Grasmick and Bursik. Respondents were asked, “If you were caught and the people in authority had decided what your punishment would be for..., how big of a problem would it create for you?” Again, the question was asked for all three violations. Responses were given on a five point scale ranging from “no problem at all” (coded 1) to “a very big problem” (coded 5).

Finally, the measure of *perceived threat of punishment* for noncompliance combined the certainty and magnitude dimensions multiplicatively (see Becker 1968; Decker and Kohfeld 1990; Grasmick and Bursik 1990; Von Hirsch et al. 1999), with a possible range of 1 to 20. The multiplicative term—i.e., the product of the certainty item and the magnitude item—implies that (1) as the certainty of punishment increases, the contribution of the magnitude of punishment to the threat of punishment increases, and (2) as the magnitude of punishment increases, the contribution to the certainty of punishment to the threat of punishment increases.

While such measures of punishment threat are standard in the literature on noncompliance, little guidance was available to measure respondents’ perceptions of reward for compliance with rules. We decided to model our measure of perceived reward for compliance on the measure of perceived punishment for noncompliance. Rewards, like punishments, have a probability (certainty) of occurring and a magnitude should they occur. To measure certainty, respondents were asked, “Do you think you would get rewarded by people in authority if you *refrained* from...?” The question was asked for each of the three violations, with responses on a four point scale ranging from “definitely would not” (coded 1) to “definitely would” (coded 4). Then, to measure the perceived magnitude of the reward should it occur, we asked respondents, “If you were rewarded by the people in authority for refraining from..., how rewarding would this be for you?” Responses were given on a five point scale ranging from “not rewarding at all” (coded 1) to “extremely rewarding” (coded 5) for each of the three workplace rules. The perceived level of reward then is the product of the probability and magnitude items and, like the perceived threat of punishment, has a potential range from 1 to 20.

Cultural Context. Culture—i.e., Japanese vs. American—is the key independent variable. Japanese workers, compared to Americans, are expected to perceive higher threats of punishment for noncompliance with workplace rules and lower levels of rewards for compliance with these rules. In the analysis, Japan is a dummy variable coded 1 for Japanese respondents and 0 for Americans. Our hypotheses predict a positive effect of Japan on perceived threat of punishment for noncompliance and a negative effect of Japan on perceived level of reward for compliance. As noted earlier, the hypotheses must be tested with control of sex (a dummy variable called Male, which is coded 1 for males and 0 for females), age, and years of education.

Analysis

Bivariate Correlations: Punishment and Reward

The bivariate correlations between perceived punishment for noncompliance and perceived reward for compliance are essentially zero—+.026 ($p=.280$) for taking a long lunch or break, +.078 ($p=.078$) for coming to work late or

leaving early, and $-.022$ ($p=.313$) for using sick leave when not really sick. The absence of strong positive correlations between perceived punishment and perceived reward is theoretically and methodologically important. Such correlations might have suggested that the punishments for noncompliance and the rewards for compliance are simply two sides of the same coin. Those who focus on punishments for noncompliance tend also to focus on rewards for compliance. But for the sample as a whole this is not the case.

We now turn to our central hypotheses—that Japanese workers, compared to Americans, will perceive higher threats of punishment for noncompliance and lower levels of reward for compliance with workplace rules.

Perceived Threat of Punishment for Noncompliance

For all three of the rule violations, Japanese workers score significantly higher than American workers on perceived threat of punishment for noncompliance. Because direction is predicted, one-tailed significance tests are used throughout the analysis. The point-biserial correlations with the dummy variable Japan (coded 1 for Japanese and 0 for Americans) are positive, fairly strong, and significant— $+.467$ ($p<.001$) for taking a long lunch or break ($N=518$); $+.283$ ($p<.001$) for coming to work late or leaving early ($N=520$); and $+.488$ ($p<.001$) for using sick leave when not really sick ($N=518$). These point-biserial correlations are equivalent to a zero-order standardized regression coefficient (Beta) in the regression of perceived punishment on the dummy variable Japan and can be compared to the partial Beta's in the multivariate analysis below.

Table 1 reports the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression of perceived threat of punishment for noncompliance on Japan and the three control variables—male (a dummy variable coded 1 for males and 0 for females), age, and education (measured in years). The regression was performed for each of the three rule violations.

Table 1 Regression of Punishment for Noncompliance on Independent Variables

	Punishment for taking a long lunch or break			Punishment for coming to work late or leaving early			Punishment for using sick leave		
	b	Beta	p	b	Beta	p	b	Beta	p
Japan	4.063	.422	<.001	2.085	.209	<.001	4.539	.443	<.001
Male	-1.336	-.115	.002	-1.840	-.153	<.001	-1.590	-.129	.001
Age	-.009	-.019	.317	-.031	-.062	.074	-.024	-.047	.119
Education	-.331	-.126	.001	-.391	-.143	.001	-.136	-.049	.110
constant	13.075			18.576			10.961		
R ²	.249			.135			.261		
p	<.001			<.001			<.001		
N	524			524			524		

Two of the control variables have some direct effects. For each workplace rule, when all other variables are controlled, males perceive a significantly lower threat of punishment for noncompliance than do females. Furthermore, for two violations (taking a long lunch or break and coming to work late or leaving early) education has a significant inverse direct effect—as education increases, perceived threat of punishment for noncompliance decreases. Age has no significant effect on perceived threat for any of the offenses.

As predicted by our first hypothesis, the dummy variable Japan has a significant positive direct effect on perceived threat of punishment for noncompliance for each of the three rules. The standardized regression coefficients (Beta's) for Japan represent the direct effect of this dummy variable with controls for all other variables in the equation. For all three

rules, the effect of Japan is positive and significant beyond the .001 level. Furthermore, the effect of this dummy variable is greater, and in most cases much greater, than the effects of sex, age, and education, and only slightly smaller than the corresponding bivariate effects reported above. Table 1, therefore, provides rather strong support for our hypothesis that Japanese workers, compared to their American counterparts, perceive a higher threat of punishment for workplace rule violations.

Perceived Level of Reward for Compliance

The results are equally supportive for our second hypothesis—that Japanese workers, compared to Americans, perceive a lower level of reward for compliance with workplace rules. The point-biserial correlations between Japan and perceived level of reward for compliance are negative and significant for all three rules— $-.377$ ($p < .001$) for not taking a long lunch or break ($N=518$); $-.360$ ($p < .001$) for not coming to work late or leaving early ($N=520$); and $-.380$ ($p < .001$) for not using sick leave when not really sick ($N=518$). The point-biserial correlations are equivalent to zero-order Beta's.

Table 2 Regression of Reward for Compliance on Independent Variables

	Reward for not taking a long lunch or break			Reward for not coming to work late or leaving early			Reward for not using sick leave		
	b	Beta	p	b	Beta	p	b	Beta	p
Japan	-2.392	-.441	<.001	-2.740	-.429	<.001	-2.934	-.435	<.001
Male	-.480	-.073	.039	-.479	-.062	.068	-.775	-.095	.011
Age	-.017	-.065	.062	-.033	-.106	.007	-.020	-.060	.077
Education	-.201	-.135	.001	-.210	-.120	.003	-.177	-.096	.012
constant	8.343			9.863			8.911		
R ²	.173			.162			.169		
p	<.001			<.001			<.001		
N	518			520			518		

The multivariate analysis of determinants of perceived level of reward for compliance is reported in Table 2. Again, the regressions were performed for each of the three rules. The findings concerning the control variables are somewhat different for reward for compliance than they were for punishment for noncompliance. Controlling for all other variables, males perceive lower rewards for compliance than females just as they perceived lower threats of punishment for noncompliance. But the sex difference is significant only for two of the three rules—not taking a long lunch or break and not using sick leave when not really sick—for reward for compliance. As was the case for punishment for noncompliance, education has inverse effects on rewards for compliance, and these are significant for all three offenses. Age had no significant effect on punishment for noncompliance in Table 1, but in Table 2 the direct effect of age is inverse and significant for perceived reward for not coming to work late or leaving early.

In Table 2, the direct effects of the dummy variable Japan support our second hypothesis that Japanese workers, compared to Americans, perceive a lower level of reward for compliance with rules. For all three rules, the Beta for Japan is negative and significant beyond the .001 level, and it is much greater than the corresponding Beta's for any of the control variables. These direct effects of Japan actually are greater than the bivariate effects reported above, suggesting that some combination of the control variables has a suppressor effect on the coefficient for Japan. The effect of Japan actually increases with controls for sex, age, and education.

Summary

The analysis provides strong support for our hypotheses. Table 1 reveals that, with controls for key socio-demographic variables, Japanese workers perceive a higher threat of punishment for noncompliance with workplace rules than do American workers. Table 2 reveals that Japanese workers perceive a lower level of reward for compliance with rules than do American workers. The overall pattern of findings is consistent with the observations of others that Japanese focus more on punishment for noncompliance than on rewards for compliance.

A comparison of Tables 1 and 2 provides an interesting insight. Note that for all three of the control variables—sex, age, and education—for all three of the rules, the signs for the coefficients are the same (inverse) in Tables 1 and 2. Males, younger workers, and more educated workers perceive lower threats of punishment for noncompliance *and* lower levels of reward for compliance. The coefficient for the dummy variable Japan, however, changes signs from Table 1 to Table 2. Whether punishment for noncompliance or reward for compliance is most salient appears to depend on culture, but not on sex, age, or education. This finding, we believe, provides some important initial support for the suggestion by Colvin et al. (2002) that nations vary in the extent to which compliance is sought through coercion or through support.

Conclusion

Our goal was to focus attention on the potential punishments for noncompliance and rewards for compliance with work-related rules and, in so doing, to explain why higher punishment and lower reward might be perceived among Japanese than American workers. We integrated differential association and social learning theory into Grasmick's control theory to propose that rational actors, deciding whether or not to comply with workplace rules should be expected to consider not only formal costs of noncompliance (discharge, fine) but also the formal rewards of compliance (promotion, job security). From observations by others about the greater collectivism and tighter orientation of Japanese culture, we predicted that Japanese workers would perceive greater punishment for noncompliance and lower rewards for compliance. Such a prediction is consistent with the recent suggestion by Colvin et al. (2002) that nations might differ in the extent to which compliance is based on coercion and on support.

In fact, the Japanese hospital employees perceived a higher threat of punishment from superiors for noncompliance with workplace rules. They also estimated a lower level of reward for compliance. The analysis clearly supported our hypotheses about cultural differences in the perceived levels of managerial punishment and reward. The differences were statistically significant and remained that way with controls for age, sex, and educational differences between the two samples.

These findings have policy implications for managers. In Japan, conformity to normative behavior is still very high. It is seen as “the safest protection from criticism and eliminates the need to make personal judgments and errors which can bring quite devastating social consequences” (Iwao 1993: 23). Given the economic recession over the past decade, therefore, Japanese managers might effectively use material and physical deprivations including dismissal threat to increase both labor cost flexibility and productivity at the worker's expense (Weathers 2001).

While this may be true for the present, Japanese managers need to recognize trends and possible changes over time. A plethora of research during the past decade (Hayashi 1992; Iwao 1993; Kitayama 1992; Markus and Kitayama 1991a, 1991b; Schooler 1990a, 1990b) has presented evidence of recent shifts toward more individualism in Japanese society. Especially, the younger generations are moving away from collectivism and toward greater individualism, while such a

trend has not been detected among older Japanese who remain collectivistic. Accordingly, as more older workers retire from the labor force, and more younger ones enter it, a shift in the basis of compliance with workplace rules is likely to occur in Japan. The coercive strategies of the past might lose some of their effectiveness as the workforce over time becomes more sensitized to rewards for compliance and less concerned about the costs of noncompliance. While Colvin et al. (2002) argue that nations might vary in their location along the coercion-support dimension, it is also possible that a single nation, like Japan, might change its position over time. Consequently, Japanese managers need to develop a variety of compliance-gaining strategies through which employees can become aware of potential rewards for compliance, in addition to the potential costs of noncompliance.

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