

Organizational Territorial Behaviour: A Systematic Review and Research Prospects

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ABSTRACT: Territorial behaviour is a new research topic in the field of organizational behaviour, which has broad theoretical prospect and practical management significance. Although there are some studies on the dimensions and measurement of territorial behaviour, the current territorial theory has not formed a complete system. Based on prior studies in this field, this paper clarified the existing conceptions of organizational territorial behaviour and summarized the existing theoretical and empirical studies on antecedents and outcomes. Future study should extend the core concept of organizational territorial behaviour, strengthen the theoretical constructions, and clarify variables connecting territoriality in order to explain employees' behaviours and guide practice in enterprise management.

KEY WORD: Organizational Territorial Behaviour, Enterprise Management, Conceptual Content, Research Review

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I. INTRODUCTION

Territorial behaviour seems to be very common in nature. Animals establish territories with smells, sounds, etc. and protect their territories from being infringed. People build fences or walls surround their own yards and warn those who break into the border. In fact, as a special field of activities for modern people, enterprises and organizations are rife with human territorial behaviour as well. According to previous studies, 75% of office staffs label items belonging to them (Nathan, 2002). Office staffs personalize their workplace (such as decorate with personal items and put name taps, etc.) or set a password for their electronic office documents. Some employees are unwilling to let others participate in their own projects and keep relevant information from being acquired by colleagues.

Synthesizing the viewpoints of previous studies, the effects of territorial behaviour on organizations is complex and have shown two different sides. Although behaviours mentioned above can enhance the employees' satisfaction with job (Wells, 2000) and weaken the negative emotional effect from privacy-lacking in the workplace (Laurence et al., 2013), territorial behaviours could also cause a series of adverse outcomes such as knowledge conservation (Peng, 2013) and knowledge hiding (Huo et al., 2016). Even worse, employees are reluctant to share ideas in order to maintain their own territory, and fiercely counter-attack the aggressors when their territory is violated.

As a result of competitive social atmosphere, organizations and enterprises are in urgent need of innovation to obtain the rapid growth of corporate benefits. It is necessary to know why and when territorial behaviours occur in organization, so as to avoid the negative impact on the organization. However, the research on territoriality in organizations is still in its infancy. There are few relevant theoretical and practical researches, which need to be further explored and improved. Given this, the manuscript systematically combed previous studies and reviewed the existing literature from concept formation, structure, measurement, and empirical research. Based on this, the future research directions of territoriality and territorial behaviour were proposed with a view to arousing the concern of organization behaviour scholars and entrepreneurs.

II. CONCEPT AND STRUCTURE OF TERRITORIAL BEHAVIOUR

2.1 Concept Formation and Development of Territorial Behaviour

Territorial behaviour is a self-boundary regulation mechanism (Altman, 1975). Its research originated from zoology, which can be traced back to the 1960s. At first, scholars focused on the biological significance, such as stabilizing biological populations and promoting species' evolution, etc. (Brower, 1965; Edney, 1974). Since the 1970s, they began to pay attention to human territorial behaviour. Although both humans and animals have territoriality genes, the causes and manifestations of human and animal territorial behaviour are quite different. Therefore, scholars started to explore the sociological significance such as the role and influence of territorial behaviour in human marriage (Rosenblatt & Budd, 1975), etc.

Although the study of territoriality has a long history, researches on territorial behaviour in organization is still in its infancy. It was not until 2005 that Brown formally introduced the concept of territoriality into the field of organizational behaviour and began to discuss the connotation, performance, and impact of territoriality in organizational context, which attracted wide attention from both scholars and managers. The discussion of its theoretical and practical significance has increasingly become a hot topic of research. Its concept has developed as Table 1.

Table 1: Definition development of territorial behaviour

Scholars	Proposed year	Concept scope	Definition
Brower	1965	Zoology	Behaviours that an organism establishes physical boundaries around it, claims the space or territory within those boundaries, and protects it from invasion by outsiders.
Ardrey	1966	Zoology	Groups protect a space area from intrusion by members of the same species.
Altman	1970	Anthropology	Perception, use and protection of places, person, objects and ideas, including temporary or persistent defense and reaction.
Taylor	1988	Anthropology	It is a temporary or lasting act of prevention and response to prevent others from using the places and objects.
Brown	2005	Organizational Behavior	An individual's behavioral expression of his or her feelings of ownership toward a physical or social object.
Peng	2012	Organizational Behavior	Individuals or groups engage in various actions related to territory with the purpose of asserting, declaring, maintaining, consolidating, protecting and expanding their control over the territory.

From the definition development, we can see that scholars' understanding of territorial behaviour is also deepening. In zoological research, they only pay attention to physical boundaries and spatial areas, while in the study of human territorial behaviour, objects used by people are also included in the scope of territorial considerations. By then, the concept of territory is still confined to the level of physical space. Up to 2005, Brown put forward the definition of social objects into the domain.

The concrete physical space (office, desk, etc.), abstract virtual space (electronic documents, work content, etc.), and psychological space (knowledge and skills, interpersonal network, etc.) are all included in the research object of territoriality. The connotation extends beyond physical space. In fact, the occupancy of physical space and personal objects has less negative impact on enterprises. What is more important for the development of an organization is knowledge, skills and interpersonal network. Therefore, more attention should be paid to non-physical space when studying territorial behaviour in an organization.

2.2 Dimensions and Measurement of Territorial Behaviour

Up to now, there are no standard rules for the classification of territorial behaviour. The dimensions and scales accepted by scholars are as follows:

2.2.1 Territorial Behaviour at Individual Level

At present, most of the studies on territorial behaviour in organizations remain at the individual level. Most scholars agree with Brown's classification, dividing territorial behaviour into marking and defensive. Marking is further divided into Identity-Oriented marking and control-oriented marking. Identity-oriented marking refers to the behaviour that individuals intentionally decorate and modify the surrounding environment to reflect their identity. Control-oriented marking refers to the behaviour that individuals communicate with others and inform others that the territory has been claimed, thus preventing others from entering, using and destroying the territory. Defence is further divided into anticipatory defence and reactionary defence. Anticipatory defence occurs before territory is violated, referring to the establishment of impermeable and flexible borders. Reactionary defence occurs after territory is invaded, referring to the act of venting emotions and once again claiming the territory to prevent future violations (Brown, 2005). Following the division of territorial behaviour in organizations, Brown (2009) developed a 23-item scale containing the above four dimensions of territorial behaviour, including 5 items of control-oriented and 6 items of the other three dimensions (Brown, 2009). However, the scale still pays attention to the physical properties of territory rather than psychological space. In order to solve this problem, Brown (2014) developed a set of single-dimension 6-item scale (Brown, 2014). Compared with the previous version, this scale pays more attention to employees' territorial behaviour in the workplace and is more suitable for the study of in organizational context.

2.2.2 Territorial Behaviour at Team Level

Although there are few studies on territorial behaviour at team level, some scholars still believe that in modern society, boundaries are likely to migrate and expand to team level due to team belonging and identity (Liu, Chen, Xiao, et al., 2016). Given that, they put forward the concepts of internal and external territorial behaviours. Liu et al. (2016) developed a team-level territorial behaviour scale with eight items, of which the first four items were external territorial behaviour, describing the alert degree of team members to colleagues in other departments; the last four items were internal territorial behaviour, describing the working atmosphere within the team, and measuring the strength of territorial boundary within the team.

2.2.3 Other Types of Territorial Behaviour

In addition to the conventional employee territorial behaviour, there are also some other types of territorial behaviour that have attracted the attention of scholars. In today's era of innovation, knowledge territorial behaviour plays an important role in the process of transferring individual knowledge into organizational knowledge. It is defined as the defensive or reactive behaviour in order to protect their psychological territory, which is due to the exclusive ownership of knowledge (Cao & Yang, 2015). It can be seen that because employees' knowledge is implicit, knowledge territory behaviour eliminates the physical factors and only considers the behaviour related to psychological territory. Therefore, only anticipatory defence and reactionary defence for knowledge are retained in the scale. However, the scale did not reported reliability and lacks further practical verification. Besides, some scholars believe that managers will regard their subordinates as the territory, and explore the anticipatory defensive strategies of managers to subordinates, namely persuasion and training, in order to maintain the ownership requirements of employees and limit their betrayal (Gardner, Munyon, Hom, et al.).

III. INFLUENCING FACTORS OF TERRITORIAL BEHAVIOUR

3.1 Factors of the Overall Concept of Territorial Behaviour

Throughout the research on the cause of territorial behaviour, scholars only consider from the perspective of psychological ownership. As early as Brown proposed organizational territorial behaviour, psychological ownership has been taken as its antecedent variable (Brown, 2005), and the relationship between psychological ownership and territorial behaviour has been simply verified (Brown, 2009; Huo, Cai, Luo, et al., 2016). In the study of knowledge territorial behaviour, scholars also regard perceived knowledge ownership as a pre-dependent variable (Peng, 2013; Li & Xu, 2017). From the perspective of psychological ownership, when people perceive the possession of an object or space, they will have a sense of responsibility, which drives them to protect the object or space from infringement. Because perceived ownership is subjective, vague, and unstable, territorial behaviour will occur as a self-boundary adjustment mechanism to emphasize the boundaries of individual territory. This explanation can be applied to almost all the antecedent mechanisms of human territorial behaviour when examining the subordinate relationship between people and objects. However, the study of territorial behaviour in organizational context should also be considered from a diversified perspective to explore how the relationship between people and organizations can induce employee territorial behaviour.

3.2 Factors of Different Dimensions of Territorial Behaviour

For the antecedents of marking, some studies have shown that knowledge workers' knowledge investment, knowledge familiarity, and knowledge control are positively correlated with both identity-oriented and control-oriented marking (Jarvenpaa & Tanriverdi, 2006). While for defence, the main antecedent variable is territorial invasion. That is, when employees perceive that the territory is invaded, it will induce a higher level of reactionary defensive (Brown, 2011). Besides, managers' expectations for subordinates' turnover will promote anticipatory defence towards subordinates (Gardner, Munyon, Hom, et al., 2016).

IV. OUTCOMES OF TERRITORIAL BEHAVIOUR

4.1 Positive Outcomes of Territorial Behaviour

Existing studies have shown that the positive consequences, including job satisfaction and organizational commitment, are mainly due to marking. Personalized decoration in the workplace can enhance employees' job satisfaction (Wells, 2000), which plays an important role in calming emotions (Laurence, Fried, Slowik, 2013). In addition, if employees can express their personality through identity-oriented marking, they identify more with the culture of the organization. In this process, the time and energy invested by employees will also improve their organizational commitment (Na & Liu, 2014).

4.1 Negative Outcomes of Territorial Behaviour

Territorial behaviour in organizations can affect both task conflict and relationship conflict among members. Some scholars have found that the workplace characteristics of an open office can lead to employees'

territorial behaviour, and ultimately lead to higher-level of conflicts. When employees hold negative views on territorial, conflicts also occur (Connelly & Aurelia, 2012). In addition, some researches have shown that identity-oriented marking and anticipatory defence can alleviate relationship conflict within the organization. However, both control-oriented marking and reactionary defence can lead to relationship conflict, and anticipatory defence can also lead to task conflict.

Territorial behaviour can affect the relationship between members of an organization. Some scholars believe that one's territorial behaviour can affect the other organization members' cognition of him (or her), because individuals with frequent territorial behaviour are considered to be difficult to cooperate. Too much territorial behaviour means that individuals only pay attention to their own interests, thus reducing employee-team exchange (Chu & Yang, 2011). In addition, in the environment of high trust, an employee's territorial behaviours can reduce others' evaluation of his (or her) team contribution (Brown, 2014).

Territorial behaviour can affect employees' job performance and team performance. Territorial behaviour at individual level might cause employees to pay too much attention to themselves and reduce their energy invest in work, thus affecting their personal performance (Brown, 2005). At team level, both internal and external territorial behaviour will have a significant negative impact on team performance. Such negative impact is even stronger in teams with high task dependence (Liu, Chen, Xiao, et al., 2016).

Knowledge territorial behaviour will lead to knowledge hiding and restrain knowledge sharing. Employees' willingness to monopolize knowledge produces psychological territory, and knowledge territorial behaviour refers to defence of such a knowledge territory (Cao & Yang, 2014). Some studies have shown that knowledge territorial awareness and behaviour can inhibit knowledge sharing within the organization (Liu, Liu, Zhu, 2016), leading to knowledge hiding (Huo, Cai, Luo, et al., 2016), while organizational-based psychological ownership can weaken the negative correlation between them (Peng, 2013).

Territorial behaviour can weaken employees' innovation and creativity. Research shows that knowledge territorial behaviour is negatively correlated with knowledge creation (Li & Xu, 2017). Besides, marking behaviour significantly weakens the creativity of independent self-concept groups (Brown, 2011). Some scholars also believe that because of the implicitness and high value of knowledge, mental workers will take more defence, hindering knowledge sharing and personal innovation (Li & Shi, 2016).

Overall, although the marking can lead to some positive results, high level of territorial behaviour will bring more negative outcomes to the organization. The study of the antecedent and consequence of territorial behaviour is still in its infancy. There are still many variables and theories to be explored.

V. FUTURE RESEARCHES ON TERRITORIAL BEHAVIOUR

Based on the above analysis of territorial behaviour research, this paper argues that future studies can be expanded in the following three aspects.

5.1 Deepen the Concept of Territorial Behaviour

As a relatively new concept in the field of organizational research, territoriality is still in its infancy. Follow-up studies can be carried out from the aspects of in-depth discussion of concepts, definition of connotation and extension, and comparison of related concepts.

5.2 Expand the Theoretical Perspective of Research

Most of the current studies are based on the theory of psychological ownership or from the perspective of knowledge territory. Scholars can make a perspective conversion in future research such as regarding the territory as a sort of resource. According to the theory of social capital, social capital resources are embedded in the social networks of interrelated individuals, groups or nationalities, and can be obtained through social relations networks. As a valuable object in an organization, territory is being protected and claimed by staffs. Does this kind of protective behaviour cut off the network, refuse to communicate, or is the one-way flow of resources (only inflows)? If it is not exchanged with other members of the network at all, it will affirmatively lead to scarcity of resources, and even reduce the stock of organizational resources, which will lead to a series of negative results. If it is the one-way flow of resources, in the short term, it may lead to an increase in resources. In the long run, however, it is not conducive to the accumulation of organization resources, which may lead to negative effects.

Therefore, from the perspective of social capital theory, future research can focus on the following issues. First, define the direction of resource flow in territorial behaviour. It can be explained by perceived colleague support: employees are willing to get support from colleagues, but unwilling to share. Second, we can further distinguish short-term and long-term territorial behaviour and explore the different consequences of them. Finally, most of the previous studies focused on the individual level, while a few scholars focused on the internal and external territorial behaviour at the team level. Future studies can also focus on the "corporate territorial behaviour" and its impact on the development of enterprises.

In addition to social capital theory, resource dependence theory can also be used to explore the antecedents and consequences of territorial behaviour. According to the theory of resource dependence, power and politics in organizations mean control over scarce resources. Territories are valuable objects in organizations. One of the important motivations for individuals to engage in territorial behaviour is to gain control over certain key resources. Therefore, territorial behaviour can be explored from a resource-driven perspective.

5.3 Enrich the Antecedent Variables

There are few studies on the antecedents of territorial behaviour. Current empirical studies only confirm that psychological ownership is the cause of territorial behaviour, while power needs and other factors can only affect some dimensions. Is there any other factor in the occurrence of territorial behaviour? And how will these effects vary in different situations? It is still worth further discuss.

As the expression of an individual's psychological possession of an object (Brown et al., 2005), the occurrence of territorial behaviour has more emotional elements. Individuals' emotional attachment to territory plays an important role in territorial behaviour. Therefore, variables related to psychology and personality are crucial to territorial behaviour. In the next place, we can also start with job performance. In an organization, some employees who are willing to share the territory may have low performance, while those with the highest performance are often willing to share. Potentially, those who are willing to share may not have access to resources, so the job performance may not good. Those who are unwilling to share may have access to sufficient resources, so the job performance is not necessarily bad as well. The hypothesis we are exploring here is that people who have access to resources will perform better. In the future, people with better performance have higher self-efficacy and confidence in owning all the objects, so they are willing to share the territory. Self-improvement theory can also be used to explore performance differences and self-esteem. Whether the frustration of self-esteem will lead to territorial behaviour when the performance is lower than that of others. In addition, whether performance appraisal is individual-oriented or team-oriented might affect individual's territorial behaviour in the team.

5.4 Complement Outcome Variables

At present, most of the studies on territorial behaviour are consequence studies, which focus on conflict, knowledge sharing and concealment. In the future, we can further explore the influence of territorial behaviour on popularity, career success and other variables through empirical research, improve the influence on creativity, innovation behaviour, innovation performance and other variables. Enriching the relevant theory of territorial behaviour, providing suggestions for managers.

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