

Minimizing Deviant Workplace Behaviour through Person Job Fit: A Malaysian Case Study

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Abstract: *Recent research has shown that Deviant workplace behaviour is crucial phenomena to be studied. This is due to its consequences on organizations outcomes such as poor performance, low productivity, stress, job dissatisfaction and high turnover among employees. The purpose of this paper is to investigate strategies of deviant workplace behaviour in Malaysia. Data was collected using qualitative approach and a total number of 14 employees from public organization in Malaysia were interviewed. The study found person-job fit as a remedy of deviant workplace behaviour.*

Keywords: deviant workplace behaviour (DWB), law enforcement officers, person job fit

1. Introduction

The concept of Deviant Workplace Behavior is becoming essential due to technological advancement and globalization. Deviant Workplace Behavior is a crucial to study because it influences employees' behaviour at work and damage the image of organizational misbehavior. Research on deviance in non-profit organization is limited. One possible reason for this research could be there is limited room for deviance in public organizations (Raelin, 1994; Nair and Bhatnagar 2011).

Firstly the term deviance have been explained as retaliation and dysfunctional behaviour or organizational misbehaviour (Vardi and Wiener, 1996) and counterproductive workplace behaviour (Fox , 2001). In the words of Robinson and Greenberg (1998) there was no general definition agreed among scholars due to paucity stage of research in this area. Firstly Robinson and Bennett 1995 (p. 556), operationalized Deviant Workplace Behavior as “a voluntary behaviour engaged by employee that is contrary to the significant organizational norms and its members”. Previous scholars have given different expressions to this term such as counterproductive workplace behaviour by Mangione and Quinn (1975), workplace sabotage by Harris (2002), worker resistance dysfunctional behaviour by Griffin (2005) and non-complaint behaviour by (Puffer). In a similar manner, anti-social behaviour is defined as “any behaviour that brings harm or is intended to bring harm to the organization and its employees or its stakeholders” by Giacalone and Greenberg, (1977).

A variety of types of Deviant Workplace Behavior (DWB) have been explored by scholars. Example Galperin and Burke (2006), Appelbaum (2012) and Nasir (2012) have reported different types of DWB among business and non profit organizations. Types of Deviant Workplace Behavior which have been reported by previous scholars such as physicall assault,

non-verbal, threatening, intimidating, humiliation, sabotage which causes exploitation at work place (Appellbaum, Semerjian and Mohan, 2012). A few others pointed bullying, production deviance, sabotage, theft and withdrawal (Coffin, 2003); theft and bullying (Chappel and Martino, 2006); absenteeism and theft (Goh, 2006); fraud, sabotage or vandalism (Harper, 1990) and cyber loafing (Lima, 2016).

However studies remain scarce for strategies of forestalling DWB at workplace (Bahron, 2017; Agwa, 2018). In this article we aim to investigate strategies of Deviant Workplace Behavior within non-profit organization in Malaysia. Since non-profit differ from profit organizations in a number of ways (Brown and Covey, 1987) understanding deviance in non-profits requires a strategic approach.

This paper is divided into 3 parts. In the following we will first review literature on deviance in organizational literature as a preliminary stage. Secondly, we describe the methodology approach used in the study. Finally the presentation of results, discussion and limitation of the research will be offered.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Exploring strategies of Deviant workplace behaviour in the law enforcement agency.

Previous studies on deviance research, have reported that there are two streams have been developed in parallel one focusing on strategy of police deviance, the other one is related to strategy with other organizations. Firstly this study will explain about strategies found with police deviance research.

A variety of study have been conducted on strategies of police deviance. For Example, Barry (2000) recommended ethics training, rewarding virtuous conduct, zero tolerance and empowering the internal affairs Bureau to help in preventing police deviance. Ethics training will make them aware of what is wrong and right. This pertains to what should be done and during work and off work. Next rewarding virtuous conduct refers to weak supervision and officers in lengthy assignments are involved in most scandals. Thus officers must realize that being a good citizen is an essential element in being a good officer. This is followed by zero tolerance is to eliminate code of silence which can hamper the discipline of an officer. Therefore the agency need to promote justice, truthfulness and good loyalty among the officers. As a matter of fact empowering the Internal Affairs Bureau (IAB) is to investigate all police misconduct complaints, both administrative and criminal activities. This will increase the quality of these investigations and reduce the chance of corrupt behaviour. Similarly Lamboo (2010) reported Dutch police department developed internal investigation to receive complaints of police misconducts. In particular, the study highlights four types of investigations as a strategy to overcome police misconduct such as external oversight, internal or external initiated investigations. The complaints were received from citizens, supervisors, fellow police officers, national criminal intelligence service, criminal investigations and other police sources. Lamboo (2010) found that there was an increase in the internal complaints of misconduct. This is a method of fighting against code of silence. In addition Jiao (2010), found Hong Kong developed an independent agency to investigate corruption. New York Police City Department (NYPD) developed an independent body of anti-corruption. The findings indicated that even though the two countries have developed independent agencies as a remedy, but it is only on temporary solution to overcome police misconduct.

Considering this, Rogojan (2009) suggested personal selection which consists of background checks, polygraph tests, employment interviews, honesty tests, psychometric tests, surveillance techniques, keeping record and inspections followed by promoting pro-social behaviour such as OCB, whistle blowing, CSR and innovation lastly ethics courses are the remedies recommended for deviant behaviour in organizations. A number of scholars such as Huberts, Kaptein and Lasthuizen (2007) mentioned police misconduct can be controlled by different leadership styles. For that reason, proved that role modelling, strictness and openness influenced police officer behaviour. To explain in detail, role modelling limits unethical conduct while strictness is effective in controlling fraud, corruption and misuse of power. Openness is effective way of controlling police misbehaviour. Another approach to control police misbehaviour by introducing a dispersed leadership style (Gordon, 2010). Gordon, (2010) pointed out that officers place an emphasis on the need to protect them, seeking legitimacy for their relative position and resisting acts of power on behalf of other members of the organizations. Therefore dispersed leadership is recommended compared to traditional leadership in combating police misbehaviour. In addition Andresscu (2012) suggested acting ethically and promoting integrity can be done by improving standards, selection, training and salaries to higher professionalism and police morale.

2.2 Exploring strategies of Deviant workplace behaviour in other organizations.

The second strategy will focus on other organizations. In particular Chang and Smithikrai, (2010) recommended organizational justice and enhancement of policies will reduce DWB. Furthermore Appelbaum (2006) found lack of moral leaders to promote and maintain of a new organizational climate. In extended research by Appelbaum (2007) exploring two types of deviance such as positive and negative. The study highlighted that Positive deviance which honourably violate organization's internal rules. While, negative deviance means violate organizational norms, policies or internal rules. The study also found that psychological empowerment is the source for positive deviance. For instance conduct frequent background checks during hiring employees. Additionally Appelbaum (2012) also mentioned that transformational and ethical leadership are effective tools for organizations to prevent deviant workplace behaviour such as workplace bullying. Furthermore Boye and Jones (1997) also explained Deviant Workplace Behavior can be discouraged by treating employees with respect and dignity, adopting policy and punishing Deviant Workplace Behavior will be less costly and more effectively. The absence of integrity is a cause of Deviant Workplace Behavior (Palazzo, 2007). Therefore Palazzo (2007) argued that compliance programs should be promoted to keep a balance between organizational ethical climate with individuals.

Several studies Lawrence and Robinson (2007) explored causes of Deviant Workplace Behavior is due to power and resistance to change. This has been agreed by Agboola (2011) indicating that organization need to implement human resource policies as strategies to prevent Deviant Workplace Behavior. Furthermore Ahmad and Omar (2014) found that spirituality at workplace can minimize Deviant Workplace Behavior and increase job satisfaction.

Furthermore scholars have identified person job fit as a solution in various organizations such as Higher learning Institutions, Pakistan (Saufi, mansor, Kakar & Singh (2020), Banking Institutions (Suwanti & Udin, (2020), Police agency (Islam, Ahmad, Ahmed, Ahmer, (2019). Person job Fit has been defined as a match between the person and job's characteristics (Cable & De Rue, 2002). Indirectly it refers to knowledge, skill and ability (KSA) of a person should be compatible with the job demands and resources (pay, fringe benefits, allowances and working conditions). Thus fulfilling the psychological and physiological needs and performance of the employees. Person job fit has a relationship with task performance.

Meaning employees who fit demand and resources of the job reduced turnover intentions research proven by Saufi et. al.(2020). Similarly a study done by Suwanti et. al, (2020) found Person job fit important factor in organizational effectiveness. Employee who have high level of Person job fit are more willing to do their work with enthusiasm, which in turn increases their Organizational citizenship behaviour.

3. Methodology

The study adopted qualitative (case study) approach. It is sought to understand how people a) interpret their experiences, b) construct their worlds and c) discover the meanings they attribute to their experiences (Meriam & Associates, 2002) Specifically, this study investigated the strategies of DWB among the informants of the study. The researchers went with an open mind regarding the subjects to be investigated. Favourable, the interview structure was guided in such a way that it encouraged informants to have an interesting interaction along with giving good ideas base on real life experiences.

Data collection and analysis

A sample of 14 informants who have experienced Deviant Workplace Behavior were selected for the present study. The informants were selected through purposive sampling Adamu and Mohamad (2018) since the researcher intended to get a more holistic understanding of the strategies of Deviant Workplace Behavior which was suggested by the informants. They were from various departments with not less than 3 years of work experience. This was a single case study in a law enforcement agency.

Author adopted semi-structured interview for data collection. Dexter (1970) supported interviewing as the best technique to use when conducting intensive case studies for a few individuals. Moreover it can give better quality more quantity of data and less costly. Essential questions were directed to the informants to get the main theme of the study – strategies of Deviant Workplace Behavior. During the interview probing questions were used to acquire additional information and to open the doors for further examination of the information obtained from the informants. In addition, there were also throw away questions just to build close relationship with the informants and to make them feel more comfortable, warm and friendly towards the researcher. Data was translated from Bahasa Malaysia to English by a certified translated.

Analysis

The interviews lasted between 30 - 60 minutes. All the interviews were audio taped and transcribed. The transcribed data were coded with concurrent comparison of all meanings gained in the process of coding to determine similarities and differences. This method suggested because its inductive comparative nature provides a systematic method for analysing any kind of data set. This method enables the researcher to identify themes systematically as they appear from the data (Merriam, 2009). The essential part in this interview was the author wanted to investigate strategies of minimizing DWB at workplace and motivated the informants to express their feelings freely on the subject of focus.

The important excerpts from the interviews are given in the following pages.

4.0 Findings

The current section presents the results of this exploratory study, arranged in context to the research question.

What are the strategies of Deviant Workplace Behavior?

A number of descriptions were provided by the informants based on officers who witnessed co-workers engaging in 1 or 2 types of Deviant Workplace Behavior. Some of the informants (officers) suggested proactive strategy such as person job fit (recruitment) as future remedy to prevent DWB. It is to minimize DWB.

Tables 1: Participant Profile

Respondent	Gender	Department	Experience
A	Male	Investigating	11 years
B	Male	Crime	14 years
C	Male	Training	16 years
D	Male	Crime prevention and community safety	36 years
E	Female	Management	34 years
F	Male	General	32 years
G	Male	Integrity and standards compliance	15 years
H	Male	Federal Reserve Unit	14 years
I	Male	Integrity and standards Compliance	14 years
J	Male	Integrity and standards Compliance	11 years
K	Male	Crime	9 years
L	Male	Crime	8 years
M	Male	Crime	6 years
N	Male	General	6 years

Person Job fit/ Recruitment

Person-job fit / Recruitment in this study refers to a process of finding and hiring the best qualified candidate for a job opening. The recruitment process includes analysing the requirements of a job, selecting the right candidate and integrating the new candidate to that organization (Werther and Davis, 1996). Additionally main objective of recruitment or person-job fit strategy is to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of human resource services.

Informant A, B and C mentioned that focusing on recruitment strategy can produce quality employees who will sustain in the workforce. This can also help in productivity and will show good morale at workplace. Indirectly this can create a healthier work environment. Informant A strongly believes that to enhance integrity, the basic is recruitment. The informant further explained ethics can be practiced through integrity which stems from recruiting the right employees.

“To improve integrity base is recruitment”.

Informant B emphasize physical and psychological tests are important tests in selecting a candidate and to judge whether he or she fits into the system.

“if (they) don’t pass the psychological test the officer can become lazy and experience a behavioural change. But failure in the psychology test is due to internal networking. This is problematic to the police force. Psychology test is a good test. Thus recruiting policemen must go through good selection process without internal help. In comparison to previous times, we seldom have problematic policemen as the selection process

was rather stringent. Stringent screening produces good products”.

Similarly informant C also agreed selection and recruitment procedures should be tightened. The outcome of the selection and recruitment process is to strengthen the system. Moreover they suggested that background of the recruit should be investigated and those with a good personality should be selected.

“Selection and recruitment procedures should be tightened”.

Informant C suggested upgrading the education requirement and creating job fit into the system can enhance a person’s appearance and good education ideas. Adding on to it he believes that education can influence a person to think in a matured way in order to maintain an ethical way of conduct. Therefore the informant, suggests to upgrade the entry requirement for a constable to diploma level.

“The latest is entering with SPM (secondary school) qualification and need to pass physical and psychological test followed by entering into training academy. In my opinion, at least entry requirement with diploma in selection process is considered a new approach. At least constable with diploma”.

Comparatively he has also experienced that some of the new recruits (officers) have a degree qualification but are being appointed as constable cadet sergeant due to lack of job vacancies instead of being appointed as inspectors. So, a skill mismatch occurs and it can affect organization’s productivity. This is simply because over skilled employees are capable of handling more complex tasks. If their skills are underutilized then it may lead to skill loss and colossal waste of resources which can hamper work. Therefore creating a person - job fit into the system is a strategy to reduce absenteeism and retain officers from switching to different departments.

“Current newly recruits have obtained a degree qualification but selected to become a constable because no job vacancy ...”.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

In organizational domains, occurrences of Deviant Workplace Behavior are often socially complex and sensitive phenomena to be discussed, especially in developing countries. The aim of studying on Deviant Workplace Behavior in organizations is to gain deeper understanding of these complex phenomena and to explore the solutions. In this article, we have discovered person-job fit construct which can help in reducing Deviant Workplace Behavior. The qualitative method has helped in exploring in depth of Deviant Workplace Behavior and its remedy.

Although the above studies on strategies of Deviant Workplace Behavior have been presented. Most of the strategies recommended by police agency such as whistle blowing, dispersed leadership style, ethics training, empowering the internal affairs Bureau and conducting ethics courses. But there is lack of studies on strategies focusing on other areas of human resource as a solution for Deviant Workplace Behavior.

Similarly previous studies focused on Deviant Workplace Behavior in other organizations by accessing on destructive deviance and its contributing factors. Example empirical studies on organizational and individual destructive deviance (Adejoh and Adejoh, 2013); case study on destructive deviance (Agboola and Salawu, 2011); work deviance with organizational cynicism, organizational injustice (Ahmad, Kiyani and Hashmi, 2013); organizational and individual destructive deviance (Abdul and Nasuridin, 2012); organizational deviance and multi factor leadership (Aksu, 2016); destructive deviance with individual and situational factors (Alias, Rasdi and Said, 2012); destructive deviance with interactional justice and group structure (Ambrose, Schminke and Mayer, 2013); predictors of deviant workplace deviance such as person organization fit, participative decision making, careerism (Malisetty, 2015); comparative study on educational leaders in primary and high schools in Egypt (Agwa, 2018) and others. Generally scholars paid little attention on exploring strategy of Deviant Workplace Behavior. There are very limited studies focusing on Person job fit as a remedy for DWB in police agency. Current study is to add to the existing body of literature on person job fit.

Current study has discovered Person-job fit as a remedy of strategy of Deviant Workplace Behavior in the police agency. It will reduce job stress and increase performance. Moreover it will also decrease undesired turnover and dissatisfaction at workplace (Deniz, 2015; Hassan, 2012; Iqbal 2012; June, 2011). Moreover it will increase Organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB), (Ahmad Saufi, 2020; Suwanti, 2020).

Conclusion

The study of Deviant Workplace Behavior in organizations is a challenging venture. In order to do it successfully, Deviant Workplace Behavior has to be specified clearly. Whether it is positive or negative deviance. Once the construct is defined clearly then we have to look into the strategies which can combat Deviant Workplace Behavior. Strategies can be reactive or proactive measure. According to the informants of this study Person - job fit is a proactive approach. The authors are confident that person job fit can overcome Deviant Workplace Behavior in future. Besides that Person- job fit also plays a significant role in creating a healthy work environment. We hope that our work will further spur this existing line of research and prove useful tool to review and consolidate the growing body of literature on person job fit as a remedy to Deviant Workplace Behavior.

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