

ORGANIZATIONAL CONSTRAINTS, JOB DISSATISFACTION AND COUNTERPRODUCTIVE WORK BEHAVIOR

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The main purpose of this study is to examine the influence of organizational constraints on job dissatisfaction among administrative staff, and how this factor initiates their counterproductive work behavior. Data was gathered through questionnaire survey completed by 121 administrative staff from three public universities located in the northern region of Peninsular Malaysia. Using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), the results found that organizational constraints is an important factor in influencing job dissatisfaction of administrative staff, which in turn leads to their engagement in counterproductive work behavior. The theoretical and practical implications of these findings for understanding the hypothesized relationship are discussed.

Keywords: Organizational constraints; job dissatisfaction; counterproductive work behavior; administrative staff

I. INTRODUCTION

Counterproductive work behavior (CWB) refers to any actions that employees engage in that have the potential to harm their organization [1]. It includes fraud, lateness, absenteeism, laziness, wasting time, inappropriate use of the internet, sexual harassment, gambling at work, and drug use at work [1] [2] [3]. CWB is a costly problem in business field, resulting in billions of dollars lost each year due by employees' lateness, laziness, and absenteeism. For instance, U.S. organizations lost up to \$85 billion dollars per year for employees' internet misuse and \$50 billion dollars annually for internal theft and fraud [4] [5]. Although CWB has not yet reached an alarming situation in Malaysian organizations, it is undeniable that CWB has detrimental implications for the well-being of organizations and its members.

In Malaysia, the issues of CWB always has been discussed in public media and the most concerning cases are related to fraud, poor work attitude, tardiness, misuse of organizational resources, and fake of medical claims [6]. It was supported by a news article from Borneo Post Online [7] that fraud is a major problem and it became inevitable cost of doing business in this country. CWB are estimated to be responsible for as much as 20% of all business failures [8]. These are only estimates because CWB are often not reported until they resulted in serious losses and court cases.

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Due to the important practical issues of CWB within the organizations, this study is sought to address two gaps. The first gap is pertaining to CWB itself in which abundance of researches on behavior at work have focused on the “good/positive behavior” such as job engagement, organizational citizenship and job satisfaction. Nevertheless, only a handful of studies have attempted to study the “bad/negative behavior”, such as job dissatisfaction and CWB, thereby creating gap in the literature that needs to be filled. The second gap in the literature that requires attention concerns the predictors of CWB. Although previous studies showed linkages between work stressor and CWB, the results have not provided a clear understanding on how organizational constraints might promote job dissatisfaction, which resulting in CWB among employees [9] [10]. Understanding the linkage between organizational constraints, job dissatisfaction and CWB is essential for organizations in order to design an effective workplace policy in order to curb the occurrence of CWB. Thus, the main objective of this study is to examine the influence of organizational constraints on job dissatisfaction, and how this negative feeling (i.e., job dissatisfaction) yield CWB among employees.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

(A) Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB)

CWB can be defined as any intentional behavior that represented by the employees, which may affect the organization’s reputation [11] [12]. Spector and Fox’s (2002) [13] also defined CWB as the workers’ intentional acts that may harm the organizational financial or non-financial benefits or both. CWB also can be referred as workplace deviance behavior, organizational misbehavior, and anti-social behavior, which include the employee adverse behavior such as theft, fraud, tardiness, misuse of organizational resources, vandalism of organization’s equipment and any disciplinary problems [14] [15]. Past studies (e.g. [16] [17] [18]) also defined CWB as a voluntary behavior initiated by employees that violates the significant organizational norms and threatens the well-being of the organizations. Bennett and Robinson (2000) [19] identified CWB as employees’ adverse behavior that happened due to their low motivation to conform to organizational workplace policies. It is misconduct, which employees can be punished through the workplace disciplinary system.

(B) Organizational Constraints

Organizational constraints represent situations, incidents, or things that will prevent employees from translating ability and effort into high levels of performance [20]. Organizational constraints may consist of faulty equipment, incomplete or poor information, limited supervisory support, or inter-personal interruptions. Organizational constraints have been recognized as one of the sources of job stressor,

which can be associated with employees' affective and physical reactions, including feelings of frustration [20] and job dissatisfaction [21]. The findings from a study done by a past study [22] reported that employees are much more satisfied with their jobs if they perceive organizational support (e.g. provide necessary facilities) as not a hindrance to their job performance. Spector and Jex (1998) [20] also indicated that deficiency of the organizational resources such as poor office equipment and supplies may hinder employees from performing well and this may cause them to feel dissatisfied with their level of job performance. The feeling of dissatisfaction at work arises when employees feel that the organization is unwilling or not providing them with the necessary equipment and supplies to ensure the success of their job. Once employees are unable to perform well due to these organizational constraints, they will experience a high level of job dissatisfaction. Following the above discussion, it is hypothesized that:

H1: Organizational constraints has a positive influence on job dissatisfaction.

(C) Job Dissatisfaction

Locke (1976) [23] defined job satisfaction as a pleasurable emotional state that results from the appraisal of one's job experiences. Job dissatisfaction, on the other hand, is an opposite concept, which refers to an unfavorable feeling that an employee has towards his/her job situations. Job dissatisfaction is an unpleased feeling that always diminishes employees' motivation to work and leads them to become unproductive. Dissatisfied employees are more likely to have greater negative behavioral reactions [15]. In essence, employees who are highly dissatisfied at work are more likely to engage in CWB to express their discontentment. Job dissatisfaction that is caused by previous job strains experienced by the employees will stimulate them not to conform to the workplace policies.

As pointed out by past studies [24], there are five examples of CWB that are always exhibited by dissatisfied employees. First, dissatisfied employees are more likely to involve in spreading damaging rumors at work and they also tend to be impolite towards the customer. Second, they also tend to do work incorrectly and purposely slow down the production. Third, dissatisfied employees are also more likely to cause damages to the office equipment and supplies. Fourth, they tend to steal office materials. Lastly, dissatisfied employees always come late to work without permission, and they also tend to misuse the working hours for personal matters. All these are the behaviors that are commonly considered as unethical behavior and they also can be constituted as a threat to the well-being of the organization [24]. Job dissatisfaction is highly correlated to the CWB because it may influence the employee to react in negative manners when they are not satisfied with their job. Hence, it is hypothesized that:

H2: Job dissatisfaction has a positive influence on counterproductive work behavior.

III. METHOD

(A) Sample and Procedure

The sample of this research comprises of administrative staff from three Malaysian public universities located in the northern region of Peninsular Malaysia. A technique of purposive sampling was used, in which the number of questionnaires in batches of 100 were equally distributed to each of the participating public university. Out of 300 questionnaires distributed, 143 questionnaires were returned. However, after dropping cases with missing values and outliers, 121 questionnaires were retained and usable for further analysis.

The respondents consisted of 34 male and 87 female. Most of the respondents or 61.2 percent were married and 77 respondents are in the age range of 21 – 35 years old. In terms of academic achievements, 44 respondents have Bachelor degree, while 67 respondents have diploma, Malaysian Higher School Certificate (STPM) or equivalent certifications. 10 respondents are Master degree holder. All the respondents indicated that they have worked in the respective university more than four years.

(B) Measurements

Organizational constraints was measured by 12-item [20]. Meanwhile, job dissatisfaction was assessed using an 8-item scale adapted from Brayfield and Rothe (1951) [25]. Counterproductive work behavior was measured by 6-item [19] based on the feedback of six respondents during the stage of pre-testing. Sample items are “taken a longer break than is acceptable at your workplace” and “came in late to work without permission”. A 5-point Likert-scale that ranged from (1) never to (5) very often was used as the response scale for all variables understudy except for job dissatisfaction that used a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. The survey items were translated to Malay language via the conventional back-translation procedure [26].

IV. FINDINGS

(A) Validity and Reliability

Before performing validity analysis, the existence of common method bias was examined using the Harman’s single factor test [27]. The result indicates that the first factor captured 36.89% of the variance in the data, which did not account for a majority of the variance. Hence, the common method bias did not appear to be a problem in this study.

Next, convergent validity was assessed through internal consistency (i.e., loadings of each items), average variance extracted (AVE), and composite reliability (CR). The results indicated that the loading of all the remained items were greater

TABLE I: RESULTS OF MEASUREMENT MODEL

<i>Model construct</i>	<i>Measurement items</i>	<i>Item loading</i>	<i>CR</i> (<i>>0.70</i>)	<i>AVE</i> (<i>>0.50</i>)
Organizational constraints	Ocon3	0.706	0.935	0.615
	Ocon4	0.810		
	Ocon5	0.852		
	Ocon7	0.794		
	Ocon8	0.779		
	Ocon9	0.808		
	Ocon10	0.754		
	Ocon11	0.714		
	Ocon12	0.827		
	Job dissatisfaction	JDis2		
JDis3		0.872		
JDis4		0.894		
JDis5		0.913		
JDis6		0.897		
JDis7		0.849		
JDis8		0.802		
Counterproductive work behavior		CWB1	0.917	0.788
	CWB2	0.641		
	CWB3	0.658		

Note: CR = Composite reliability; AVE = Average variance extracted.

than threshold values of 0.70 (Hair *et al.*, 2014). AVE for all constructs were in the range of 0.561 and 0.765, which is above the recommended value of 0.50, and CR ranged from 0.788 to 0.958, which exceeded that threshold value of 0.70 [28] The results show satisfactory convergent validity of the constructs examined in the study.

The discriminant validity of the constructs was assessed via the criterion of heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT). The results indicated that the factor correlations were significantly lower than 1 [29]. Thus, discriminant validity for the constructs were well establish. Having achieved convergent and discriminant validity, the constructs in the research model are deemed adequate.

(B) Test of Hypotheses

The results indicated that organizational constraint explained 29.3% ($R^2 = 0.293$) of the variance in job dissatisfaction. Meanwhile, job dissatisfaction able to explain 11% ($R^2 = 0.110$) of the variance in CWB. Besides that, predictive relevance (Q^2), a criteria to determine how well a particular dependent variable are explained by a predictor was also observed [28]. With the omission distance of six, the result show that the Q^2 value for both dependent variables (job dissatisfaction = 0.217; counterproductive work behavior = 0.041) were greater than zero, which implies

the model has adequate predictive relevance, and thus, permitted the subsequent path analysis.

TABLE II: RESULTS OF HYPOTHESIS TESTING

<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Relationship</i>	<i>Direct effect</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>Decision</i>
H1	Organizational constraints → job dissatisfaction	0.541	7.440*	Supported
H2	Job satisfaction → counterproductive work behavior	0.332	4.832*	Supported

Note: t -value > 2.33 = significant at * $p < 0.01$;

To examine the hypothesized relationships, bootstrapping (5000 resamples) was performed. The results indicated that organizational constraints is positively related to job dissatisfaction ($\beta = 0.541$, $p < 0.01$) and similar findings are also found in the relationship between job dissatisfaction and counterproductive work behavior ($\beta = 0.332$, $p < 0.01$). Therefore, H1 and H2 were supported. Table 2 depicts the summary of the hypothesis testing of this study.

V. DISCUSSION

Based on the past literature, this study proposed that (1) organizational constraints is positively related to job dissatisfaction; and (2) job dissatisfaction is positively related to CWB. The results of this study provide a significant support for the hypothesized relationships. The results signify that the engagement of CWB among respondents of this study were motivated by their dissatisfaction towards the job experiences, which is caused by organizational constraints (e.g., poor office equipment and supplies, insufficient supervisory support, incorrect instructions, and inter-personal conflict). This finding is aligned with past studies [20] [21] [22]. Their study found that employees' job dissatisfaction is influenced by their perception towards the organizational constraints and increased job dissatisfaction promotes the engagement of CWB. Thus, employees who possess high level of job dissatisfaction are those who are unhappy with the lack of facilities at work as well as insufficient management support. Subsequently, they are incited to engage in CWB due to such negative emotional reaction. This is consistent to the proposition in the Motivator-Hygiene Theory whereby organizational constraints (i.e. hygiene factors) such as working conditions, workplace policies, inter-personal relations, and quality of management are major predictors of employees' job dissatisfaction [30]. And, dissatisfied employees tend to retaliate to their employer by engaging in CWB. The findings of this study provide adequate evidence that organizational constraints and job dissatisfaction are the "driving force" that motivates employees to exhibit CWB.

Based on the findings gathered, this study has provided important insights to the Registrar's Department of public universities. Specifically, the university should

pay close attention to provide better working conditions, adequate office equipment and supplies, and sufficient management support to promote job satisfaction among administrative staff. This is attributed to the fact that job dissatisfaction is a significant factor to influence the engagement of CWB. To eliminate the occurrence of CWB among administrative staff, providing necessary office facilities and supervisory support is a must effort for university management to diminish administrative staff job dissatisfaction.

VI. LIMITATION AND CONCLUSION

This study has contributed to the understanding of the relationship between organizational constraints, job dissatisfaction and CWB. However, there are a number of limitations that deserve to be noted. Firstly, to enhance the understanding on factors related to job dissatisfaction and CWB, other sources of work stressor such as role conflict, role overload, role ambiguity, and personal conflict can be incorporated in the study. This is important to determine which type of work stressor is the major predictor of job dissatisfaction and CWB, so that an effective workplace policy can be recommended. Also, this study was conducted in only three public universities located in northern region of Peninsular Malaysia. Thus, the findings may not be generalized to other public or private universities. Future researchers should consider widening the scope of population by incorporating administrative staff from public universities in other parts in Malaysia as well as the private universities. This would elicit more meaningful findings to add to the growing body of CWB literature. Overall, the present study has managed to substantiate the empirical link between organizational constraints, job dissatisfaction and CWB. In essence, the result indicated that organizational constraints was significant predictor of job dissatisfaction, which subsequently resulted CWB among administrative employees.

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