

THE ISLAMIC VIEWS ON COUNTERPRODUCTIVE WORK BEHAVIOUR: ISLAMIC WORK ETHICS PERSPECTIVES

Intan Nurul 'Ain Mohd Firdaus Kozako^{1,a}, Norazlan Anual^{2,b}, Zatul Himmah Abdul Karim^{3,c}, Noorazzila Shamsuddin^{4,d}, and Zanirah Mustafa @ Busu^{5,e}

^{1,2,3,4}Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Kelantan, Bukit Ilmu, 18500, Machang, Kelantan Darul Naim, Malaysia.

⁵Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Kelantan, Bukit Ilmu, 18500, Machang, Kelantan Darul Naim, Malaysia.

^aintan866@kelantan.uitm.edu.my, ^bazlanannual@kelantan.uitm.edu.my,
^czatul446@kelantan.uitm.edu.my, ^dnzila614@kelantan.uitm.edu.my,
^ezanir126@kelantan.uitm.edu.my

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Abstract. Purpose – This paper aims to look at a religious view on counterproductive work behaviour (CwB) that is currently happening in organizations. This concept paper will discuss the issues involving counterproductive work behaviour in the perspectives of Islam by comparing with the Islamic Work Ethic (IWE). Obviously, no religions agree that counterproductive work behaviour is an ethical conduct. Nevertheless, counterproductive work behaviour was so common even to those who are working at Islamic organizations.

Problem Statement - Work ethic seems to be the most important element in the development of an organization and contribute to CwB. It has become an increasingly popular topic of study among organizational researchers because it can be quite widespread and can cost organizations significant amounts of money. Islamic Work Ethic was defined as the set of moral principles that distinguish what is right from what is wrong in the Islamic context (Beekun, 1997). Even though Muslims in the world are increasingly becoming inspired by the principles of Islam, but not all of them are practicing IWE where some may involve in CwB.

Design/Methodology/Approach – The paper reviews the foundations of CwB by relating to IWE and investigates various empirical studies conducted previously in several countries. This paper was written after an up to more than 30 journals were read and analysed, ranging from 2008 to 2016 and later a reference to the holy Quran was made. After all relevant information was summarized in Journal Analysis Table (JAT), this paper suggests that in order to have a correct work ethics, employees should follow the conditions of Islamic Work Ethics religiously. Organizations must be congruent and should be motivating their employees to ensure counterproductive work behaviour are avoided.

Findings – The findings will discuss the Islamic perspectives of counterproductive work behaviour as well as how to examine whether the practise of Islamic work ethics in an organization can reduce the involvement of counterproductive work behaviour.

INTRODUCTION

Counterproductive work behaviour can be quite widespread and can cost organizations significant amounts of money. In Malaysia, CwB is also one of the problems faced by the employers (Ngui, 2005). Moreover, history has shown that bad environmental and social practices have a negative effect on organization. This situation may influence negatively on potential business partners to invest in an organization (Gibson, 2003). Work ethic, on the other hand was developed to minimize these negative behaviours among employees.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Counterproductive work behaviour. Counterproductive work behaviour is defined as any intentional behaviour on the part of an organization member viewed by the organisation as contrary to its legitimate interests (Gruys & Sackett, 2003). This behaviour shares the common feature of violating the legitimate interests of an organization (Sackett & DeVore, 2001). Meanwhile, Spector et al. (2006) had classified CWB into five dimensions which are abuse that refers to harmful and nasty behaviours that affect other people, production deviance discussed on purposely doing one's job incorrectly or allowing errors to occur, sabotage which is destroying organizational property, theft which mean wrongfully taking the personal goods or property of another and withdrawal which refers to avoiding work through being late or absent. Other researches by Bolin and Heartherly (2001), Giacalone et al. (1997), Sackett and Devore (2001), and Vardi and Weitz

(2004) also supported that CWB can range in terms of severity from minor to serious offence. However, although minor behaviours are considered relatively harmless, they still can negatively impact organizational effectiveness (Robinson & Bennett, 1995; Sackett, 2002).

As a matter of fact, CwB has attracted researchers' attention because such behaviour can cause significant negative impact to the individuals and organization. This impact can be in the form of lost productivity, high insurance and labour costs, elevation of employee turnover rate, and increase in work pressure (Penney & Spector, 2005). According to Henle (2005), nearly 95% of all companies report some CwB related experience within their respective organizations. This is also supported by Zhang, Wan, Zhao and Bashir (2011) says that studies done in the USA revealed between 33% and 75% of employees have engaged in at least some form of CwB, and these behaviours may be responsible for as much as 30% of all business failures. Furthermore, according to Griffin and O'Leary-Kelly (2004), CwB has been considered injurious to both the organization and individual, for example reducing the firm's profit margin and human welfare.

There are several other theories which could help in understanding issues relevant to CwB such as Social Exchange Theory and Norm of Reciprocity, Cognitive Social Theory, and General Strain Theory. The Social Exchange Theory (SET) can assist in observing complex unproductive work behaviour among members in an organization (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007).

In Malaysia, the issue of CwB has also consistently been given a great deal of attention. There is evident from the frequency of reports in the newspapers and other public media involving cases of poor work attitudes, dishonesty, fraudulence and fake medical certificates (Abdul Rahman et. al. 2014). A review on the dismissal cases under the purview of the Malaysian Industrial Department from 2005 to 2014 indicates the presence of a variety of CwB among employees (The Malaysian Current Law Journal 2005 – 2014). Added to this, Khalizani et. al. (2011) claimed that cases of CwB had increased tremendously in the last 10 years to about 11,700 cases, from 2500 cases in 1994. These evidences show the real situation on how serious CwB was and how it can affect negatively to the organization as well as to the society of the organization as a whole.

B. Counterproductive work behaviour and Islamic perspectives. Work ethics are one of the key issues in the organizational management. Organizational achievement is much influenced by the work ethics practiced by the management and its employees. Islam as ad-Deen is the complete life system created by Allah as the guidance to all human beings in all aspects including the question of work ethics. Islam has provided a comprehensive guide to the work ethics that should be understood and practiced in an organization. The excellence of an organization is largely influenced by the work ethics practiced by the management and its employees. The implementation of ethical culture of Islamic work is a necessity that should be an agenda in an organization. Islamic work culture builds strength through the internal mechanism (built-in mechanism) that encourages a person to do business and works as a religious individual and as a sign of obligation. Employment and faith are inseparable and should be the encouragement and motivation for every Muslim worker in producing the excellent and high performance employees.

C. The Conditions of Islamic Work Ethics. The Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) refers to a set of values based on the Quran and as-Sunnah. The practice of IWE creates excellences in all aspects of human life, such as economy, social, and politics. The conditions of IWE are as follows:

- a) The practice must be acknowledged by Islam and does not conflict with the Islamic law. Practices that violate the Islamic law and have links to the activities of *syubhah* and illegal are not regarded as worship.
- b) The practice is made in full faith to preserve the honor of the self, family, beneficial to the Earth, totally and glorify Allah SWT as organized.
- c) The best practice implemented to meet what may be determined by prophet Muhammad SAW has said:

إن الله يحب إذا عمل أحدكم عملاً أن يتقنه

“That Allah SWT loves when one of you makes something work with improved his work.”

(Hadith narrated by Muslim)

- d) The practice is done according to the Islamic law and within the boundaries, such as not being cruel to others, being honest, no cheating, and never oppress or seize others' right.
- e) The practice is performing the *solat*, *zakat*, and fasting during Ramadan.

When a believer completes the above five conditions while handling all his work and his affairs, he is considered worshipping Allah, even though he does not sit in the mosque while doing the job. Generally speaking, work culture talks about the flow of ideas, feelings, and ways of society to work.

D. The Characteristics of Organizational IWE. The religion of Islam teaches humans to work hard, but the work should oblige the religion boundaries that focus on honesty, sincerity, and high discipline. Work is considered worship as long as the work purpose is good and lawful. Islam has outlined some of the features of organizational IWE that should be highlighted in carrying out the job including:

a) The intentions are for the sake of Allah SWT

In Islam, it is required to have a good intention when working, hence good results make a person to be more responsible. The intention is very important in doing work. If we want our work to be considered as a worship, the intention must be present in the heart. Everything matters and would be seen by Allah SWT, considered as righteous deeds because of the intent. Thus, do not neglect the intentions when completing the work so we would not miss the reward of a worship which is bigger than the work that we do.

Work with good intentions and sincere for the sake of Allah SWT. Work done must be able to put aside all the negative elements, such as boasting about it, being arrogant and showing off. As a saying by prophet Muhammad SAW goes:

إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ، وَإِنَّمَا لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مَا نَوَى

“Verily deeds act that suspended the intention. And everyone will get a reply in accordance with what is intended.”

(HR Bukhari Muslim)

Having an intention for the sake of Allah SWT makes the worker to be honest and never gives up or feels frustrated with obstacles and challenges faced.

b) Honest and trustworthy

According to Islam, work is a demand and a necessity. If the work meets some certain conditions, work become worship to Allah SWT and should be implemented with full of honesty, trusts, and responsibilities, hence the responsibilities and trusts are rewarded on the judgement day later. At the same time, work performed as a worship which is also a responsibility to perform the duties and obligations, and no longer be personal tasks where the individual can either refuse or accept it. An employee must perform accordingly. Upholding the trust in not only regarding the financial matters but also in properly carrying out their duties for the sake of people who deal with the country (Abdullah al-Qari Salleh, 2005). Allah SWT has asserted that everything is given in accordance with the ability of a person. Allah SWT has said:

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ

“Allah SWT does not bless someone unless what it can bear. It is awarded to good high, and it also bear the sins of evil doing.”

(Al-Baqarah: 286)

c) Discipline

Since work is a task that cannot be avoided and is the responsibility of a religion, then the employees must comply with the discipline and certain work ethics. Employees also must have a positive attitude in performing their duties to determine the target objectives to achieve. Employees should also balance between his personal interest and the interest of the people in the community. Work in this context is not limited to a specific group or type only; it is instead the joint responsibility of men and women as Allah SWT has said:

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْتَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيَاةً طَيِّبَةً وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

“Those who do good works, good male or female in good faith, then surely We will give him a good life and indeed We will give consideration to them a better reward than what they have used to have.”

(Al-Nahl: 97)

d) The objective of this life in accordance with the objective of the life hereafter

In whatever done by the manager and employees, they must be able to link between the objective of this life and the life hereafter. Every effort made is recorded as righteous deeds or charitable endowments get a reward

from Allah SWT (Osman Ayub, 1988). Everything is under the supervision of Allah SWT. Always feeling the presence of Allah SWT causes a person feels the importance of doing something at its best. If there are managers and employees who try to separate the life of this world and the life in hereafter, and accentuate the life of this world more than the life in hereafter, that such action is contradict with Allah SWT’s will. The Quran does not support such attitude as Allah SWT has said:

بَلْ تُؤْثِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةَ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰ

“(But you (the unbeliever) choose a worldly life, is the life hereafter is better and more lasting.”
(Surah Al-A’alaa: 16–17)

Those who concern more of the life in hereafter until they neglect the life of this world resulting to their loss. The prophet Muhammad SAW prohibits people concentrating on one life as he said:

لَيْسَ بِخَيْرٍ كُمْ مَنْ تَرَكَ دُنْيَاهُ لِآخِرَتِهِ وَلَا آخِرَتَهُ لِدُنْيَاهُ حَتَّىٰ يُصِيبُ مِنْهُمَا جَمِيعًا فَإِنَّ الدُّنْيَا بَلَغٌ إِلَىٰ الْآخِرَةِ وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَلَّ عَلَى النَّاسِ

“Not belonging to the best person among you, which people who leave the world to pursue the happiness in hereafter. Also not the last man leaving to pursue the world happiness. It is best he can achieve both because indeed the world is towards the happiness in hereafter and do not all become incriminating.”

(HR Ibn. Asakir)

e) The use of optimum time

Islam is highly honouring the preciousness of time. Human age includes year, month, hour, minute, and seconds describe the time that being divided according to certain parts. Time is really precious and should not be wasted as Allah SWT has said:

وَالْعَصْرِ (١) إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ (٢) إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَّصُوا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَّصُوا بِالصَّبْرِ (٣)

“For the sake of time. Indeed, human beings really are in the loss. Except those who have believed and done righteous deeds and advised each other to obey the truth and advised each other to the patience”

(Surah Al-Asr: 1–3)

Every employee shall also start work right before or on time, work hard, and not getting involved in things that may lead them to CWB. Time is very precious and should not be wasted. We must be aware of the time value and should we use the best and not abuse it. Allah SWT has led us to not only the value of the time, but also the responsibility to do anything. Allah SWT has said:

فَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ حِينَ تُمْسُونَ وَحِينَ تُصْبِحُونَ ٧١ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَعَشِيًّا وَحِينَ تُظْهِرُونَ ٨١

“Recite to Allah when you are in the evening and when you are in the early morning, and sacrifice the praise of the heavens and the Earth, and when you are in the evening and at the time of Zuhur.”

(30: 17–18)

f) Self-critics should be practiced (assess)

Accessing screening themselves, either individually or as a group. Each individual needs to review his work and analyse the actions as well as the attitudes. If it is satisfactory, we should be grateful and praise Allah SWT. Otherwise, he must correct any mistakes that have been committed and should not repeat it. Umar Al-Khattab a.s said to take a look of yourself before they research it, take a look at the actions before other people see it, and get ready to face a larger attempt (Aron Arrayed Tuskan, 2003). An individual should evaluate the production or productivity undertaken compared to the efforts, thoughts, and money that have been donated. The management, on the other hand, needs to make the assessments of the employees including the degree of understanding of the task given, complying with the regulations and instructions prescribed, and co-operate with others.

E. Conceptual Framework. Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of this study. It includes the independent variables on the left side of the framework and the dependent variable on the right side. There are five (5) elements served as independent variables under the Islamic conditions of work ethics. Those elements were used to investigate the influence of the characteristics of Islamic Work Ethics to combat Counterproductive Work Behaviour (CwB).

In addition, there are six (6) dimensions served as dependent variables under the characteristics of Islamic Organizations Work Ethics.

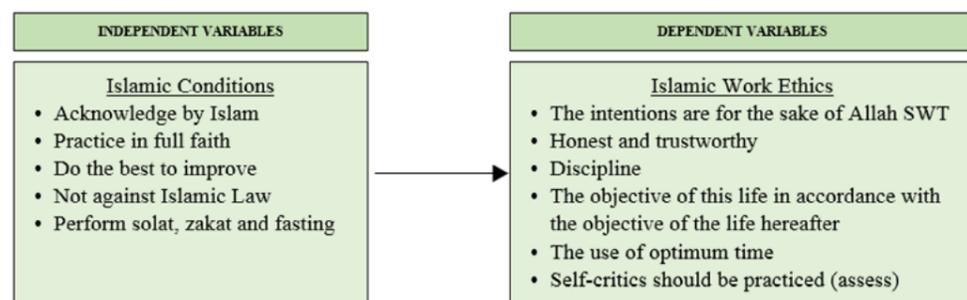


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

The paper reviewed the foundations of CwB by relating to IWE and investigates various empirical studies conducted previously in several countries. This paper was written after an up to more than 30 journals were read and analysed, ranging from 2008 to 2016 and later a reference to the holy Quran was made. The information was later summarized in Journal Analysis Table (JAT).

THE IMPLICATIONS OF COUNTERPRODUCTIVE WORK BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS ISLAMIC WORK ETHICS

In order to create the excellences in the organization, the orientation of the staff should be on the right track. In achieving the excellent organizational culture, the commitment from the entire staff of employees to improve the excellences of an organization is necessary.

a) Not willing to accept changes. Work to be undertaken should be done wholeheartedly on the needs of the organization by putting aside other interests, especially the personal interest. Getting the work done is not simply because of the material benefit but more as a religious claim made solely to reach out to Allah SWT. The concept of the Islam culture should be understood by each employee of the organization. When it is fully understood and being assimilated in the human life, as a result, it leads to the appreciation of Islam as Ad-Deen in every aspect of life.

As Allah SWT has said:

.... إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنفُسِهِمْ....

Which means, "Allah SWT will not change the fate of a race unless the race itself that changes anything in themselves."

(Surah Ar-Ra'd: 11)

In understanding and implementing the continuous improvement of the Islam culture, it is indeed a heavy duty that needs to be implemented as a whole and takes a long time because it involves the process of development of the attitudes and behavior of the employees. Understanding the work culture forms the attitude changes, behavior, and work motivation. The management should be working on various approaches to ensure that this work culture practice is an ongoing process.

b) The influence of negative ideology in organization management. The priorities of the organization management are the performance and productivity alone lead to the occurrence of crisis as dishonesty, corruption, not focusing on work, and not optimizing the time in the administration. Therefore, it is all Muslim parties' responsibility to link each action as well as of measures or reformations in the administration in accordance with the concept of Islam to overcome the symptoms and crisis.

The western value influences in the administration are still being practiced in the management of the organizations

nowadays although the country has had long achieved the independence. Physically, we have achieved independence but mentally, we still get the problems with the ideology. Excellences in an organization just measure the ability of the products and increase the work performance. Religious value is not a major criteria in the measurement. As a result, it produces the human that is economic-oriented and selfish, neglecting the betterment of the *ummah*.

c) Being materialistic. The concept of work in Islam is not only to find the profit of a mundane, but more profit in terms of *ukhrawi* in order to gain the love of Allah SWT. Employees need to brace themselves with spiritual and religious aspects to keep the values of a culture by the Islamic platform. The modern lifestyle that only looks at the importance of the material leads to the production of the individualistic human being. Working is not only to gain material profit but as an effort to bring oneself closer to Allah SWT. Allah SWT has provided everything to all human beings in order to live on this Earth. They should seek in order to producing and using resources that have been blessed by Allah SWT that bring benefits to all. Every effort made which is counted as righteous deeds or charitable endowments get a reward from Allah SWT.

The remuneration of a person doing something good has been described in the hadith of the prophet Muhammad SAW:

مَا أَكَلَ أَحَدٌ طَعَامًا قَطُّ خَيْرًا مِنْ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ مِنْ عَمَلٍ يَدِهِ وَإِنَّ نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ دَاوُدَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ كَانَ يَأْكُلُ مِنْ عَمَلٍ يَدِهِ

"There is no person consuming a food even better than the food avenue of his effort (work) on your own, and indeed the prophet Daud a.s, consuming food from their own efforts."

(HR Bukhari)

CONCLUSION

This obviously requires a culture of commitment and a high patience by every individual, whether the manager or the employees. It requires not only an increase in the quality of work and productivity, but also have to elevate the moral values and finds ways so that the workers have the awareness to live responsibly, trustworthily, honestly, and sensitive to the well-being of the society and the nation at large. The process of educating the society to practice a healthy work culture must be implemented by all parties. In addition, in the process of the educating the community about the culture, various programs and campaigns of awareness and moral values of religion and divine are the important and effective elements. It should be read and practiced. Therefore, the views of religion, religious values, and the universal values in the form of piety and faith must be given the attention and appropriate pressure.

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