

THE DETERMINANTS OF COUNTERPRODUCTIVE WORK BEHAVIOUR: A CONCEPT PAPER

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ABSTRACT

For the past few years, counterproductive work behaviour (CWB) cases among workforces have been on the rise. Although CWB easily goes unnoticed in many organizations, absenteeism, sabotage and theft signified CWB at workplaces. Regardless of forms, CWB are harmful to the organization or fellow employees and undermine the goals and interests of a business. As present workplaces see spikes in CWB occurrences, many employers are fearful that their employees are much more likely to engage in any CWB which is why understanding the determinants of CWB is gaining importance. In relation to CWB, The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model has been repeatedly used in explaining the well-being and performance of employees in occupational settings. The objective of this paper is to provide an overview of the JD-R model, which incorporates workload as job demand, job control as job resources, job stress as strain and job engagement as motivation with CWB as the behavioural stress reaction. This study adds value to the existing knowledge by developing a conceptual understanding that determinants of CWB at workplace is context-specific from the manufacturing industry lens. To the fact employees are an important asset in today's increasingly competitive business environment, a review of counterproductive behaviour at the workplace is deemed appropriate.

Keywords: Counterproductive-Work Behaviour, Job Demands-Resources Model, Manufacturing

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Counterproductive-work behaviour (CWB) is on the rise around the globe and remains a substantial problem to all organizations worldwide. Based on the Department of Industrial Relation Malaysia, (2021) a total of 127 cases of misconduct involving 15,704 of manufacturing workers were reported. Misconduct at the workplace includes several types of behaviours that are counterproductive to the organization. Absence without notice, late attendance, leaving before time, violence and bribery are common behaviours that are out of

line with organization policy, against the legitimate interests of the organization and bring damage to productivity.

Workplace activity that is intentionally damaging to coworkers and the organisation is referred to as Counterproductive Work Behaviour (CWB) (Spector & Fox, 2005). Companies may suffer billion-dollar losses annually due to CWBs, which can have further negative consequences like lower worker productivity and a deterioration in the company's image (Cohen, 2016). CWB is voluntary behaviour that infringes on organizational norms and goals (Bennett Rebecca & Robinson, 1995). CWB involves deliberate action intended to harm the organization or organizational members (O'boyle et al., 2014). Examples of CWB are theft and misappropriation of a company's properties (Spector et al., 2006). In the case of CWB, it is generally accepted in many scholarly works that there must be some reasons or incidents that trigger a workforce's counterproductive behaviour which explains why some workforces are more likely to engage in CWB than the rest.

Despite noteworthy scholarly works in understanding CWB have been made regarding the varied determinants of CWB, one gap of CWB researches failed to consider context surrounding CWBs at workplace. This study belief the influence of workplace setting that form the context for CWB is worthwhile of investigation. This study reviews manufacturing industry to describe CWB phenomenon and defines CWB as the harmful behaviours perpetrated by the individual workforce at workplace. Drawing from the scholarly work of the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) by Bakker and Demerouti (2007), this paper provides (i). overview on workload as job demand and job control as job resource influence associated with CWB, (ii). overview on the mediating effect of job stress as strain between workload-CWB relationship and (iii). overview on the mediating effect of job engagement as motivation between job control-CWB relationship.

2.0 COUNTERPRODUCTIVE WORK BEHAVIOR AT WORKPLACE

In reality, CWB in organizations could take place at the individual level, group level, departmental level or organizational level. Some forms of CWBs may even occur at a level higher than that of the organization to which certain types of CWB are common. Theft and sabotage (Spector et al., 2006) along with sexual advances and aggression (Gruys & Sackett, 2003) are among the counterproductive work behaviour (CWB) at work place that are harmful to both organizational member and their organization (Sackett & DeVore, 2002; Dalal, 2005). CWB causes harm to businesses, reduces trust in society, and ruins organisations. It is among the biggest issues facing organisations around the world (Bellora et al., 2021). In addition, according to Mehak et al. (2024) CWB hamper both organisational success and productivity. Organization bear billions of dollars on CWB. CWB has negative consequences and has economic and mental costs when the activities are executed with the organization. Theft and sabotage lead to economic costs which result from such behaviour. Socially, CWB has a cost on wellbeing of the organizational members' mental and physical health (Bowling & Beehr, 2006). According to Vardi and Weitz, (2004) the costs of all forms of CWBs are expected to be staggering in the future.

Anger, dissatisfaction, and frustration are more common among people who feel they are receiving unfair treatment. Reciprocity dictates that persons who are dissatisfied with their supervisor or employer may respond by engaging in negative work behaviours such as reducing their output, arriving late, taking longer breaks, or leaving early. In addition, people may act ineffectively towards their co-workers as a means of expressing their displeasure, such as by verbally assaulting them, playing cruel practical jokes on them, or even ruining their work. The democratic leadership style places a strong focus on cooperation, which has been demonstrated to reduce employee turnover and workplace violence. Alternatively, because of the apathy of the laissez-faire leadership style, workforces with this approach exhibited less intention to quit but more unproductive behaviour (Puni, 2016).

Withdrawal is the tendency of the workforce to avoid situations or surroundings that could aggravate him or cause him to feel negative feelings. The withdrawal sub-dimension has revealed a number of behaviours among the workforce, including turning up late for work, leaving early, and frequently abusing and prolonging breaks. Organisations have a stake in being able to predict the likelihood that their workforces or candidates will engage in these behaviours. Counterproductive Work Behaviour (CWB) is those that employees engage in that negatively impact the larger workplace environment. It may be difficult for organisations to pinpoint the exact causes of CWB because different circumstances necessitate different explanations and ways to communicate these behaviours.

3.0 THE PRESENT ATMOSPHERE OF ORGANIZATIONAL SETTING

Nowadays, working person leads a very stressful life when the amount of work to be done is growing immensely. Although in modern society all physical tasks are placed on machines, as businesses want to make the most money possible, workforces are subjected to cater heavy workloads and on duty over a long period. Stress at work is a person's reaction to the apprehensive tension effects of their work environment because of the tension in their minds (Raza et al., 2017) and is a psychological reaction to demands that are made beyond the capacity of the individual (Suroso et al., 2020). Anxiety and anger are common emotional reactions for workforces who are participating in voluntary harmful company-disrupting activities. Damaged psychological well-being is recognized by World Health Organization as among prominent reasons of decreased job involvement and nonattendance at workplace (Harnois & Gabriel, 2000). (Hassan et al., 2023) in his study discovered a significant positive correlation between staff tiredness and CWB. The results suggest that emotionally fatigued individuals are likely to engage in CWB at the workplace.

4.0 THE JOB DEMANDS-RESOURCES (JD-R) MODEL

Despite existing scholars have argued a variety of factors likely affect CWB of individual employees, this concept paper utilizes Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model as overarching theoretical lens for understanding CWB at manufacturing industry. This study defines CWB as the harmful behaviours perpetrated by the individual workforce at workplace. JD-R model is chosen as the theoretical underpinning to understand CWB among employees because the model is often used to understand "how the work environment affects well-being and performance" (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), thus model captures the pivotal role the workplace environment plays in the emergence of CWB at organizational setting.

JD-R model proposes that job characteristics can be classified into job demands and job resources, each activating different processes (Demerouti et al., 2001) as shown in Figure 1 below. Job demands involving features of the job that call for sustained effort; meanwhile, job resources involving features of the job that assisting in achieving the work-related goals (Demerouti et al., 2001). According to JD-R model, job demands lead to a health-impairment process, while resources lead to a motivational process. At the end of the day, job strain leads to negative outcomes, meanwhile motivation leads to positive outcomes.

Unifying the two research traditions, the work demands and resources (JD-R) hypothesis explains how these elements have unique and additive effects on motivation and job stress. Reversed causal effects are also suggested by the JD-R theory: Engaged workers utilise their employment resources to stay active (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). Citing Herzberg et al. (1959) study on the two-factor approach, Bakker and Demerouti, (2014) found that health considerations and motivational elements are two different sets of qualities that influence workforce satisfaction and motivation. The workforce is said to feel better about their jobs when they have the motivational aspects, commonly referred to as job satisfaction.

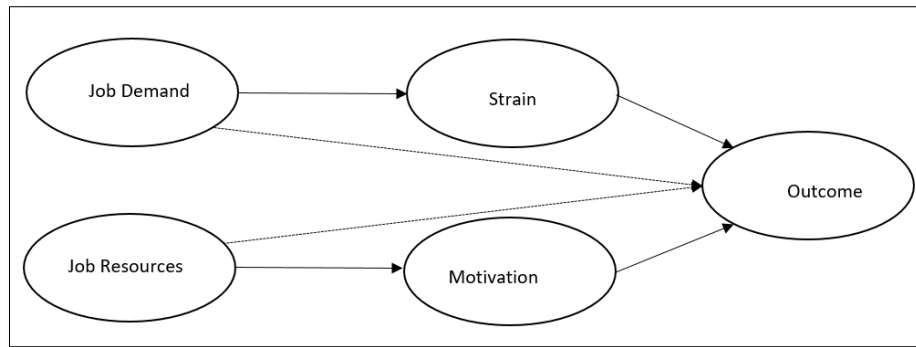


Fig. 1: *The Job Demands-Resources Model*

4.1 Job Demand and Job Resources as Determinants of Counterproductive Work Behaviour

Firstly, the model helps in providing theoretical explanations on corresponding determinants of CWB. Job demand at workplace can create negative health impairment to employees as an adaptive response to a condition that is being perceived as a challenge to workforce's health. Meanwhile job resources can create positive motivation as reaction to a situation that is supportive to perform the job. The model proposes that availability of job resources can help to lessen the negative effects of job demands and the negative consequences of job demand can reduce the extent to which employees have sufficient resources to perform their job. Accordingly, JD-R model is deemed as suitable to understand what trigger violation towards standard of behaviour among employees at workplace.

This paper adopts workload as job demand and job control as job resource to describe counterproductive-work behaviour phenomena. According to research by Bakker et al. (2004), specific types of workplace deviations, such as absenteeism, are directly impacted by workload. However, according to (Siswanto et al., 2019), workload does not have one obvious effect on an employee's performance. One of the elements that can impact the association between perceived working hours and overall stress is called job control (Kim, 2014). Job control is crucial in affecting employee workload and stress directly or indirectly (Portoghese et al., 2014). At times, employees' perception of decisions is due to a lack of job control, leading to feeling as though they have little or no control over what they do, which also means that they have little influence over what occurs at work (Portoghese et al., 2014). Stress and job control have been proven to be significantly correlated in several workplace settings (Schmitt, 2019).

4.2 The Mediating Effect of Strain between Job Demand and CWB

Secondly, the model helps in explaining the mediating effects of strain between job demand and CWB. JD-R model claims that CWB are product of job demand mediated by strain. According to Bakker et al., (2011), job demands are requirements that must be fulfilled and so necessitate exerting both physical and mental energy, resulting in strain. Furthermore, higher work expectations necessitate greater mental effort, which stresses out employees and makes them feel burned out, which in turn leads to absenteeism. Burnout symptoms such as emotional depletion are brought on by workplace stress, and counterproductive work conduct is a behavioural response to job-related stress (Fatima Makhdoom et al., 2019). Leiter et al., (2003) found that depersonalisation and emotional weariness were more strongly connected with work-related stress and resources than they were with personal achievement. In addition, a poor work environment is also thought to increase stress (Jimmy et. al, 2023).

To investigate all postulated relationships between job demands, job resources, and job stress simultaneously, Demerouti et al. (2001) began developing a structural equation model. The JD-R model examined cynicism and burnout in both individuals and organisations, and it found both positive and negative relationships between resources and job demands that lead to stress and burnout at work. How work-related stress is linked to abuse, sabotage, and withdrawal can be better understood by closely analysing causal thinking (Douglas & Martinko, 2001). It contends that when unpleasant situations are attributed to internal reasons, it often results in negative feelings about oneself. It suggests that a workforce's emotional reactions are determined by the locus of causation, and these reactions eventually influence the workforce's decision to commit CWB.

This paper adopts job stress as strain to describe counterproductive-work behaviour phenomena. Job stress is a phenomenon that results from a specific job, workplace, or work circumstance that makes people feel ill, uncomfortable, or uptight (Beehr & Franz, (1987) as cited in Suroso et al., 2020). Job stress occurs as an employee is unable to meet the demands of their position, and this causes a condition of physical and mental imbalance that results in a stressful environment. Since there is many form of strain, the relationships between specific kind of strain and CWB must be borne out an understanding to what extent does strain relate to job demand and CWB.

4.3 The Mediating Effect of Motivation between Job Control and CWB

Thirdly, the model helps in explaining the mediating effects of motivation between job control and CWB. JD-R model claims that CWB are product of job control mediated by motivation. Motivation helps people to work harder by following applicable procedures and meet the target standards that have been defined (Novita et al., 2023). This paper adopts job engagement as motivation to describe counterproductive work behaviour phenomena. The job engagement focuses on the positive aspects of an employee work. The length of time someone can sustain their efforts is a measure of their motivation (Novita et al., 2023). It is employee readiness and aptitude to help their company succeed, mostly in providing discretionary effort on a sustainable basis (Wahyu Ariani, 2013).

Employees who participate in CWB are less likely to be fully engaged in their work and that they are less productive (Sulea et al., 2012). Internal work motivation and job engagement are connected ideas, according to (Phan, 2007) study, because persons who are internally motivated to finish tasks are more likely to be involved in the tasks they carry out. In addition, he contends that even though job control correlates positively with job engagement, it correlates negatively with job stress. Wahyu Ariani, (2013) states that, when employees have negative perceptions of their work environments, they are more prone to engage in CWB. Job engagement, being a good affective state, should be inversely correlated with CWB.

5.0 RESEARCH DESIGN

This conceptual paper reviews the phenomenon of counterproductive work behaviour. Accordingly, the study is reviewing and synthesizing existing literature towards developing a comprehensive understanding of counterproductive work behaviour among workforces in the context of manufacturing industry. To begin with, this study conducted a comprehensive literature review on reputable scholarly articles and publications related to of counterproductive work behaviour to identify key concepts and relevant theories. Subsequently, relevant theories, concepts, and empirical evidence are analysed and integrated to provide a conceptual framework for understanding and analysing the phenomenon.

6.0 DATA ANALYSIS

For a conceptual paper, data is derived from the literature review and existing theories obtained from scholarly articles, books, reports, and other relevant publications that enable a comprehensive analysis of the studied topic.

7.0 DISCUSSION OF COUNTERPRODUCTIVE WORK BEHAVIOUR IN THE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

One of the most frequent workplace disagreements that has a detrimental effect on the company and frequently results in trade dispute suits in industrial court is counterproductive work behaviour, or CWB. Puni, (2016) found that workers in industrial production exhibited detrimental working behaviours. Theft, harassment at work, absenteeism, tardiness and workplace bullying are examples of CWB in industry. According to Fox et al., (2001) and Spector et al., (2006) the reason why manufacturing workers commit CWB remains unanswered, given that individual's CWB can negatively impact organizational performance, produce losses, induce fear among coworkers, and increase workplace stress. According to Lexis Advance Malaysia Research (2023) there are a variety of reasons why people participate in counterproductive work behaviour (CWB). Kwon et al., (2020) propose a comprehensive conceptual framework that improves upon the JD-R model and, in doing so, more effectively explains the dynamics pertaining to employee engagement and innovative behaviour.

Malaysia is fourth-placed among Asian countries for manufacturing hubs, ahead of China, Japan, Vietnam, and India, according to KPMG's Cost of Doing Business Index Hui-Nee Au-Yong et al., 2023 (as cited KPMG Malaysia, 2020). A total of 2,215,420 workers were working in the manufacturing sector in August 2021, up 1.2% from 2,190,787 workers in the same month the previous year. In August 2020, salaries and wages paid totalled RM124.4 million, a 6.5% increase over the same month the previous year (DOSM, 2023). There are over 2.3 million skilled and unskilled workers in the manufacturing industry as of March 2023, up 2.8% from the previous year (DOSM, 2023). Current data shows that the manufacturing sector is experiencing a wide range of trade conflicts. A trade dispute is defined as "any dispute relating to employment or non-employment, terms of employment, or working conditions of any such workmen between an employer and his workers" (Hannan Nur et al., 2011).

The Industrial Relations Act 1967 (IRA) is the legislative framework that governs trade disputes in Malaysia. Compared to other important industries in Malaysia the manufacturing sector had the highest number of trade disputes in 2021, with 127 cases and 15,704 workers affected (Department of Industrial Relation Malaysia, 2021). Despite high number of trade disputes, not much research was conducted on CWB in the manufacturing industry and considerable gap exists. Perhaps by analysing the CWB in the manufacturing industry using the JD-R model will allow manufacturing organizations to tackle and reduce the CWB more effectively. This is especially since the JD-R model evaluates both job demand and job resource and determines causal relationship among the variables.

8.0 IMPLICATION

This study makes an important contribution to the extended understanding of CWB by grounding to the fact that CWB is context-specific. This study argues that most scholarly work of CWB is rather individualized and not in accordance to context-specific perspective. Every sector/industry might have specific deliberate counterproductive behaviour that detriment the organization, each may vary in severity along with underlying motivation. Expanding CWB beyond individual perspective towards sectoral/industrial ground may lead to identification of new predictors enacted CWB. This study pays greater attention to the broader lens of CWB by providing a much-needed review of the industrial level CWB.

9.0 CONCLUSION

Despite countless scholarly works of CWBs, the dependence on generic determinants of employee counterproductive behaviours cut across industry reflects a gap in existing research. The current paper addresses three important yet generally overlooked issues regarding CWB at the industrial level as most scholarly work on CWB focuses on an individual level. This study adds value to the existing knowledge on counterproductive work behaviour by developing a conceptual understanding that determinants of CWB at the workplace is context-specific by organizational nature; thus, it has limited generalizability to other settings. Accordingly, it is advisable that each employer and employees foresees CWB within the organization as consequences from specific workforces-workplace interaction. A more detailed CWB research within the manufacturing industry needs to be conducted to understand the context better. Since it is common for any organization, regardless of the size, to run into counterproductive work behaviour at work setting, this study argues that CWB at the workplace is context-specific, demanding understanding why employees behave in a way that is counter-productive within the context of their work.

10.0 SUGGESTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study reviews CWB in the context of the manufacturing industry to proposes the possibility of different determinants to CWB. This study argues different industry encompasses different kinds of workforces-workplace interaction, thus leading to different determinants of counterproductive work behaviour. However, much more remains to be done and further research is still needed. Align to Bowling & Gruys (2010) proposal that further CWB research investigating beyond the individual employee level, this paper suggests that future researchers to conduct a more in-depth study on contributing factors towards CWB at industry level as the new direction.

CO-AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

The authors affirmed that there is no conflict of interest in this article. Author1 carried out the review of literature about counterproductive work behaviour in bigger picture. Author 2 carried out the review of literature on JD-R model. Author 3 reviewed literature specific to counterproductive work behaviour in manufacturing industry. Author 4 overlooked the write-up of the whole article.

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