The Effect of Job Dissatisfaction on Counterproductive Work Behavior

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Abstract: The main purpose of this study is to examine the influence of job dissatisfaction on the involvement of counter productive work behavior among university staff. Data was gathered through questionnaire survey completed by 266 university staff from three public universities located in the Northern region of peninsular Malaysia. The regression results found that job dissatisfaction is an important factor in influencing university staff to be engaged in counterproductive work behavior. The practical implications of this finding for understanding the hypothesized relationship are discussed.

Key words: Job dissatisfaction, involvement, counterproductive work, important factor, hypothesized relationship

INTRODUCTION

Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB) refers to any actions that employees engage in that have the potential to harm their organization's image or profitability (Bowling and Eschleman, 2010). It includes fraud, bribery, violence, absenteeism, wasting time, inappropriate use of the internet, sexual harassment and workplace bullying (Bowling and Eschleman, 2010; Penney *et al.*, 2011; Spector *et al.*, 2006). CWB is a costly problem which likely to result in billions of dollars lost each year due by employee's lateness and absenteeism. For instance, US organizations lost up to $85 billion dollars per year for employee's internet misuse and $50 billion dollars annually for internal theft and fraud (Coffin, 2003; Latto, 2007). 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 (Rahman and Aizzat, 2008). It was supported by a news article from BPO (2014) that fraud is a major problem and it became inevitable cost of doing business in this country. According to Thomas (2012) CWB are estimated to be responsible for as much as 20% of all business failures. These are only estimates because CWB are often not reported until they resulted in serious losses and court cases.

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, there by creating gap in the literature that needs to be filled. The second gap in the literature that requires attention concerns the predictor job dissatisfaction an independent variable that received less attention from pass studies. Understanding the linkage between job dissatisfaction and CWB is essential for organizations in order to design an effective workplace policy in order to decrease employee's dissatisfaction and curb the occurrence of CWB. Thus, the main objective of this study is to examine the influence of job dissatisfaction on employee's CWB.

Literature review
Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB): CWB also known as workplace deviance behavior it can be referred as any intentional action initiated by the employees which may affect the organization's reputation (Aftab and Javeed, 2012; Gruys and Sackett, 2003). This statement is parallel with Spector and Fox (2002)'s definition for CWB. They defined CWB as the employee's behavior that may harm the organizational financial or non-financial benefits or both. CWB is a type of employee's adverse behavior such as theft fraud, tardiness, misuse of organizational

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resources, vandalism of organization's equipment and any disciplinary problems (Roberts *et al.*, 2007; Samnani *et al.*, 2014). Past studies (Lee and Allen, 2002; Mount *et al.*, 2006; Robinson and Bennett, 1995) 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) identified CWB as employee's 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.

Job dissatisfaction: Locke (1976) 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 a form of negative emotional reaction of an employee towards his/her own job and it is most commonly recognized as unhappiness at work. Job dissatisfaction is an unpleased feeling that always diminish employee's motivation to work and leads them to become unproductive. According to Samnani *et al.* (2014) dissatisfied employees are more likely to have greater negative behavioral reaction. In essence, employees who are highly dissatisfied at work are more likely to engage in CWB to express their discontentment.

As stated by Cohen *et al.* (2013) there are five examples of CWB that are always exhibited by dissatisfied employees. First, unsatisfied employees are more likely to involve in spreading damaging rumor 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. As stated by Cohen *et al.* (2013) these are the behaviors that are commonly considered as an unethical behavior and they also can be constituted as a threat to the well-being of the organization. Based on the above discussion, it is to propose that job dissatisfaction is correlated to the CWB because it may influence the employee to react in negative manners when they are not satisfied with their job.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sample and procedure: The sample of this research comprises of university 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 200 were equally distributed to each of the participating public university. Out of 600 questionnaires distributed, 303 questionnaires were returned. However, after dropping cases with missing values and outliers, 266 questionnaires were usable for further analysis.

Measurements: Job dissatisfaction was assessed using an 8 item scale adapted from Brayfield and Rothe (1951). The example of items are "I consider my job rather unpleasant" and "most of the time I have to force myself to go to work". Meanwhile, CWB was measured by 6-item adapted from Bennett and Robinson (2000) based on the feedback of 12 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 CWB and job dissatisfaction was response based on the 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 (Brislin, 1980).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The frequency analysis showed that 159 out of the 266 respondents were female. The 189 of the respondents were married and majority of the respondents (39.5%) were above 40 years old. 241 of the respondents were permanent staff while the less were employed based on the contractual basis. Academic staff made up of 54.5% of the total respondents. The rest consisted of administrative staff. Majority of the respondents (38%) indicated that they have worked in the respective university between four to seven years.

Internal consistency reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) of the independent and dependent variables (i.e., job dissatisfaction and CWB) of this study were assessed and the results found that both variables has satisfactory reliability values (i.e., job dissatisfaction = 0.938 and CWB = 0.772) that is above the threshold value of 0.60 as suggested by Ho (2014).

On the other hand, in order to examine the influence of job dissatisfaction on the engagement of CWB among university staff, a linear regression analysis was performed via Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 22.0. Before performing regression analysis, few assumptions such as normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, independence of residuals and the absence of multicollinearity have been tested and met as indicated by Ho (2014). Table 1 depicted the results of regression analysis conducted.

Table 1: Regression results of job dissatisfaction on CWB

Variables	Unstandardized coefficients (β)	SE	Standardized coefficients (β)	t-values	Sig.
Constant	1.273	0.081	-	15.706	0.000
Job dissatisfaction	0.124	0.038	0.199**	3.307	0.001

**p<0.01; Dependent variable = CWB; $R^2 = 0.04$

The results of regression revealed significant positive relationship between job dissatisfaction and CWB ($\beta = 0.199$, p<0.01). The result signify that university staff are likely to engage in CWB if they are experiencing job dissatisfaction. This finding is aligned with the studies by Samnani *et al.* (2013) and Cohen *et al.* (2013). Employees who possess high level of job dissatisfaction are those who are unhappy with the job experiences and they are having the high tendency to behave negatively towards their job responsibilities. Dissatisfied employees likely to retaliate to their employer by engaging in CWB. The findings of this study provide adequate evidence that job dissatisfaction is the "driving force" that provoke employees to be exhibit CWB.

Based on the findings gathered, this study has provided important insights to the registrar's department of public universities understudied. Specifically, the university should pay close attention to provide positive working environment such as encouraging one another, recognizing employee's efforts and open communication as one of the key administrative strategies to promote job satisfaction among university staff. For university staff to be satisfied they must find their work interesting and feel like they have more potential than their current level of functionality that likely to be contributed to the university well-being. To eliminate the occurrence of CWB among university staff, diminishing job dissatisfaction of university staff is a must effort for university management. Thus, online job satisfaction survey should be performed periodically to effectively understand how employees feel about their job experiences. This survey allows university management to improve and monitor satisfaction levels and to eliminate the occurrence of CWB among university staff.

CONCLUSION

This study has contributed to the understanding of the relationship between 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 CWB, other factors such as work stressor, ethical climate, work values and employee disengagement can be incorporated in the future study. In this study, job dissatisfaction only able to explain 4% of the variance of CWB and thus implied that there are other factors likely to influence the involvement of CWB among university staff.

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 university 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 job dissatisfaction and CWB. In essence, the result indicated that job dissatisfaction was significant predictor of CWB.

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