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THE ROLE OF DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS ON WORKPLACE DEVIANT BEHAVIOR

Hadi Farhadi, Fatimah Omar, Rohany Nasir, Maryam Zarnaghash, & Mehrdad Salehi

ABSTRACT

Workplace deviant behavior (WDB) has been a neglected topic in organizational researches. It refers to a range of volitional acts at work that harm or intend to harm organizations and their stakeholders, client, co-worker, customer, and supervisors. The main purpose of this study was to investigate the role of demographic factors (age, gender, education level, and organizational tenure) on deviant behavior in organizations. This study investigates whether subjects with different demographic background differs in tendency to deviant behavior. Two hundred twelve samples who were working as civil servant in Malaysia participated in this study. Data were collected using a set of questionnaire consisting of 30 items. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS software version 16.0. Although the findings of this study have shown differences in engaging in deviant behavior between subjects with different age and organization tenure level, it was unable to find differences in deviant behavior between subjects with different gender, and education levels. Study implications for practitioners and scientists in the field of industrial organizational psychology and future research were discussed as well.

Keywords: counterproductive Workplace behavior, deviant behavior, demographic factors, gender, age, education level, organizational tenure, marital status, industrial and organizational psychologist

INTRODUTION

Misbehaviors in the workplace take many forms. Deviant behavior is a permanent phenomenon that has overwhelmed organizations since their beginning (Fox & Spector 2005). Some common forms of workplace deviant include ; absenteeism, abusing sick day privileges, abusing drugs and alcohol, filing fake accident claims, sabotaging, breaking organizations' rules, withholding effort, stealing, taking long breaks, working slowly, harassing other employees and hiding needed resources. In the past researches, workplace deviance is referred to by many names including: counterproductive workplace behavior (Fox & Spector 1999), retaliatory behavior (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997), workplace aggression (Andersson & Pearson 1999), organizational misbehavior (Vardi & Wiener 1996), and antisocial behavior (Giacalone & Greenberg 1997). Despite the use of different terms which refer to a similar behavior domain, they share a similar conceptualization. The term workplace deviance refers to a range of destructive acts at work that harm or intend to harm

organizations and their client, co-worker, customer, and supervisors (Spector & fox, 2005). In the other words, previous Researchers have employed a variety of terms to describe nonproductive behavior in the workplace which all harm or intend to harm organizations, members or both. Hence,

organizational managers and researchers need to consider the effect of deviant behavior in organizations in order to increase productivity.

Previous studies attempted to examine the reasons why workers engage in deviant behavior. While Past studies have identified some individual and personal antecedents which lead to deviant behaviors (Bennett and Robinson, 2003), we see the need for further exploration. Understanding why a phenomenon occurs, past studies have sought to realize elements of the environment and personality (Farhadi et al.,2012). We chose to look at demographic characteristics as were a more important variable for deviant behavior in Asian countries, thereby, addressing this gap in the literature. In this study, we seek to discover if a relationship exists between demographic factors and deviant behavior. More specifically, we would like to determine if factors that influence or contribute to deviant behavior may differ across cultures. It has been suggested that demographic characteristics as well socioeconomic factors, such as education level could also affect employee behaviors. The findings will serve to help organizations to better understand what types of people are most likely to engage in deviant behavior in specific settings.

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES AND DEVIANT BEHAVIOR

With regard to demographic factors, large body of literature on organization behavior have shown that there are several demographic variables which influence WDB (Lau at al., 2005, Henle, 2005, Sackett et al., 2006, Hershcovis et al., 2007, and Berry et al., 2007). For instance, Hershcovis et al. (2007) indicated that gender were stronger predictors of interpersonal aggression (a type of WDB). They showed that men being more aggressive than women. In addition, Henle (2005) found that gender and age were related to workplace deviant behavior while tenure was not significantly correlated. Furthermore, Sackett et al. (2006) conducted a research to show the relationship between to domains of citizenship and counterproductive behavior. General demographic information that was gathered from participants in this research consist of: gender, race, age, marital status, highest educational degree obtained, occupational area, hours a week one typically works, number of years of higher education completed, current job tenure (years), and career tenure (years). Results indicated that demographic variables significantly predicted both composite OCB and CWB, respectively.

The result of a meta-analysis done by Lau et al. (2003) showed that age, sex, and marital status were all valid predictors of different deviant behaviors. Age was the most powerful predictor of deviant behaviors. Consistent with past research findings, The present study particularly will be looking at the significant differences of six demographic variables, which are gender, education level, marital status, age, organizational tenure, and rank holds within the organization or occupational rank on WDB. Consequently, the current study aims to extend the literature by further investigating the differences between those factors on engaging in WDB. Therefore, the following hypotheses are suggested:

Hypothesis: there is a significant difference in workplace deviant behavior among subjects with different demographic characteristics (gender, age levels, tenure and educational level).

METHODS

This study used a non-experimental quantitative research design. The present study is designed to examine the existing differences between participants to engage in deviant behavior. This study was conducted in a government (public) organization in Malaysia. A total of 212 employees of a public organization in Malaysia were randomly selected for this study. A set of questionnaire that consists of two sections was used to measure the study variables which include:

Workplace deviant behavior measurement: Employee workplace deviant behavior was measured using Bennett and Robinson's (2000) workplace deviance Scale. This19-item measure with a 7-point Likert-type response scale was used to measure the extent to which participants have engaged in workplace deviance during the past year. Item responses ranged from 1 = never, 2 = once a year, 3 = twice a year, 4 = several times a year, 5 = monthly, 6 = weekly, 7 = daily. Examples of the workplace deviance items included: "Played a mean trick on someone at work", "Made fun of someone at work", "Cursed at someone at work". Cronbach's Alpha for the 19 workplace deviance items was $\alpha = .921$. Demographic variables: five demographic items were included in the survey. Items assessed participants' gender; age, tenure, and education level (see Table 1).

The data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The data file was uploaded into SPSS 16, and the variables were categorized as nominal, ordinal or scale as appropriate. In addition, the variables were labeled appropriately to make the SPSS output easier to interpret. This study utilized such technique as descriptive statistics, Frequency test, ANOVA, and independent sample t-test to investigate the differences between the participants to engage in deviant behavior.

RESULTS

To study the differences in WDB between demographic backgrounds, four hypotheses were developed as follows. To determine significant differences between two categories in a group like gender (male and female) with dependent variable (WDB), t-test will be used. In addition, One-way ANOVA analysis will be applied to test significant differences between more than two categories in a group with dependent variable.

Table 1 Profile of subjects

Variables		Numbers	Percent
Gender			
	Male	93	43.9
	Female	119	56.1
Age			
	Less than 20	6	2.8
	21-30	140	66
	31-40	42	19.8
	41-50	16	7.5
	More than 50	8	3.8
Education level			

	Undergraduate	128	60.4
	Postgraduate	70	33
	PHD	9	4.2
Organizational			
	Less than 10	168	79.2
	11-20	27	12.7
	More than 20	12	5.7

With regard to the differences between male and female in mean of WDB scores, hypothesis1 was developed. Hypothesis 1. There is a significant difference on workplace deviant behavior between samples with different
gender.

Independent sample t-test was used to compare the WDB for women and men samples (see Table 2). This study found that there was no significant differences between the WDB scores among women and men ($t = -.341$, $p > 0.05$). Therefore, this study was unable to support hypothesis 1.

Table 2 Independent Sample T-Test for comparing the women and men's WDB scores

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	d.f	T
Workplace deviant behavior	Male	93	1.92	.92	210	-.341
	Female	119	1.97	.89		

Hypothesis2: There is a significant difference in workplace deviant behavior among samples with different age levels.

One- way ANOVA analysis was used to test whether there was any difference between subjects with different age categories in workplace deviance behavior. Based on the analysis shown in Table 3, there was a significant difference in WDB between samples with different age levels ($F=3.660$, $P<0.01$). Therefore, based on this finding, the current study was able to support hypothesis 2.

Table 3 One Way Analyses Of Variance (ANOVA) for comparing the WDB with different age level

Variables	Sum of squares	d.f	Mean Square	F

Workplace deviant behavior	Between Groups	11.297	4	2.824	3.660*
	Within Groups	159.739	207	.772	
	Total	171.036	211		

*p < .01

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant difference in workplace deviant behavior between subjects with different organizational tenure level.

Table 4 One Way Analyses Of Variance (ANOVA) for comparing the WDB with different levels of samples' organizational tenure

	Sum of squares		d.f	Mean Square	F
Workplace Deviant Behavior	Between Groups	13.328	2	6.664	8.673
	Within Groups	159.739	204	.768	
	Total	170.066	206		

*p < .01

One- way ANOVA analysis was used to test whether there was any difference in WDB between participant with different tenure levels. Based on the analysis shown in Table 4, there was a significant difference in WDB between samples with different organizational tenure ($F=8.673$, $P<0.01$). Therefore, based on this finding, the current study was able to support hypothesis3.

Hypothesis 4: There is a significant difference in workplace deviant behavior among samples with different educational levels.

One- way ANOVA analysis was used to test whether there was any differences in workplace deviance behavior among subject with different education levels. Based on the analysis shown in Table 5, there is no significant difference in WDB between samples with different levels of education ($F=3.660$, $p > .05$). Therefore, based on this finding, the current study was unable to support hypothesis 4.

Table 5 One Way Analyses Of Variance (ANOVA) for comparing the WDB with different levels of samples'
educational levels

Variables

Workplace Deviant behavior	Between Groups	1.328	2	.664	.801
	Within Groups	169.112	204	.829	
	Total	170.440	206		

DISCUSSION

Other factors which have considerable predictive power on WDB are demographic factors which in this research consist of four factors (gender, age, education level, and organizational tenure). In the following the relationship between each factor with WDB will be discussed.

Hypothesis 1through 4 predicted there are differences in the level of workplace deviant behavior among the subjects in terms of demographic factors (e.g., gender, age, education level, and organizational tenure). However, there were no significant differences in WDB among the subjects with different gender, and education levels. Significant differences were found for participant with different level of age and organizational tenure in WDB for this sample. Therefore, this study was able to support differences in WDB between subjects with different age levels and organizational tenure categories. However, it was unable to support differences in WDB between subjects in different levels of gender and education level.

With regard to demographic factors, there is no consistent evidence about demographic differences in WDB. Some studies point out that there are differences in WDB between employees with different demographic background, whereas some others studies could not find any difference (Farhadi et.al. 2012). For instance; Hershcovis et al. (2007 showed that men being more aggressive than women. Berry et al. (2007) found that demographic variables had only very weak correlations with ID and OD. They found age had a small negative correlation with ID and OD, being male was slightly positively correlated with ID and OD, and work experience and tenure generally had

small negative correlations with ID and OD. Henle (2005) found that gender and age were related to workplace deviant behavior while tenure was not significantly correlated.

All in all, this study found significant differences in WDB between subjects with different organizational tenure and age levels. How can this significant relationship be explained? The possible explanation is related to high commitment between employees with long tenure than short tenure. Also, the relationship between high commitment among employees with high level of age (older employees) and low level of age (younger employees). In other words, it is more expected from employees with long tenure and high age group to be more committed to their organizations and engage less in WDB than employees with short tenure and low age (younger employees).

CONCLUSION

Based on results of this study it can be concluded that, despite the differences in cultures, nationalities, values, attitudes, economic and political background, the findings of current study support some of researches done in other countries. We would like to assert factors that influence or contribute to deviant behavior may differ across cultures. It has been explored that demographic characteristics as well socioeconomic factors, such as education level can affect employee behaviors. The findings served to help organizations better understand what types of people are most likely to engage in deviant behavior in specific settings. The findings have significant implications on the policies of human resource in organizations. It is suggested to future researchers in this field to re-examine this findings by using a broader group of sample and examine some other factor such as cultural background, race, and religion.

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Hadi Farhadi, Fatimah Omar, Rohany Nasir, Maryam Zarnaghash, and Mehrdad Salehi

School of Psychology and Human Development,
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities,
University Kebangsaan Malaysia,
43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia
Tel.: +60-176535719.
E-mail address: farhadihadi@yahoo.com.