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THE EFFECTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE ON EMPLOYEE COUNTER WORK BEHAVIOR MEDIATED BY EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT; A CASE OF MANUFACTURING SECTOR EMPLOYEES

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ABSTRACT

Employee counterwork behavior (CWB) is a negative behavior exerted by employees. Every year, organizations around the world suffer financially and operationally due to the employee involvement in CWB. In present study, we investigate this issue by using the organizational justice and employee engagement perspective. The study aims to test the effects of organizational justice on employee CWB and employee engagement. Additionally, we tested if employee engagement

function as a mediator in organizational justice and employee CWB relationship. The study utilized quantitative and cross-sectional approach. Data was collected from manufacturing sector staff (n=212). Validity and reliability was established using the Confirmatory Factor Analysis performed by AMOS. Path analysis was performed for hypotheses testing. Our key findings are that organizational justice dimensions including distributive justice ($\beta=-.086$, $P<.05$); procedural justice ($\beta=-.084$, $P<.05$); and interactional justice ($\beta=-.075$, $P<.05$) has negative and significant effects on employee CWB. We also found that organizational justice dimensions including procedural justice ($\beta=.073$, $P<.05$); and interactional justice ($\beta=.075$, $P<.05$) has positive and significant effects on employee engagement while result for distributive justice turned out to be insignificant. We also found positive but insignificant effects of employee engagement on CWB ($\beta=.032$, $P>.05$). Additionally, we tested the employee engagement as mediator and found that employee engagement significantly mediates between distributive and procedural justice and employee CWB relationship. Based on these findings, we concluded that employee involvement in CWB is not only influenced by personality factors but also influenced by organizational related factors.

Keywords: Justice, Engagement, Counter Work Behavior, Deviance, Manufacturing, Oman.

INTRODUCTION

Employee Counter work behavior (CWB) is a destructive behavior from employees which negatively effects the organizational performance and operations (Nasir & Bashir, 2012). Every year, organizations around the world bear financial and operational burden due to the employee involvement in CWB. There is also increased incidents of CWB among employees in the manufacturing sector in Oman leading to the need to investigate this issue scientifically. There are fewer studies related to employee CWB in Omani context and no known study in Oman manufacturing sector. Based on this literature gap, the present study intends to investigate this issue by using the organizational justice perspective. The central theme of this study is that if employees are treated well, their perception about organizational justice will increase, and in return, the CWB incidents will decrease. Therefore, this study utilizes the organizational justice as an explanatory concept for employee CWB. Additionally, the study tests the employee engagement as mediator in order to enhance our understanding about organizational justice and staff CWB relationship.

Significance

The findings may be utilized by the management of manufacturing firms in Oman to get better understanding of why employees involve in CWB and how it can be reduced which can lead to several positive financial and operational benefit for the manufacturing sector. Academically, the study covers literature gap by investigation of influence of organizational justice on staff CWB and additionally testing the employee engagement as mediator. The findings can be used by students, future researchers and consultants for better understanding the CWB and relevant concepts.

Research Question

What are the effects of dimensions of organizational justice on staff CWB?

What are the effects of dimensions of organizational justice on staff engagement?

What are the effects of employee engagement on staff CWB?

Does employee engagement mediate the relationship between dimensions of organizational justice and employee CWB?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizational Justice

Organizational justice is a perceptual concept formed by employees based on fairness in various employment aspects (Greenberg & Colquitt, 2013). It is an important workplace concept and researchers have taken increased interest on the topic especially during last 30 years (Greenberg & Colquitt, 2013). Organizational justice is evolved as a multidimensional concept and literature commonly cites three dimensions of justice including distributive, procedural, and interactional justice (Karatepe, 2011). The following are the details of the dimensions.

Distributive Justice

Distributive justice relates with the employees perception regarding pay and related decisions made by the organization (Greenberg & Colquitt, 2013). The distributive concept mainly based on the salary and related tangible benefits offered by the organization. Employees judgement of fairness of reward and related benefits by the organization shapes employee's perception of distributive justice (Kim, Tavitiyaman, & Kim, 2009). If employer fairly distribute work responsibilities, benefits, and rights, it will be perceived as positive distributive justice by employees. HR practices employed by an organization such as pay, increment setting and promotion shapes employee's distributive justice perception. Earlier researches shows that distributive justice leads to several favorable outcomes including work commitment, job satisfaction and employee engagement (Ouyang, Sang, & Peng, 2015; Haynie, Mossholder, & Harris, 2016; Xu, Loi, & Ngo, 2016).

Procedural Justice

Procedural justice relates with employee's perception formed because of the way organization makes various decisions (Greenberg & Colquitt, 2013). This dimension of organizational justice is based on fairness in methods and mechanisms used to decide about important issues such as wage determination, promotion and so on (Vermunt & Törnblom, 2016). HR practices such as employee training and development, career development, salary increment, appraisal and employee voice also influence employee's perception about procedural justice (Greenberg & Colquitt, 2013). Previous studies show that procedural justice is important and lead to several favorable outcomes including employee job satisfaction, reduced stress level, organizational commitment and work performance (Haynie et al., 2016; Xu et al., 2016; Ouyang et al., 2015).

Interactional Justice

Vermunt & Törnblom, (2016) describe interactional justice as employee's perception regarding the quality of interpersonal connection with supervisor. Interactional justice is mostly influenced by the relationship with supervisor or how supervisor treat his/her followers (Greenberg & Colquitt, 2013). Earlier studies show that interpersonal justice has positive influence on staff including organizational commitment, job satisfaction and work performance (Nix & Wolfe, 2016; Xu et al., 2016).

Employee Counter Work Behavior

Spector and Fox (2005) describe CWB as volitional behavior from employees which harms or intended to harm organizations or people in organization. CWB is intentional behavior acting against organizational interest. The CWB is harmful to organization and violates organizational and social norms. It causes stress at workplace (Meier & Spector, 2013); and leads to reduced job satisfaction and higher intention to quit by other employees who are victims of CWB (Hershcovis & Barling, 2010). Furthermore, CWB also has financial cost as it is reported that it cost organizations billions of dollar every year (Bowling & Gruys, 2010).

Given the broad nature of CWB, Spector proposed five dimensions of CWB including abuse, production deviance, sabotage, theft, and withdrawal. Abuse refers to display of harmful character towards other members of organization and can be physical or psychological in nature (Spector & Fox, 2005). In other words, it is violent treatment of people (Izawa, Kodama, & Nomura, 2006). Production deviance refers to dealing job tasks not in accordance with as planned or improper dealing of job task (Howald, Lortie, Gallagher, & Albert, 2018). Production deviance may include purposeful decrease of work quality or quantity to give loss to the organization. Sabotage refers to the deliberately damaging the physical property or some other tangible assets (Bauer & Spector, 2015). Examples of sabotage include breaking windows or machinery, damaging cars, and wasting inventory. Theft means staff members steal some product, machinery, tools, etc. from organization (Bauer & Spector, 2015). Employees engage in theft for giving loss to the organization (Robertson, 2018). Examples of theft can be stealing cash, not registering some cash receipts, bribery, bringing change in financial records and so on. Withdrawal refers to reduced working hours or days against the instructed timings (Spector & Fox, 2005). Examples of withdrawal include coming late and leaving early regularly. Employees involved in withdrawal behavior ignore discipline and relevant messages from management. Overall, these five dimensions gives a good indication of nature of CWB in organization.

The previous studies reported that CWB can be caused due to the individual personality related factors such as personality traits (Oh, Charlier, Mount, & Berry, 2014) and negative emotions (Fida, Paciello, Tramontano, Fontaine, Barbaranelli, & Farnese, 2015); or organizational factors such as HR practices, supervisory behavior and time pressure (Arthur, 2011; Piening, Salge, Baluch, & Park, 2014). In present study, we investigate it from organizational justice and employee engagement perspective.

Organizational Justice and CWB

Previous studies show that organizational justice influence employees behavior and attitude (Akram, Haider, & Feng, 2016; Pan, Chen, Hao, & Bi, 2018). More specifically, the relationship between organizational justice and CWB is also investigated in few studies. For example, study by Devonish and Greenidge (2010) shows that organizational justice reduces staff involvement in CWB. A study by Oge, Ifeanyi, & Gozie (2015) shows that organizational justice dimensions are negatively related to staff CWB. Another study by Al-A'wasa (2018) in custom department in Jordan and reported that organizational justice dimensions negatively influence staff counter work behavior. Study by Shkoler & Tziner (2017) reported that organizational justice influence staff work misbehavior which is a closer concept to counter work behavior. Based on the previous

studies findings and organizational justice theory, we propose that organizational justice if present will lead to reduction in employee CWB. Following are the hypotheses formulated;

H1: There is significant effects of distributive justice on staff CWB.

H2: There is significant effects of procedural justice on staff CWB.

H3: There is significant effects of interactional justice on staff CWB.

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement concept means employees are physically, cognitively, and emotionally involved in their workplace performance (Kahn, 1990). Generally, the employee engagement is conceptualized as three dimension including cognitive, emotional and behavioral dimension (Shuck & Reio, 2011). Accordingly, cognitive dimension is about employee's assessment about meaningfulness and safety of his work and availability of sufficient resources to perform tasks adequately. Emotional engagement is about an emotional bond and efforts to put own resources such as knowledge and expertise into work. Behavioral engagement is about increased discretionary efforts put in the work. The three dimensional model is useful and better capture the employee engagement, however, in this study, for parsimony purpose, we will use the unidimensional model of engagement.

The nature of organizational justice suggest that it influence employee engagement. Relevant empirical work reported positive influence of organizational justice on employee engagement. For example, study by O'Connor & Crowley-Henry (2019) reported that organizational justice has positive influence on employee engagement. Similarly, study by Kang & Sung (2019) also reported positive effects of organizational justice on employee engagement. Other studies also reported similar results (e.g. Al-Shbiel, Ahmad, Al-Shbail, Al-Mawali, & Al-Shbail, 2018; Nwokolo, Ifeancha, & Anazodo, 2017; Sharma & Yadav, 2018). Based on the findings of previous studies, we propose the following hypotheses.

H4: There is significant effects of distributive justice on staff engagement.

H5: There is significant effects of procedural justice on staff engagement.

H6: There is significant effects of interactional justice on staff engagement.

Regarding the employee engagement and CWB, some empirical evidence suggest that employee engagement reduce the CWB. For example, Johnson (2011) suggested that in the presence of higher employee engagement, employee CWB will reduce. Similarly, study by Dalal, Baysinger, Brummel and LeBreton (2012) reported that staff engagement negatively influence CWB. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis.

H7: There is significant effects of employee engagement on employee CWB.

Employee Engagement as Mediator

We proposed employee engagement as mediator between organizational justice and CWB since if employee perceive organizational justice as present, it will lead to the positive relationship between employee and organization leading to higher engagement among staff. Furthermore, engaged employees have personal, cognitive, and emotional resources invested in the organization so such employee will not likely to involve in CWB as it can disturb the relationship with organization and result in end of employment and personal loss. Therefore, we propose that employee engagement can function as mediator in the relationship between organizational justice and employee CWB. Our specific hypotheses are as follows;

H8: Employee engagement mediate the relationship between distributive justice and employee CWB.

H9: Employee engagement mediate the relationship between procedural justice and employee CWB.

H10: Employee engagement mediate the relationship between interactional justice and employee CWB.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study design is explanatory as it explains the relationship between independent and dependent variable. In terms of data collection and timeframe, it is a cross-sectional study and survey based. The cross-sectional approach means that data is only collected once from the participants as it suits with the nature of the study (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

Population & Sampling

The population of the study is staff of manufacturing sector in Oman. For sampling, we selected a sampling frame based on three industrial zones in Oman. Additionally, we utilized the random sampling for collecting data where units in population get equal chance of selection (Babin & Zikmund, 2015; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The following are the calculations for sample size based on Cochran formula.

$$n_o = Z^2pq/e^2$$

Where:

e refers to desired precision level

p is the (estimated) proportion of the population which has the attribute in question,

q is $1 - p$.

Thus, on the basis of 90% confidence interval, 50% population proportion, and 95% confidence with associated Z value of 1.96, the sample required is;

$$n_o = ((1.96)^2 (0.5) (0.5)) / (0.07)^2 = 196$$

Data Collection Measure

We used the survey method to collect the data. For this purpose, online tool using Google Form is used which was forwarded to the survey participants. We used 20 item scale from Niehoff and Moorman (1993) for measuring organizational justice. The measure consist of 5,6, and 9 items for distributive, procedural, and interactional justice respectively. The measure for CWB is adapted from Spector, Bauer, & Fox (2010) consist of 10 items. For measuring engagement, we used job engagement scale (Saks, 2006) based on 5 items. Likert scale is used for measuring all items.

Data Analysis

For data analysis, we used AMOS for establishing reliability, validity, and hypotheses testing. Details are given in results section.

Validity and Reliability

Validity of an instrument indicate the extent to which a measure is measuring as it is intended (Privitera, 2018). There are various types of validity such as face validity, criterion validity and construct validity (Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle, & Gudergan, 2017). In present study, we established the construct validity by performing confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The construct validity refers

to the extent to which, there is a fit between an instrument and theories on which test is based. CFA test two types of validity including convergent validity and discriminant validity.

We also established reliability which is about the consistency between independent measurements of the same phenomenon (Privitera, 2018). Reliability is established using the Cronbach alpha and Composite Reliability for which the cut off limit is 0.60 or above.

RESULTS

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	178	83.96%
Female	34	16.04%
Age		
18 to 25 Years	78	36.79%
25 to 35 Years	55	25.94%
35 to 45 Years	65	30.66%
Above 45 Years	14	6.61%

In terms of gender, there are 178 males and 34 females participated in our survey. Based on age categories, the highest category was 18 to 25 years’ age with 78 participants (36.79%); followed by 35 to 45 years age category with 65 participants (25.94%).

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	S.D.
Distributive Justice	3.61	.60
Procedural Justice	3.48	.73
Interactional Justice	3.76	.58
CWB	2.16	.76
Employee Engagement	3.84	.81

The descriptive statistics indicate that in our sample manufacturing firms, the employee perception about presence of three dimensions of organizational justice is just moderate including distributive (Mean=3.61, SD=.60); procedural (Mean=3.48, SD=.73); and interactional (Mean=3.76, SD=.58). Furthermore, presence of CWB is also lowest (M=2.16, SD=.76); and employee engagement is reported to be close to high level (M=3.84, SD=.81).

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

CFA is performed for testing the reliability and validity of the measures. Fit indices including RMSEA, RMR, GFI, and AGFI were used for testing the model fitness. The result are as follows;

Table 3
Reliability and Convergent Validity

Variables/ Constructs	Items	Standardized Factor Loadings	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted	Maximum Shared Variance
Distributive Justice	DJ1	.642	.889	.890	.614	.156
	DJ2	.856				
	DJ3	.771				
	DJ4	.768				
	DJ5	.844				
	PJ1	.729				
			.771	.772	.521	.121

	PJ2	.781				
Procedural Justice	PJ3	.678				
	PJ4	.766				
	PJ5	.676				
	PJ6	.831				
	IJ1	.815				
Interactional Justice	IJ2	.875				
	IJ3	.893				
	IJ4	.912				
	IJ5	.866	.947	.947	.693	.356
	IJ6	.777				
	IJ7	.721				
	IJ8	deleted				
	IJ9	.669				
CWB	CWB1	.712				
	CWB2	.844				
	CWB3	.888				
	CWB4	.781				
	CWB5	.827	.915	.917	.612	.245
	CWB6	.671				
	CWB7	.746				
	CWB8	deleted				
	CWB9	.845				
	CWB10	.834				
Employee Engagement	EE1	.740				
	EE2	.860				
	EE3	.829	.937	.938	.683	.185
	EE4	.859				
	EE5	.823				
Model Fitness: X2=1187.52, df=424, X2/df= 2.80, RMSEA=.075, RMR=.033, GFI=.903, CFI=.912						

The initial model did not achieve the desired model fitness so we applied modification indices by covary the error terms of same variable. Additionally, we deleted two items (IJ8, CWB8) due to the low factor loading. The revised model achieved fitness including $x^2/df=2.80$, RMSEA of .075, RMR of .033, GFI of .903, and CFI of .912. The recommended values as suggested by Hu and Bentler (1999) and Browne and Cudeck (1992) are as follows (RMSEA<.08, RMR<.05, GFI>.90, CFI>.90). All standardized factor loading was also above 0.60 with AVE of above 0.50 so it is a good indication of convergent validity (Hair et al., 2017). Furthermore, the Maximum Shared Variance is also less than its respective AVE so it shows that there is good convergent validity for our measure. The reliability measures including Composite Reliability and Cronbach alpha for all variables are also greater than 0.70 so it is an indication of good reliability.

Table 4
Discriminant Validity

	Distributive Justice	Procedural Justice	Interactional Justice	CWB	Employee Engagement
Distributive Justice	.783	.534	.436	.212	.567
Procedural Justice	.534	.721	.454	.193	.676
Interactional Justice	.436	.454	.832	.133	.565
CWB	.212	.193	.133	.782	.225
Employee Engagement	.567	.676	.565	.225	.826

We used the Fornell and Larcker (1981) criteria for establishing discriminant validity. The result is given in the above table where diagonal bold values are respective square root of AVE while other values represent correlation between variables. According to this criteria, if diagonal bold values are greater than all other values in its respective row and column so it is an indication of discriminant validity. In this case, this requirement is met for all the variables indicating satisfactory discriminant validity.

Hypotheses Testing

To test the hypothesized relationship, we used the path analysis using the AMOS performed on the imputed Factor Score from CFA.

Table 5
Regression Weights

H. No.	Paths	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Remarks
H1	DJ>CWB	-.086	.039	2.20	***	H1 Supported
H2	PJ>CWB	-.084	.032	2.62	***	H2 Supported
H3	IJ>CWB	-.075	.037	2.02	***	H3 Supported
H4	DJ>EE	.053	.048	1.10	.238	H4 Not Supported
H5	PJ>EE	.073	.025	2.92	***	H5 Supported
H6	IJ>EE	.075	.013	5.76	***	H6 Supported
H7	EE>CWB	.032	.084	.380	.344	H7 Not Supported

Model Fitness: X2=29.69, df=1, X2/df= 29.69, RMSEA=.281, RMR=.027, GFI=.970, CFI=.936

***<.05, **<.01, *<.001

The result shows that organizational justice dimensions has negative and significant effects on staff CWB including DJ ($\beta=-.086$, $P<.05$); PJ ($\beta=-.084$, $P<.05$); and IJ ($\beta=-.075$, $P<.05$). The dimensions of organizational justice including procedural ($\beta=.073$, $P<.05$); and interactional ($\beta=.075$, $P<.05$); has positive and significant effects on employee engagement, while, distributive justice ($\beta=.053$, $P>.05$) has positive but insignificant effects on employee engagement which subsequently has positive but insignificant effects on employee CWB ($\beta=.032$, $P>.05$). Based on these results, we accept H1, H2, H3, H5, and H6 while rejecting H4 and H7.

The mediation analysis is performed by dimensions of organizational justice as independent variables, CWB as dependent variable, and employee engagement as mediator. The analysis is based on the indirect effects as per the guidelines of Baron and Kenny (1986) classical approach. The mediation analysis is performed by using the direct and indirect effects calculated by using the bootstrap procedures (5000 samples). Results are as follows;

Table 6
Mediation Analysis

H. No.	Path	Total Effects	Direct Effects	Indirect Effects	Remarks
H8	DJ>EE>CWB	-.130*	-.086***	-.044**	H8 supported
H9	PJ>EE>CWB	-.140*	-.084***	-.056**	H9 supported
H10	IJ>EE>CWB	.098*	-.075***	-.023	H10 not supported

***<.05, **<.01, *<.001

Mediation result indicate that employee engagement is partially mediating the relationship between organizational justice and employee CWB as indirect effects are statistically significant for distributive ($\beta=-.044$, $P<.05$); and procedural ($\beta=-.056$, $P<.05$); while insignificant for interactional justice ($\beta=-.023$, $P>.05$).

Discussion

The study tested the influence of organizational justice dimensions on staff CWB with mediating role of employee engagement. The first main set of result indicate that organizational justice dimensions has negative and significant effects on employee CWB. The findings are in accordance with the earlier reported findings. For example, Devonish and Greenidge (2010) reported a similar effects of organizational justice dimensions on employee CWB. Other studies also reported similar negative influence of organizational justice dimensions on staff CWB including Oge et al., 2015; Al-A'wasa (2018); and Shkoler and Tziner (2017). Second set of result shows that organizational justice dimensions including procedural and interactional exert a significant positive effects on employee engagement while insignificant effects for distributive justice. The results are similar to other studies which also reported positive and mostly significant influence of organizational justice dimensions on employee engagement (e.g. Al-Shbiel et al., 2018; Kang & Sung, 2019; Nwokolo et al., 2017; O'Connor & Crowley-Henry, 2019). The result that employee engagement is exerting insignificant influence on employee CWB is contrary to literature as mostly it is reported that higher employee engagement bring reduction in employee CWB (e.g. Dalal et al., 2012; Johnson, 2011). Finally, we found partial support for the mediating role of employee engagement between the relationship of organizational justice dimensions and employee CWB. This finding enhance our understanding about how organizational justice dimensions' influence employee CWB. Overall, our finding contributes to the literature of organizational justice, CWB, and employee engagement.

CONCLUSION

The study used the organizational justice perspective to understand staff CWB, while also testing employee engagement as mediator. The key finding of the study are that organizational justice dimensions' influence negatively to the employee CWB and positively to the employee engagement. Furthermore, we found support for the mediating relationship of employee engagement between organizational justice dimensions and employee CWB. From these findings, we can conclude that employee CWB is not only personal or individual phenomenon but also influence by organizational factors. Therefore, organization should give attention to the overall work environment, HR practices, and issues such as pay determination and equality in order to develop a sense of justice among the staff. As it will develop positive work environment and relationship between organization and employees and reduce the occurrence of CWB. We can also conclude that it is important for organizations to give attention to employee physical, cognitive, and emotional engagement at work as it leads to favorable work performance and reduce negative aspects such as CWB. Overall, our finding contributes to the CWB literature by highlighting the role of organizational justice as its predictor and enhancing understanding about organizational justice influence on employee CWB by using the engagement as mediator.

Recommendations

The first recommendation is that employee CWB is properly monitored and efforts should be taken to reduce CWB. In this regard, organization should employ suitable HR practices and develop a healthy positive work environment in order to curb employee CWB.

The second recommendation is that supervisory staff should be trained to identify and reduce employee CWB by positive counselling of staff and developing and maintaining a positive work environment.

The third recommendation is that organization should foster such organizational culture where employees are emotionally, physically, and cognitively engaged at workplace as it reduce several negative employee behavior and attitudes such as CWB.

Limitations and Directions for Future Researchers

Small sample size from only one sector and limited geographical area are limitations of the study. Another limitation is that mostly perceptual based measure is used which effects the quality of data collected. In future, a researcher may use multiple method of data collection to improve data quality. One avenue of future research can be investigation of demographic factors and their combined influence on employee CWB. Another avenue of future research can be investigation of various mediators and moderators influencing staff CWB between the relationship of organizational justice and employee CWB.

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