

## Antecedents that affect Deviant Behavior at Workplace in Malaysia

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**ABSTRACT:** *The study has contributed to investigate the deviant behavior at workplace and its overall impact on the organization performance and employees productivity within the context of Malaysia. The study entails a qualitative design based on previous researches that have shared meaningful insight to the objective of study and data has been analyzed by deductive content based approach. The paper has identified important predictors of the deviant behavior at workplace. The human resource department of organization in Malaysia should formulate strict policies under the Employment Act 1955 and Penal Code to reduce the level of risk.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Deviant behavior, Employees, Malaysia, Organization, Workplace*

### I. INTRODUCTION

The deviant behavior among the employees in the public service offices has been increased across the globe. The deviant behavior at workplace is persistent and brings detrimental implications to the groups, individuals and organizations. The main causes for these misbehaviors are due to the person's differences with other employee like behavior individuality, attitudes regarding work, integrity course, and philosophy related to morals that have been shown as the major facts for the counterproductive work attitudes (Robinson, Wang & Kiewitz 2014). The attention has focused on the contextual factors of these misbehaviors rather than the individual predictors, for example the relationship of the individual with the organization, the attributes of the grouping and organization itself that may prompt or raise these awful attitudes (Zagenczyk et al. 2014). The research pointed to the substantial costs associations acquired by reason of employee's misbehavior; therefore, scholars have gradually tried to understand the causes of these deviant behaviors.

Counterproductive or discriminatory behavior tends to show an attitude that can harm anyone and organizational citizenship might help anyone to overcome the situation (Fida et al. 2015). Counterproductive behavior has many perspectives like the violent behavior or belligerence, nonconformity, vengeance and reprisal. The approaches of these behaviors have many things in common as the perception of these attitudes are voluntary means and are not accidental or consented. It might spoil the organizations and their stakeholders for example customers, collaborators or colleagues and the controllers. Counterproductive work behavior acts are intended against the association itself in opposition to other person of the association (Zhao, Peng & Sheard 2013). Emotional intelligence may be a key aspect that can most probably persuade the performance of non-tasking attitudes among the workers doing services.

Malaysian organizations of public services have improved in many aspects in its respective fields due to creativity, transformation and innovation in their public governance. But the negative behavior creates difficulties for the public service in Malaysia to enhance their services and understanding the antecedents that affect the deviant behavior (Alias et al. 2013). Concerning the common happenings in any association, the major subject of counterproductive work behavior in Malaysia is common. The happenings of these deviant behaviors are evident from the occurrence of reports in newspaper and on media. The cases of deviant misbehaviors include many factors such as corruption, poor work behavior, societal and ethical issues along misrepresentation. Into the bargain, an analysis of the Industrial Law reports in Malaysia from the year 2000 to 2009 has simulated the presence of these deviant attitudes among the employees of Malaysian public and private sectors (Ang Chooi Hwa & Amin 2016).

### II. SCOPE AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

This research holds a wide scope and prospect as, it has been reported in a study that deviant behaviors in Malaysia have been found to increase with a rapid rate in organizations and businesses (Camic, Rhodes & Yardley 2003). This has gained attention of the researchers to conduct future research in order to acquire other pertinent underlying reasons causing deviant behaviors. For further adding value to the scope of the study, the research can also conduct presenting solutions to decrease or hold the increase in deviant behavior at

workplace of Malaysia. This can include implementation of strict laws and regulations in organizations for developing a legal system for employers and employees. This can be a great opportunity for the researchers to make contribution in this context.

### **III. LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Tort Law :** The reduction in the utility level of an individual from an economic perspective caused by tortuous act can be considered as damage. The tort law focuses at having a fair decision for the harmful events. The unlawful, unethical, harmful, illegal injury or damage is the concept that fits under the tort law (Chamallas & Sperino 2014). In Malaysian culture, the tort law has focused on the individual's rights and also centralized the negligence in attaining the rights. The law is also centralized towards the environmental credibility. The environmental sustainability largely focused on the necessities of the individuals to protect the benefits and privileges against environmental harm (Razman et al. 2013). Tort law has a major significance in assessing the diversified range of behaviors at the workplaces. It is a fact that the Tort law is significantly helpful for developing a fair decision in the harmful events, where the deviant behaviors are mostly observed. Therefore, tort law has been utilized because of its effectiveness.

The scope and significance of the tort law has risen over the last two hundred years considerably. The tort law before the industrialization revolution was considered unimportant field. With modern traffic types, hazardous products usage, and steam engines the number of accidents rose drastically. The increase in the number of accidents initiated the development towards the modern tort law. The development includes the negligence doctrine and expansion of rigorous liability with regards to risk involved due to dangerous activities. Severe expansion in the development of tort law came into being during the twentieth century, which includes liability of product, liability of environment, liability marketplace torts, and liability for medical practice (Diamond et al. 1996).

In the twentieth century, the most important hidden function related to the tort law is the business of interstitial legislation. The interstitial legislation is compensating the individuals or employees for the wrongs, which through the criminal law are rarely punished. The private attorneys hired are responsible for fulfilling the latent function to express the grievance within the areas where enforcement of government is nonexistent.

**Deviant Behavior at Workplace :** There are two groups in the workplace deviant behavior; namely positive and negative deviances. The positive or constructive deviances includes the behaviors that employers do not permit, but assist in attaining the objective of the organization and support employees to achieve the level of job satisfaction. The positive deviant behavior refers as the intentional behaviors that go away from the norms of an organization. The norms and values of an organization that deals with the ethical concerns and decides what is ethically legal and what not. It ultimately develop the ethical environment within the organization. There are many factors that can develop the ethical atmosphere including self-interest, company profit, friendly terms, team interest, professional codes and self-efficacy. All these factors control the level of mortality of an individual, who is linked with the organization (Alias et al. 2013). A study has stated that deviant behavior at workplace usually account for great number of profit and loss, which can be damaging for the overall atmosphere of workplace (Appelbaum, Deguire & Lay 2005). Some of the common example of deviant behavior at workplace includes vandalism, sabotage, absenteeism, spreading rumors, sexual harassment, and aggression. Furthermore, the occurrence of such behaviors at the workplace is considered harmful for the organization's wellbeing (Bennett & Robinson 2000). Regardless of the fact, employee deviance is considered as a unfavorable factor to the efficacy of organization and the issues regarding the misbehavior at workplace has been central to the media attention. The studies published to the subject of deviant behavior in the Malaysian context has been meager.

Some of the important factors have been investigated that are the reason for deviant behavior occurrence and from which one of it is stress factors that contributes towards the prevalence of deviant behavior. The stress factors include over burden of work or job related stress (Douglas & Martinko 2001). A study was conducted regarding the deviant behavior and job stress at workplace that involved 162 employees working in the Malaysian organization, which revealed there was a positive significant relationship among the stress factors and deviant behavior at workplace (Omar et al. 2011). The same study helped in identifying the negative emotions of employees working in Malaysian organization. It determined frustration and irritation within due to work related stress, which exhibits deviant behavior at workplace. Additionally, another study conducted in the

Malaysian perspective discovered that stress within employees tempted them to conduct various form of deviance at workplace and identified substance abuse, high absenteeism, and low job motivation as forms of deviance (Radzali, Ahmad & Omar 2013). The government has done efforts to produce a stable workforce in order to pull towards foreign investments. In this case, the resistance of workers was observed as deviant behavior because it interrupted the stability of workers (Crisis 2014). Therefore, the professionals played an important role in maintaining the policies and systems to improve the ethical work practice in the public service organization in Malaysia (Robinson, Wang & Kiewitz 2014). Intentional castigation of emotional anguish is the chief authorized theory in discrimination cases at workplace and incline under the act of torts. In Malaysia, there have been not enough evidences of remedying the usage of tort laws (Ang Chooi Hwa & Amin 2016).

The workplace deviant behavior in Malaysia has grabbed a lot of attention as compared to the past years and has encouraged towards the concept of tortious deviant behavior at workplace. The Malaysian industrial department from 2004 to 2005 has indicated an increase in the flow of workplace deviant behaviors (Rahim et al. 2014). Moreover, a study conducted also has contributed to the workplace deviant behavior's predictors associated within the Malaysian employees and found out certain predictor such as individual related factors (Alias & Mohd Rasdi 2011). The individual factors or organization is the common predictor of deviant behavior that includes emotional intelligence, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. A source also commonly reported that in the Malaysia public service, absenteeism, problems of discipline, corruption and abuse were found as various forms of deviant behaviors (Utusan Malaysia 2009).

Both the informal and formal organizational policies are included in the organizational norm and the organizational rules are denoted as deviance, which were described in terms of standards of special social group (Rock 2014). The Price Waterhouse Cooper Global reported that the companies of Malaysia have high rate of corruption and bribery that has been estimated to 35%, which was higher to other regions of Asia that was estimated to around 33%. The same report also stated greater chances of deviant behavior at workplace of Malaysia (Camic, Rhodes & Yardley 2003). The workplace deviant behavior impact negatively to the organizations as well as human welfare, in this regards many studies were conducted to know the reasons or the predictors of deviant behavior at workplace among the employees of Malaysia.

According to Faridahwati (2012), the deviant behavior at workplace of Malaysia was also due to the reason of leadership styles and work related values that influence the attitudes of the employee. Furthermore, the evident with regards to the deviant behavior at workplace of Malaysia were also reported in many newspapers and other public media that showcased poor working attitudes, fraudulence, fake certificates of medical, and dishonesty (Shamsudin., Subramaniam & Al-Shuaibi, 2012). The key role of Malaysia is to become a fully developed country by the end of 2020; however, the existence of workplace deviant behavior between the employees lead to important key challenges in order to reach their objective. Therefore, understanding the predictors of workplace deviant behavior is necessary in the Malaysian public service.

**Factors influencing the Deviant Behavior :** A study has been conducted to examine the impact of the factors related to the organization among 220 staff member in a Malaysian government organization. Particularly it aimed to determine the impact of perceived organizational justice, organizational ethical environment and organizational deviance. The findings of the study have suggested that the organizational ethical environment has been influenced by the ethical environment of an organization whereby, organizational deviance has been influenced by the organizational justice and support among the staff. It has been recommended that the HR professionals must employ their expertise in reducing the deviant behavior at workplace (Alias & Rasdi 2015).

**Employment Act 1955 and Penal Code :** Due to the increase in deviant behavior at workplace, the Malaysia public service and different organization have now built their attention towards the safety and security concerns. Moreover, the Malaysia workplaces require a prevention strategy to resolve the issues of deviant behaviors and make policy and planes in order overcome this concern. It has been examined that in some of the organizations, deviant behaviors also cause high risk to others as they become the victim in between. The employees working in organization can also get expose to harm or injury, and threats to the person performing unethical. The overall performance or productivity of the employees is highly affected. Therefore, some of the chief mechanism related to these issues is found in various organizations of Malaysia, which include the Penal Code and Employment Act 1955. The Employment Act 1995 has been applied within the organizations of Malaysia that entails proper rules and regulations concerning the organization environment. The section 14(3) of the act indicated that the employees can choose to terminate the service contracts without notice, in situations where they feel vulnerable of getting harm or injured by another person.

Moreover, the section also formed a sensible opportunity for permitting the employees to escape from risks or threats (Smith & Abdullah 2004). It is important the all organizations operating in Malaysia should encluse relationship among the employer and employee and also among employees as, specified in the employment act. It can reduce the chances of deviant acts by employees and can safe other victims of unethical acts. The Malaysian organizations employ this act so, the victim can get their right against threats they face by rendering alternatives in projected case of deviance.

The penal code of Malaysia has formulated some norms and regulations for the unethical act at workplace that are considered justifiable to be incorporated in criminal case acts. Within the penal code, the reactive part has major sequential specifications, which needed to be implemented in every organization operating within Malaysia (ILO 2016). Additionally, the penal code has developed the nature and type of punishment for the criminal or offender and implements the penal code extensively for addressing the deviant behaviors at workplace.

#### **IV. METHODOLOGY**

**Design and Data Collection :** The study has followed a qualitative research design in order to discover literature from authentic past studies regarding the deviant behavior at workplace. The qualitative literature also provided insights to develop ideas potentially useful for the aim of research (Camic, Rhodes & Yardley 2003). In order to formulate results, content based analysis was applied to interpret the gathered qualitative information and help in finding the underlying reasons and facts to deduce results. Content analysis has been considered as a widely used qualitative technique for summarizing the main point derived from various studies, in order to provide meaningful conclusion to the study (Forman & Damschroder 2008). Moreover, this qualitative content analysis is based on deductive approach as the structure of the research was based on previous studies. The data has been gathered from various remarkable sources that entails past studies related to the deviant behavior at workplace within the context of Malaysia. It include electronic sources such as Emerald insight, Science Direct, SAGE, and Springer that helped in accumulating the authentic information.

#### **V. DISCUSSION**

**Programs to reduce Deviant Behaviors from Workplace in Malaysia :** There are specific legal remedies applied to avoid and reduce the bullying at workplace cases, however, the systems started to achieve a strategy to reduce the flaws from a workplace are a part of the initiatives to attain the Strategic Reforms Initiatives (SRI) of the New Economic Model (NEM) and the Government Transformation Program (GTP). The policies have been employed to enhance the growth of Malaysia, human resources and development of productivity. The government has launched the NIP (National Integrity Plan) in 2004 as a protective approach in order to overcome the corruption. Several programs being executed, deviant behavior among support staff has become one of the most complicated issues faced by the public service organizations in Malaysia (Robinson, Wang & Kiewitz 2014).

In the above discussion, the phenomena of bullying cases in Malaysia has occurred repeatedly. It is not prompting anger or resistance from the society. This behavior is due to the fear of victims that arises in stillness and impedes them to report the problems. Normally, the person to whom employee reports i.e. the boss, is actually the bully. The main aspect of this deviant behavior is that it is not seen as against the law, this seemed to the deviant behavior and the bully easily got away from this attitude. Conversely, Malaysian senior controllers in many organizations need to take actions against the increased bullying factors, which have many dangerous effects on employees. They must conduct training sessions and develop handbooks and guides to spread awareness against the negative and inappropriate behavior that can harmfully affect the employees. In many Malaysian organizations, training frameworks have been introduced to aware the employees that how to react against these deviant behaviors and also developed major process, which lead the employee to report any case against this bullying behavior (Hassan, Al Bir & Hashim 2015). Various studies were included throughout the study to explore the major findings of the research. A study was conducted that evaluated key predictors of the deviant behavior at workplace and discovered potential stress factors that contribute to deviant behavior (Nasurdin, Ahmad & Razalli 2014). Additionally, another study also compelled on predictors of workplace deviant and described the roles of human resource department for supporting the employees working in the organizations of Malaysia (Alias et al. 2013). Both of the studies depicted that important factors contributes to the deviant behaviors in employees and organizations should accountably take charge on these issues by building relationship among the employer and employees in order to reduce the risk of danger or harm.

According to a source, a significant and negative relationship among the deviant behavior and spirituality was discovered within the workplace (Camic, Rhodes & Yardley 2003). Workplace renders an opportunity for employees in order to demonstrate their skills and abilities and various behaviors of employees have direct impact on other employees as well. Furthermore, a study also stated that workload is also an important factor that result in deviant behaviors and showed a significant relationship among work load and deviant behavior at workplace (Penney & Spector 2005). It showed that employees exhibit deviant forms of behavior when extensive pressure of work is imposed over them and also employees respond in unethical ways when there is an increase job stress. The job stressed has been defined as an emotional experience, which is linked with anxiety and anxiety originating from the occupation or job. A study was also conducted in Malaysia's organization that revealed a positive relationship among deviant behavior and job stress (Omar et al. 2011). A study also argued that job stress resulted in negative emotions in an employee ultimately creating an internal pressure on the employee for getting back on track in order to get the remedy for unbalanced feelings (Appelbaum, Iaconi & Matousek 2007).

The results of this study has brought some major findings in light, which include the predictors of the deviant behaviors and how the organization of Malaysia have incorporated the rules and regulations regarding the deviant behavior at workplace. Moreover, it has also discovered that the deviant behavior also lead to negative consequences such as low productivity and risk to others employees as well. For this human resource policies are exclusive to implement within an organization for influencing organizational performance as well. Knowledge towards the working ethical conditions should be given to every individual both the employer and employee in order to reduce the level of risk and deviant behavior. A study suggested that, management of an organization of Malaysia should frequently train or re-educate employees with organization norms and rules (Jacobs & Scott 2011).

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

It may be concluded that the employees, who are dissatisfied with their work will be more intended to develop confusion and conflicts, which can lead to deviant behavior. An important emphasis has been given on organizational policies that should be incorporated carefully within the organization in order to manage the behavior of employees effectively. Also, it is important that the organizations should manage effective programs for enhancing the individual performance and productivity. The research has also highlighted that organization in Malaysia should embed ethical and work values in order to enhance spirituality at workplace. The common factors such as stress, work load, and personal differences identified also increase the level of dissatisfaction among the staff and employees, which eventually provoke workplace deviance. Moreover, the study has identified various causes of workplace deviant behavior and examined that high level of stress also generate the unethical attitudes among the employees. On the other hand, organizational justice implemented by the top level management can also help in minimizing the stress level as experienced by the employees consequently reducing the chances of deviant behaviors at workplace. Controlling stress and individual factors would ultimately leads to reduction in the level of deviant behavior and increase the productivity. It has been recommended that employing constitutions should engage strong implement of penal code and employment act in order to maintain an environment of strict rules and regulations followed by each individual at workplace. Moreover, within the context of Malaysia limited studies are conducted; thus, to investigate the deviant behavior at workplace of Malaysia future research should be conducted to explore the level of deviance and also solution towards reducing the level of deviance. The future would provide a render definitive theoretical view regarding workplace deviant behavior and would help in developing an additional proposition leading towards a more refined theory. Also, that human resource department should take better interventions to assist the employees and environment of organization in an attempt to reduce the workplace deviant behavior occurrence.

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