A STUDY ON DEVIANT WORKPLACE BEHAVIOR OF IT EMPLOYEES

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ABSTRACT

Destructive deviant workplace behaviours are getting more and more important in today's business world. Although numerous researchers in the literature have tried to determine and clarify antecedents and consequences of deviant behaviours, studies on both alienation and deviance are limited. In this respect after a comprehensive literature review on the concept of workplace deviance, this paper provides a theoretical framework on some rarely studied predictors (i.e. person-organization fit , participative decision making, careerism) of it, where work alienation plays a mediator role. Managerial and further research implications are provided.

KEYWORDS: *deviant workplace, personal feelings, expectations, perceptions, characteristics*

1.INTRODUCTION

The concept of workplace deviance has been received a great deal of attention in past two decades (Robinson and Bennet, 1995; Bennett and Robinson, 2000; Henle, 2005; O'Neill and Hastings, 2011). Workplace deviant behaviour has generally conceptualized deviance as destructive (Robinson and Bennett, 1995; Spector and Fox, 2002; Sacket,2002; Henle, 2005; Spector and Fox, 2010; Bodankin and Tziner, 2009), but some researchers have used this concept as a positive meaning (Spreitzer and Sonenshein, 2003, 2004; Appelbaum et al., 2007), which is called as a constructive deviance (Galperin, 2002; Warren, 2003; Robbins and Galperin, 2010; Galperin, 2012; Vadera, Pratt and Mishra, 2013). Thus, it can be inferred from these studies the construct of workplace deviance includes positive (constructive) and negative (destructive) behaviours, which are deviations from formal organizational norms (Warren, 2003). Although this behaviour is a two-edged sword, in this study, we address only destructive deviant workplace behaviours.

Destructive deviant workplace behaviours are one of the most important research topics affecting well being of organizational norms and performance.

Therefore understanding these behaviours and related work attitudes has become a significant research area. A deviant behaviour in the workplace has been defined as "voluntary behaviour that violates significant organizational norms and in so doing threatens the well-being of an organization and its members or both" (Robinson and Bennett, 1995; Bennett and Robinson, 2000). In this respect, previous researches show that workplace deviance is an important threat for organizations in terms of social and economic costs (Bennett and Robinson, 2000; Greenberg, 1990: Murphy, 1993; O'Leary-Kelly, Griffin and Glew, 1996; Griffin, O'Leary and Collins, 1998; Galperin and Burke, 2006; Örücü and Y1ld1z, 2014). According to these definitions this kind of behaviors has two basic characteristics: (a) they are not mentioned in the formal job definitions and go beyond the existing role expectations, (b) they violate organizational norms.

There are many empirical studies on the direct antecedents of workplace deviance. They include many demographical factors, organizational conditions, employee perceptions and characteristics, etc. However, these predictors might cause deviance not directly but

through some negative attitudes. For instance according to the social exchange theory (Blau, 1969) perceptions cause attitudes that cause behaviours. In other words employees' personal feelings, expectations, perceptions, characteristics etc. may develop some negative attitudes towards the work and organization which then cause some negative behaviour. Therefore in this study, we highlight work alienation as a negative attitude that links some possible predictors to deviant behaviours. Although important and interesting, relations between two negative concepts, both at the expense of the organizational milieu and norms, work alienation –a negative attitude, and workplace deviance -a set of negative behaviours, are rarely studied until now. Thus, the present study has two main research questions: (a) what might be some less studied antecedents of destructive deviant workplace behaviours, and (b) is work alienation a missing link between the antecedents and behaviours? It develops a conceptual model that incorporates some possible causes and a mediator for destructive deviant workplace behaviours.

The paper proceeds in the following manner. It begins with a literature review on deviant workplace behaviours and work alienation. Then the mediator role of alienation is discussed in the relations of careerism, participative decision making and person-organization fit to deviant behaviours. Lastly, conclusion and implications are forwarded.

2.DESTRUCTIVE DEVIANT WORKPLACE BEHAVIOURS AND WORK ALIENATION

The concept of destructive workplace deviant behaviours has been defined as "voluntary behaviour that violates significant organizational norms and in so doing threatens the well-being of an organization and its members or both" (Robinson and Bennett, 1995; Bennett and Robinson, 2000). In a recent study, Gruys and Sacket (2003) extended this definition as "any intentional behaviour on the part of an organization member viewed by the organization as contrary to its legitimate interests". With this definition it is clear that behaviour (or intend to behaviour) is more important than its negative results. This behaviour is also labelled as an organizational misbehaviour (Vardi and Weiner, 1996), counterproductive workplace behavior (Fox, Spector and Miles, 2001; Gruys and Sacket, 2003), deviance (Robinson and Bennett, 1995; Hollinger, 1986), antisocial behaviour (Robinson & O'Leary-Kelly, 1998; Aquino and Douglas 2003) and dysfunctional work behaviour (Griffin et al., 1998). Although these concepts have different names, they have nearly same definitions. For instance, counter-productive workplace behaviour is defined as" behaviour that is intended to have a detrimental effect on organizations and their members" (Fox et al., 2001). Based on the these definitions, it is easy to see that destructive behaviours have two common distinct characteristics; (a) these behaviours are performed voluntarily, (b) the main aim of these behaviours harm to the organization's significant norms, or tend to harm organization and its members, stakeholders or all of them (Robinson and Bennett, 1995; Bennett and Robinson, 2000).

Destructive deviance behaviour is an important problem for organizations from two aspects; it is a common problem and its cost is enormous (Bennet and Robinson, 2000). Therefore, understanding and managing this problem is an important research area. In the literature, many researchers have studied many possible antecedents of these behaviours such as; work alienation (Kanten and Ülker, 2014), organizational climate (Kanten and Er Ülker, 2013), moral disengagement (Fida et al., 2014; Samnani, Salamon and Singh, 2014; Hystad, Mearns and Eid, 2014; Christian and Ellis, 2014), negative affect (Alias et al., 2013; Fox et al., 2001; Hung, Chi and Lu, 2009; Kantur, 2010; Spector, 2011; Ho, 2012; Samnani et al., 2014), organizational commitment (Appelbaum, Saphiro and Molson, 2006; Brooks, 2012), organizational justice (Henle, 2005; Yen and Teng, 2013; Fatima et al., 2012; Chang and Smithikrai, 2010; Appelbaum, Iaconi and Matousek, 2007; Galperin, 2002), ethical climate (Peterson, 2002; Appelbaum et al, 2005; Alias et al., 2013), organizational structure (Zimmerman, 2001; Yen and Teng, 2013; Fatima et al., 2012), organizational culture (Chung and Moon, 2011; Galperin, 2002), guilt proneness (Cohen, Panter and Turan, 2013), ethical ideology (Henle, Giacalone and Jurkiewicz, 2005), Machiavellianism (Galperin, 2002), ethical orientation (Galperin, 2002) personality traits (Salgado, 2002; Bolton, Becker and Barber, 2010; O'Neill and Hastings, 2011) have been widely studied by researchers. Apparently, since the last two-decades, numerous researches have been tried to clarify workplace deviance and as a result acknowledged that perceived fairness, injustice and some negative emotions play a crucial role in occurrences of this kind of behaviours (Fox et al., 2001; Appelbaum etal., 2006; Kantur, 2010; Kelloway et al., 2010). In light of these studies, it is easy to say that there are many negative variables that relate to this deviance. Work alienation, which can be accepted a common result of work and organization related negative factors, is one of newly studied drivers of deviant behaviours (Chiaburu, Diaz and De Vos, 2013). In this paper, the work alienation will be used as a mediator in our

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proposed model, alienation and its relationship with the destructive workplace behaviour will be defined.

Beside the above mentioned studies, work alienation as an attitudinal negative variable has been rarely related to deviant behaviors in the past literature. However, alienation is a common problem in today's business world where employees' levels of specialization have risen. The concept of alienation has long been studied (Nair and Vohra, 2010). According to Suárez-Mendoza and Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara (2008) alienation defined as the loss of capacity to express oneself at work. Work alienation occurs when employees lack concern, interest and attachment against to their work (Kanten and Ülker, 2014). According to Seeman's (1983) study, alienation is not a stable personality characteristic; in contrast, it is a situational phenomenon that emerges under some conditions. According to Sulu, Ceylan and Kaynak (2010) an alienated person is defined as a person lacking involvement in work role and disengaging from the work. The feeling of alienation can lead to a decrease in motivation and negative results in terms of organization and its members or both (Banai, Reisel and Probst, 2004; Ceylan and Sulu, 2011; Chiaburu et al, 2013).

In the literature, many researchers have studied many related factors to alienation such as; management style and practices and job characteristics, lack of decision-making, limited control over the job, organizational commitment, job involvement, performance related pressure, organizational justice, the negative effect of downsizing, perceived organizational structure, technological changes (Dipietro and Pizam, 2008; Banai and Reisel, 2007; Allen and LaFollette, 1977; Ceylan and Sulu, 2011; Hirschfield, Feild and Bedeian, 2000; Kanten and Ülker, 2014; Sulu et al., 2010; Nair and Vohra, 2012). According to these studies, it is easy to say that the causes and consequences of alienation are numerous. However its relation to deviant behaviours is rarely studied (Nair and Vohra, 2012). Accordingly, in this study we propose a theoretical model where alienation is not only a cause of deviance but also a mediator that links the effects of some other drivers to deviant behaviours.

3. MEDIATOR ROLES OF ALIENATION

Because of its harmful effects and enormous costs, studying and understanding destructive deviant workplace behaviors is an important research area (Y1ld1z and Y1ld1z, 2014). Although a great deal of study has been done about these behaviors, the main difference of the present study from previous researches is the mediator role of work alienation in the proposed model. Of course

alienation have already been proposed as mediator in a study by Kanten and Er Ülker (2013). But, in our study, predictors are not employee perceptions on organizational climate. We use employee feelings or orientations instead. Then, we propose that negative employee feelings may lead to negative behaviors through the negative attitudes, i.e. work alienation in our study.

3.1. Mediator Role of Alienation in the Relation of Person-Organization Fit to Destructive Deviant WorkplaceBehaviors:-

Generally, hiring or selecting right person to organizations is an important process. From this aspect, a fit between person and organization is a must. Person-Organization Fit (POF) is defined as the compatibility of personal and organizational characteristics (Kristof Brown, Zimmerman and Johnson, 2005). Person-Organization (POF) fit is a pivotal factor for organizations to elevate employee commitment and flexibility to overcome challenges in the competitive environment (Kristof, 1996). POF can exhibit two aspects; complementary and supplementary fit.Supplementary fit occurs when a person's characteristics are similar to those of the organization. On the other hand complementary fit was defined as when a person brings to the organization, something is missing, add needed (Kristof, 1996; Sharkawi, Rahim, and AzuraDahalan, 2013).

Alienation as an important negative attitude may play such a linking role between the employees' feelings of POF and deviant behaviors. As presented before, low level of POF is associated with destructive deviant workplace behaviors (Sharkawi et al., 2013). Alienation is also associated with destructive workplace behaviors (Kanten and Ülker, 2014; Kanten and Er Ülker, 2013; Nair and Vohra, 2012). Moreover, in Suárez-Mendoza and Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara' (2008) study, they used alienation as mediator in the relationship between POF and citizenship behavior. In this relationship hypothesized model explain that if person with high-level POF will more likely to exhibit citizenship behaviors precisely because of their low-level tendency to alienation. In this respect many studies have already state that citizenship behaviors, as a pro-social behavior (Spreitzer and Sonenshein, 2004; Galperin, 2012), are inversely related to destructive deviant workplace behaviors (Sackett and DeVore, 2001; Dunlop and Lee, 2004; Dalal, 2005; Dineen, Lewicki and Tomlinson, 2006; Vigoda-Gadot, 2007; Levine, 2010; Chang and Smithikrai, 2010; Jung and Yoon, 2012; Hafidz, Hoesni and Fatimah, 2012; Ariani, 2013; Yen and Teng, 2013). In light of these studies, we propose that an employee, who feels

that there is a misfit between his characteristics and those of the organization he serves, may get alienated and then engage in deviant behaviors.

P1. Work alienation mediates the negative relationship between Person-Organization Fit (POF) and destructive deviant workplace behaviors

3.2.Mediator Role of Alienation in the Relation of Careerism to Destructive Deviant Workplace Behaviors:-

Careerism or careerist orientation is defined as "the propensity to pursue career advancement through nonperformance-based means" by Feldman and Weitz (1991). In their study, they state that people, who have careerist orientations pretend to be successful even if they are not, use their social relationship with the coworkers or supervisors as an instrument to career advancement, and commit some misbehaviors necessary to career development.Accordingly, careerist orientation is related to some negative outcomes such as absenteeism and turnover (Aryee and Chen, 2004; Feldman and Weitz, 1991). However, we could not find in the literature any study on the effects of careerism on deviant behaviors. Thus, our aim is to close this research gap and propose that careerism is associated with destructive deviant workplace behaviors since in a recent study by Adams (2011) a negative relationship has been found between organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and careerism. Given the negative relationship between OCB and destructive workplace behaviors (Dunlop and Lee, 2004; Dalal, 2005; Vigoda-Gadot, 2007; Levine, 2010) it can be proposed that there is a positive relationship between high-level careerism orientation and destructive deviant workplace behaviors.

Another negative outcome of careerism is alienation. This has already been studied and a direct relation is found by Chiaburu et al. (2013). If frustrated careerist employees may develop negative attitudes including work alienation. But with or even without frustration, careerism may cause work alienation sincework related qualifications, tasks or performance measures are not already internalized by careerist people. Just pretending to be successful is enough. Alienated from the real substance of the work, they may then easily engage in deviant behaviors to further developtheir careers. Therefore we propose that an employee who pursues careerist orientations may get alienated and then develop deviant behaviors.

P2. Work alienation mediates the relationship between Careerism and destructive deviant workplace behaviors

3.3.Mediator Role of Alienation in the Relation of Participative Decision-Making to Destructive Deviant work place Behaviors:-

Nassehi (2005) defines organizations as "decision machines". Participative decision-making is defined by Aiken and Hage (1966) as "the degree to which staff members participate in setting the goals and policies of the entire organization". Employees' role in the decision-making process is vital for organizations in terms of their positive or negative attitudes towards the organization (Lam, Chen and Schaubroeck, 2002; Nassehi, 2005). Past studies exhibit positive effects of participative decision-making on positive attitudes and behaviors such as job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) (Black and Gregersen, 1997; Porter, Lawler and Hackman, 1996; Gilbert, Laschinger and Leither, 2010). On the other hand, there are also findings about the effects of low participation on negative outcomes such as low-level performance and alienation, (Aiken and Hage, 1966; Allen and LaFollette, 1977; Black and Gregersen, 1997). Already, according to Blau's (1964) social exchange theory if members of an organization feel themselves out of the decision-making process they might develop some negative behaviors. Since a positive antecedent of OCB can be assumed as a negative one of destructive workplace behaviors (Bennet and Stamper, 2001; Yen and Teng, 2013) and since alienation is found as an outcome of low participation, we can propose that low participation is a source of deviance and alienation mediates this relation. In other words, an employee who feels to be externalized or isolated from the decision making process may get alienated and then develop deviant behaviors.

P3. Work alienation mediates the relationship between participative decision-making and destructive deviant workplace behaviors

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│  Participative Decision     │
│          Making             │
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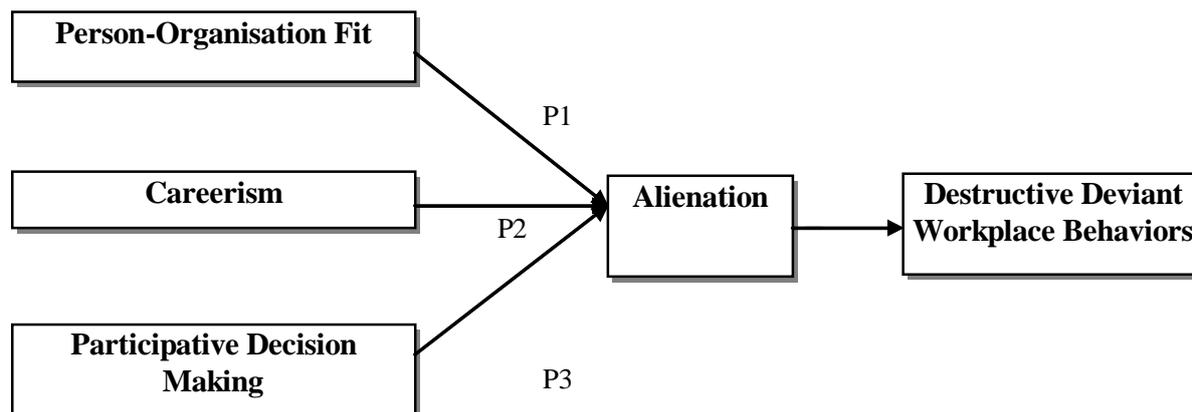
Proposed Model

4.CONCLUSION

In this study, we began defining some constructs with related to proposed model and reviewing the relevant literature of destructive deviant workplace behaviors. After explaining their rationales we suggested several propositions related with five variables; destructive deviant workplace behaviors, participative decision-making, alienation, person-organization fit (POF) and lastly careerism. In this respect, several propositions are developed to test these predictive relationships (see Figure 1). Thus, this study provides a theoretical model, whereby practitioners and researchers can examine and clarify these empirically testable relationships.

Considering this relationship within the social exchange theory (Blau 1964), we can say that employees' organizational level perceptions are predictors of attitudes and in turn these attitudes are predictors of behaviors. In other words, employees perceive some positive and negative treatment from their organizations, than develop some positive and negative attitudes and lastly exhibit some behaviours based on these attitudes. In this respect, we thought employees' feelings and orientations could lead to deviant behaviours through the agency of work alienation. This theoretical framework can be beneficial in terms of practitioners and researchers. Informed about theoretical antecedents of alienation and deviant behaviours, managers might develop some precautions to prevent or destructive deviance. For instance, HRM managers should look for POF as a must in selection and appraisal activities. Career opportunities should be provided for those specialist employees who may easily develop careerist orientations. Also top managers should establish an organizational milieu where employees may feel involved in the decision making process. If accordingly work alienation is minimized, positive attitudes such ascommitment and involvement may flourish which then lead to a decrease in destructive deviance.

Despite the strengths, this study is not without limitations. Firstly, we included only destructive deviantworkplace behaviours. But, there is also constructive deviance and this type of deviance lies outside the scope of this study. Future researches, should examine destructive deviance together with constructive deviance to emphasize the differences. Secondly, it is easy to say that there are numerous situational and contextual variables that could affect these relations. Further researches should explore the possibility that certain situational or contextual variables mediate or moderate these relations. In addition, future studies may investigate the direct or moderator effects of personality variables. Lastly, although we assume that the present study will provide a useful standpoint to researchers, we believe that it will achieve its primary purpose when empirically tested by future researches.

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