

THE INFLUENCE OF THE
COUNTERPRODUCTIVE WORK
BEHAVIOR ON THE ORGANIZATIONAL
PERFORMANCE

Abstract

This study investigates the influence of the counterproductive work behavior on the organizational performance. The objective of this paper is to demonstrate the link between human resource's job satisfactions and the overall growth of an organization. The role of human resources is crucial for any organization. The behavior of the employees affects the organizations either in a negative or in a positive way. In other words, the employee's behavior is considered very important in the life of organizations due its clear effects on obtaining performance.

The work environment has a significant influence for both individuals and organizations because it determines the success and the urge for continuation..

Keywords: counterproductive work, human resources management, organizational climate, organizational performance, economic growth.

JEL CODES: E24, J24, J28 O15

INFLUENȚA
COMPORTAMENTULUI
CONTRAPRODUCTIV AL
ANGAJAȚILOR ASUPRA
PERFORMANȚEI
ORGANIZAȚIONALE

Ana - Mădălina POTCOVARU

Ph.D. Student, Management Doctoral School,
Administration and Public Management Faculty,
Bucharest University of Economic Studies
E-mail: madi_potcovaru@yahoo.com :

Rezumat

Lucrarea prezintă influența comportamentului contraproductiv al angajaților asupra performanței organizaționale. Obiectivul acestui studiu este expunerea legăturii dintre satisfacția oferită de locul de muncă angajaților, corelată cu creșterea per ansamblu a organizației.

Rolul resurselor umane este crucial pentru orice organizație. Comportamentul angajaților poate avea atât efecte pozitive, cât și negative. Cu alte cuvinte, comportamentul angajaților este considerat a fi extrem de important pentru organizație, datorită legăturii directe cu performanța.

Cuvinte cheie: comportament contraproductiv, managementul resurselor umane, climat organizațional, performanță organizațională, creștere economică



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1. INTRODUCTION

When it comes to measuring an organization's performance, there are two major aspects to deal with. First is the economic approach, focused mainly on budgets, costs, investment and mainly profit, while the second approach is concerned with the behavioral and sociological aspects that affect the success of the organization. While the economic approach can be controlled with rules and improved with strategies, the behavior of the human resources involved in the organization, at all levels, takes more than that to function at a proper level and to contribute for the betterment of the organization.

The goal of this paper is to identify the reasons why people, especially employees, might engage in counterproductive behavior, and then to find solutions to help organizations to cope with this problem, by maximizing the satisfaction of the people who are part of it.

Each task, in particular, or job, in general, involves distinct activities and different levels of responsibility, so, accordingly, each employee will perceive his work as more or less meaningful or satisfactory.

The following Job Characteristics Model was developed by Hackman and Oldham, in 1976. It is commonly used as a support to measure how a job characteristics influence job outcomes, with accent on job satisfaction (Hackman and Oldham, 1976).

The model states that there are five core job characteristics:

1. Skill variety
2. Task identity
3. Task significance
4. Autonomy
5. Feedback

Every job has, more or less, these characteristics. The challenge is to match them with the one who is doing it. Why is this important? It is important because the person will adjust the moods according to these characteristics and this will affect the job result.

When inside an organization, employees want to draw attention on certain aspects that make them unsatisfied or "attempt to resolve injustice within the organization they might engage in CWB as a form of protest" (Kelloway et al., 2010). This kind of conduct is dysfunctional, because individuals "willfully

commit acts that have the intention of harming organizations or people within them" (Kelloway et al., 2010).

There can be many forms of counterproductive work behavior, "from difficult personalities that damage team cohesion to employee theft that undermines your organization's financial well-being" (Kelloway et al., 2010).

The most frequent CWB are an offensive behavior against co-workers, physical or verbal aggression, sabotage, theft, work done improperly on purpose and withdrawal (coming late, absence and turnover). The most important characteristics of CWB are the willingness of a certain behavior and the intention of a harmful result.

2. PREVENTING CWB – WHAT CAN BE DONE?

One solution would be that offered by Stan Mack in his article on smallbusiness.chron.com - limited access to online activities (Mack, 2014). But this could prove itself a counterproductive solution, given the fact that small breaks for an online routine almost everybody has are a necessity, and the lack of that might increase the level of frustration.

For such a solution to give optimal results, a change of mentality is needed. People should be taught to use breaks for leaving their chair or even desk for a few minute, to go out or engage in a relaxing activity.

There are also good practices for preventing employee turnover, not only restrictions. Research based on companies from United States and Germany highlighted "7 *people-centered practices*:"

1. *Job security (to eliminate fear of layoffs).*
2. *Careful hiring (emphasizing a good fit with the company culture).*
3. *Power to the people (via decentralization and self-managed teams).*
4. *Generous pay for performance.*
5. *Lots of training.*
6. *Less emphasis on status (to build a "we" feeling).*
7. *Trust building (through the sharing of critical information).*" (Kreitner and Kinicki, 2012).

Importantly, these factors are a *package deal*, meaning they need to be installed in a coordinated and systematic manner—not in bits and pieces (Kreitner and Kinicki, 2012).

One of the most efficient ways to prevent unethical behavior in an organization is showing appreciation for the employees when their work is done properly or when they are giving their best. Muhammad Adeel Anjum and Anjum Parvez put forward, in their paper "Counterproductive Behavior at Work: A Comparison of Blue Collar and White Collar Workers", a good perspective regarding two different categories of people engaged in organizational activities. "White collar jobs include performing the non-manual work; that is dealing with information, not the things. These jobs demand specialized experience and rigorous education. Blue collar jobs, on the other hand, involve performing the manual work which requires physical involvement and efforts." (Adeel and Anjum, 2013). This is the main reason why white collars might look for the intrinsic aspects of their job – the meaning of what they are doing, the degree of autonomy they benefit of, the higher purpose of their actions, a goal – while blue collar jobs holders are known to value more the material benefits (rewards and the security of their job), but it will never harm making them feel appreciated as individuals – this might encourage them to lose those habits that damage the company – as stealing, half-done jobs, coming late at work etc.

This might be one of the most proficient ways to ensure the loyalty of the employees. And it is known that a loyal employee will try to accomplish given tasks on a daily basis – this will be for sure translated in profits for the company, either in form of money, or in better results.

Organizational culture is always to be taken into account. The profit that the company has is, partly, a result of this specific way of doing things. Human resources mission is very important - when hiring someone, by paying attention to the individual values of the future employee, to see if those match with the organization's values, they'll save a lot of future costs for the company.

It is also known that when a task is completely in the hand of one employee, there are increased chances of unethical or counterproductive behavior. The solution is to create system very well balanced, where tasks are divided or, at least, checked by one other person – paying attention not to make things more complicated, unnecessary.

3. FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO CWB

"Revenge is not always an immediate and impulsive reaction to a situation but rather involves a complex interplay of cognition and emotion over time" (Spector et al., 2013).

Being in an emotional state and having an affective disposition are two very different things. It is vital to make the distinction between the impacts a transitory mood has, compared to the possibility of counterproductive work behavior when we talk about long-term emotional experience – because some persons are more liable to negative emotions than others. This takes us again to the utmost importance

of HR while hiring a new person, for making sure that the person has real chances to become a part of the already built collective. Variables as self-control (the capacity to see the long-term consequences of one's behavior), emotional stability (capacity to control or avoid major behavior changes, in the same external circumstances), self-esteem (capacity to consider yourself worthy of getting the benefits from a good job you have done), agreeableness (capacity to make yourself pleasant for the other you have to work or be with) are of major importance when a new person is brought in an already-shaped environment. If a new employee lacks most of these characteristics, the chances he feels intimidated or unable to join amplify, frustration might appear and increase and all this will affect his productivity and, on a longer term, the company's profits – they might need to divide his tasks or even to find someone else to do the job properly.

Some of the early traits of counterproductive behavior are work anxiety, poor health symptoms, withdrawal behavior – the employee comes to work, but has the intention to quit, along with hostility, aggression and sabotage.

According to Performance Group International Ltd. (2014), *"75% of employees have reportedly stolen from their employer at least once. Estimates also indicate that 33% to 75% of all employees have engaged in behaviors such as fraud, sabotage, and voluntary absenteeism"*.

A survey carried out on Nurses by the UK National Health Service Community Trust indicated that 38% of respondents had experienced workplace bullying, while 42% of respondents had witnessed workplace bullying. Healthcare professionals are the second largest occupational group to report problems associated with bullying, behind teachers. However bullying is not only confined to these sectors; it is prevalent across a wide variety of industries.

Two studies, both from 2010, indicated that more than half of the American adults were confronted with bullying at work, either being the target, either being a witness, and that 10% out of 12.000 people, in 24 countries asserted that they have been harassed, either physically, or sexually in the environment where they work.

Another one of the most toxic behaviors towards employees is abuse by a supervisor. This will definitely trigger a sense of intimidation or humiliation in the employee which further bring a feeling of being undermined, which leads to an increased chance to manifest counterproductive behaviors, sometimes aimed at their co-workers (Tepper et al., 2008).

Yves Morieux, director of the Boston Consulting Group Institute for Organization in the global People & Organization practice area, considers cooperation a basis for avoiding frustration and CWB arise. When

communication is not at its best, the employees will have “to compensate with super individual efforts for the lack of cooperation” (Morieux, 2013).

Another good practice he suggests companies should implement is “*increase the total amount of power. Give everybody the power to make decisions and make them aware of the risks, so they are willing to cooperate and solve the task*” (Morieux, 2013).

4. CONCLUSIONS

The losses caused at organizational level through this kind of practices (CWB) are massive. Efficiency is a common goal, which expands on the shoulders of every individual involved in every activity of the company. As it is said, a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, and any kind of CWB will affect the capacity and power of the overall organization. Every time a department will have to redo a task, to check someone's actions, to provide material goods earlier than planned, to find a new strategy to synchronize a team or a person with the team, the company will lose in terms of efficiency. Every time an employee comes late at work or doesn't come at all, delays actions that could solve the concrete tasks, doesn't improve or apply all the knowledge he or she has, the company will lost in terms of efficiency. If it's about products, they will deliver later or under the standard quality, if it is about organizational environment, it won't be proper for work at the highest level, if it is about the profit, there are no chances that it won't be affected, and by this, we mean decrease.

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