Does Workplace Deviance Behavior Influence Generation Perception?

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Abstract

Differences in generation remain as one of the major issue arising in current organizations which subsequently resulted to workplace deviance behavior. Differences in characteristics, values, culture, and ethics have great influence on employees to be involved in deviance behaviors. Thus, this study intent to examine the relationship between organizational ethical climate and workplace deviance behavior among different generations at a manufacturing company located in Kedah. The findings showed that there is negative significant relationship between organizational ethical climate and workplace deviance behavior. An independent t-test revealed that Generation X were likely to be involve in workplace deviance behavior than Generation Y. Results presented were in line with previous research conducted in same area of study where still show there is still room to expand the area of studies. Thus, suggestions for future research were presented at the end of the study.

Key Words: workplace deviance behavior, organizational ethical climate, Gen X, Gen Y

1. Introduction

Workplace deviance behavior (WDB) is a thoughtful problem to an organization. It affects individual employees that may trigger the effective functioning of the organization. Robinson, Wang and Kiewitz (2014), indicated several effects on deviance behaviors such as employees dissatisfaction and direct them to resign which subsequently reduce their commitment to the organization. WDB is inevitable and need to be adequately controlled; otherwise it will affect both organizational and individual performance. This is due to the belief that employees who are involved in WDB may possibly hinder organizational activities, afterwards affect the productivity and quality of performance. WDB is subjective; as a result, it can occur in many forms. For example, insults, discrimination, lies and rudeness, leaving work without permission, making work slow and not taking care of the workplace are some of the characteristics of deviance behavior (Zorlu & Bastemur, 2014).

Robinson and Bennett (1995) defined WDB as voluntary behavior that violates significant organizational norms threatens the well-being of the organization or its members. Accordingly, Mazni and Bahaman (2013), argued WDB is widespread and brings hurtful consequence to individuals, groups and organizations. In the light of the above, it is imperative for human resource professional in organizations to create and implement the policies and procedures to curb the arising problems.

Apart from the above, generation differences in workplace is another issue arise in the organization either public or private organizations. A study by Notter (2013), found there were differences in generation. This is because generations are born in different time frame with different social, economic, cultural contexts and values.

Values that clash with one another such as value in doing work can lead to conflict. Thus, employees who neglect to resolve these conflicts will end up exhibiting deviance behaviors. Conflict comes in many forms and each generation may have different issues. To overcome the conflict, the employers have to identify the factors that can lead to conflict also known as deviance behaviors. Literatures have emphasized the differences among generations. For instance, a study by Cogin (2012) stated that in Burke's study (2005) for Society for Human Resource Management found that in organizations with 500 or more employees, 58% of human resource management (HRM) professional reported conflict between younger and older workers due to their differences in the perception of work ethics and work life balance requirements. It also found that conflicts between members of different generations exist in the organizations and more than half of organizations were working towards reducing the conflict.

Similarly, Becton, Walker and Jones-Farmer (2014) quoted that generation differences exist in some workplace behavior and highlighted that organizations should be alert and take steps as a precaution in combating WDB issues. Thus, in the way to combat the issues, identifying factors that may influence WDB is important as to help the organization improved and take steps of precaution by knowing those factors in one of the manufacturing organization in Kedah. In this study, organizational ethical climate is one of the factors presented as the factor that leads to deviance behaviors. Organizational Ethical Climate is employee's perceptions towards ethics and how they perceived their work climate either good or bad (Appelbaum, Deguire & Lay, 2005). Thus, if the work climate is bad to employee and organizations they should avoid and follow the rights ethics or rules. However, it depends on the individual behaviors and attitudes. In addition, Peterson (2002) stated that organizational ethical climate does not directly linked to ethical behavior of the employees but also include deviance behaviors such as tardiness, absenteeism and lack of performance.

2.0   Literature Review

2.1   Workplace Deviance Behavior

Workplace Deviance Behavior definition has been extensively defined by organizational researchers. According to Robinson and Bennett (1995), workplace deviance behavior is voluntary behavior that violates organizational norms and threatens the well-being of organization or its members. Studies by Sunday, (2013); Kura, Faridahwati and Chauhan, (2013); Othman, Khalizani and Shahrina, (2012) are among examples of the studies that have use the definition of workplace deviance behavior by (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Workplace deviance behavior also known as wrongful behavior, organizational behavior, antisocial behavior, dysfunctional behavior and counterproductive behavior (Faridahwati, Chandrakantan & Hadziroh, 2011). There are two dimensions of workplace deviance which are directed towards organization and individual (Othman, Khalizani & Shahrina, 2012). In the same vein, Robinson and Bennett (1995) identified two dimension of workplace deviance which is interpersonal versus organization. They stated that organizational deviance involves group behaviors between individual and organization while interpersonal deviance is the behavior presents between individuals in the workplace. Theft, sabotage and putting little effort on work can be categorized under organizational deviance while making fun of others, playing mean pranks, acting rudely and arguing were into interpersonal deviance.

Workplace deviance behavior has received attention from industrial and organizational psychologists over the past decade (Muafi, 2011). Muafi (2011) claimed that deviance behavior is universal and predicted that most members in the organization are involved in misbehavior related and unrelated to their jobs. Organizational misbehavior can be defined as actions in the workplace that violates rules and standard of the organization (Omar et al., 2011). Researchers such as Kura, Faridahwati and Ajay Chauhan (2013), Othman, Khalizani and Shahrina (2012) and Faridahwati, Chandrakantan and Hadziroh (2011) also have their own perception towards workplace deviance behavior such as being cautious and intentional desire to cause harm to the organization and voluntary misbehaviors that violated organizational norm and threatens entire organizations. Thus, workplace deviance behavior should be addressed among employees because of it caned harm the entire organizations.

2.2   Organizational Ethical Climate (OEC)

Studies on ethical climate were extensively done by Victor and Cullen (1987). They introduced the concept of ethical climate in 1987.

Organizational Ethical Climate (OEC) was defined as shared perceptions of what is ethically right and how ethical issues should be held within an organization (Victor & Cullen, 1987). They also stated that OEC may influence organizational employees or members moral conduct. Victor and Cullen (1988) also affirmed that OEC is how the employees perceived whether right or wrong to act in the organizations.

On the other hand, Kim (2011) defines OEC as individual view about common perception of organizational policies, practices and procedures with moral concerns. It is about how the employees in the organization view the climate that influences their behavior and moral towards others. Thus, it is their attitudes and the ways they behave and act in the organization that influence the policies, procedures and practices. Beside policies, procedures and practices, organizational ethical climate may be varying within an organization due to difference in individuals, work group, beliefs, culture and values. In the organizations, employees' behaviors are directed by the organizations policies, procedures, and code of ethics. Thus, they are inclined to hold common perceptions of ethical climate (Shin, 2012). Employees' ethics are determined by ethical value and behaviors which influence organizational ethical climate. Therefore, employees are more likely to be affected by their organizational climate rather than work group climate because they are guided with respect to what is right and what is wrong, acceptable or unacceptable of group norms.

Study conducted by Tseng and Fan (2011) indicated that ethic being the critical rule in the personal and group practices. Everyone knows that they should behave decently not only because of the rules set up by the organizations but they need to consider their reputation, trustworthiness and long term relationship towards other (Tseng & Fan, 2011). Besides, ethic has become an issue in the organization because it affects employees' moral concern and behaviors. Apart from ethic, there are several dimension of organizational ethical climate by Victor and Cullen (1988) they includes caring, law and code, rules, instrumental and independence. Rules and law and code dimension were the most dimensions that reveal the principle of ethical climate (Shin, 2012). Table 2.2 show the definition of each dimension of organizational ethical climate.

Table 1: *Organizational Ethical Climate Dimensions and Definitions*

Dimensions	Definition
Caring	Concern of others which means individual have a genuine concern on others well-being rather than their inside and outside the organization. It is like to giving others the best as they can do.
Law and Code	The ethical code conduct set up by the organization which individual have to consider either decision made violate the rules or procedures set up. Usually, employees are expected to follow the entire legal and professional standard set up by the organization.
Rules	Regulations and principle that is expected to be followed by all employees' in the organization. Employees are expected to accept the rules determined by the organization
Instrumental	It is about employees or individual decision to assist the organization's interest or their own interest
Independence	Employees or individual are directed by their own personal belief

Source: Victor and Cullen, (1988) and Borhani et al. (2014)

In the light of the above, it can be summarize that when employees are concern towards one another in the organization, they will believe that the organizational procedures and policies are concern for the members and people outside the organizations. It will determine their actions, attitudes and behavior towards others in the organization. However, the employers also need to play their roles in maintaining good behavior among the employees and cohesive team environment. Conclusively, employees' ethical behavior might be influence by the ethical environment of the organizations and it is important to promote positive ethical climate to ensure the employees are able to perform their jobs.

2.3   Generation Differences

Study conducted by Becton, Walker and Jones-Farmer (2014), reported that there are three generations that dominate today's workforce which are Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y. Each of these generations has their own characteristics, values and beliefs which can cause intergenerational conflict (Zopiatis, Krambia-Kapardis & Varnavas, 2012). Thus, there is a need to understand their similarities and differences in order to enhance intergenerational conflict and at the same time provide comfort at the workplace.
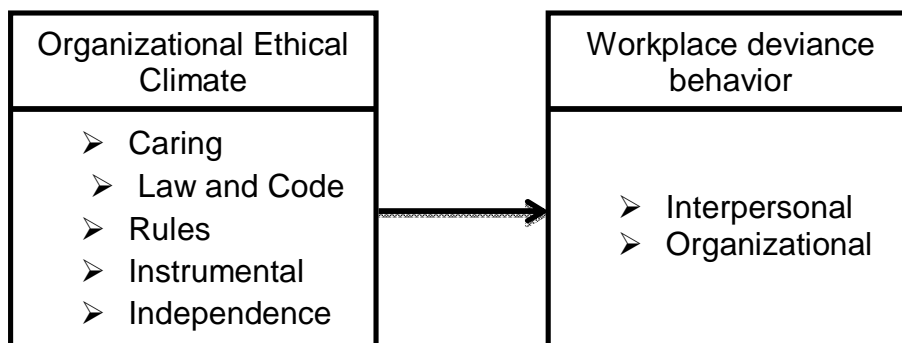
In Malaysia, baby boomers are the group of people born between 1946-1960 which have more experience and grow with the development of Malaysia. This cohort also has their own core values and beliefs system which might be different from others. Currently, their ages are between 55-64 years old. There are several values and beliefs that have been cited for this group by Lau (2014), which are tolerant, self-sufficient, hardworking and disciplined.

While, Generation X can be classified as the cohort of individuals born between 1961 to 1980 where they watched their parents get laid off early in their careers and have grown to expect and embrace change (Lau, 2014). As a result of these experiences, members of this cohort are purported to be independent and less committed to their employing organization and likely to job hop to increase marketability and to see work–life balance as extremely important.

Christina Chin (2014) indicates that Generation Y or Gen-Y are those born between 1977-1997 who are currently between the age of 17-37 years old and they are also the latest generation to enter the workforce. Generation Y can also be called as Generation Me and Millennial. According to the Statistic of Graduates in the Labor Force Malaysia (2011) as cited in Lau (2014), there are 3.30 million Gen Y between the ages of 20-34 who are in today workforce. According to Gesell (2010), various groups of employees in the organization with difference in attitude may influence recruiting, building teams, dealing with change, motivation, managing, maintaining and increasing productivity.

However, if the employees are able to understand the differences among generations and able to overcome the problems it will help them to adapt the way the various generations work with others and create more cohesive team environment (Gesell, 2010). This is because understanding the differences will help to keep the employees motivated and they will remain productive in the organization. Employees will feel more valuable and appreciated by the organization even when there are differences among them in the way they perform their work. In an effort to promote cohesive team environment in the organizations, several issues must be address such as the way generations collaborates with others, dealing with changes, organization and accountability and productivity and decision making (HR Magazine, 2009). Thus, to be successful in overcoming the issue among generation and promote cohesive team environment, those issues should be emphasized.

2.4   Conceptual Framework

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┌─────────────────────────┐         ┌─────────────────────────┐
│ Organizational Ethical  │         │   Workplace deviance    │
│        Climate          │         │        behavior         │
├─────────────────────────┤         ├─────────────────────────┤
│  ➤ Caring               │         │                         │
│  ➤  Law and Code        │────────▶│  ➤ Interpersonal        │
│  ➤ Rules                │         │  ➤ Organizational       │
│  ➤ Instrumental         │         │                         │
│  ➤ Independence         │         │                         │
└─────────────────────────┘         └─────────────────────────┘
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Based on the research framework, the dependent variable is workplace deviance behaviors which comprised two dimension; interpersonal and organizational deviance. While, the independent variables comprised of organizational ethical which consist five dimensions include caring, law and code, rules, instrumental and independence.

3.0   Research Methodology

3.1   Sampling Design

A self-administered questionnaire has been used as the instrument in this research. The measurement used for this has been adopted by previous authors where workplace deviance behavior items were develop by Bennet and Robinson (2000) and organizational ethical climate items from Victor and Cullen (1988). The original items were in English version, it was further translated to enhance respondents' understanding and their responses on all of the items. Each variable were translated into *Bahasa Malaysia* by using back to back translation as proposed by Brislin (1970) and McGorry (2000). The unit analysis of this study was individual.

In order to determine the relationship between workplace deviance behaviors among generation at workplace, convenient sampling technique were utilized in this study. The total number of employees in the company is 1000 employees including top, middle and lower level of employees with reference to Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table, the sample size needed for this population is 278 employees.

3.2   Research Procedure

Primarily, a pilot test was conducted to determine the validity and reliability of the instrument. A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed among employees at one of the manufacturing company located in Jitra, Kedah. Questionnaires were distributed by Human Resource Executive from the company. Before the actual study was conducted, contacts were made to the human resource department of the company to obtain approval. Upon approved, the questionnaires were distributed with the assistance from the executive of the human resource company. The total number and percentage returned is further discussed in the next chapter.

4.0   Data Analysis

Descriptive statistic of means and standard deviations were obtained for interval-scaled independent and dependent variables. Results presented were obtained from the employees (respondents) in a manufacturing company located in Kedah. Most of them were male with average age between 19-34 years old (Generation Y) and their religion is Islam. Results revealed that employees were involved in workplace deviance behavior (WDB) with the mean value of 2.00 and organizational ethical climate presented as the factor that influence WDB with means of 3.48

An independent t-test was conducted to compare the workplace deviance behavior score of generation differences (Generation X and Y). There were significant differences in score of workplace deviance behavior among Generation Y (M=173, SD=0.652) and Generation X (M=37, SD=1.06) with conditions; t (41.96) = -3.37, p = 0.000 as indicated in Table 1.2. The means scores indicated that the perception among Generation X and Y towards workplace deviance behavior were different.

There were also correlation and regression analysis conducted to determine the relationship between variables. However, before those analyses conducted, the factor analysis has been conducted and the dimension of organizational ethical climate has been rename by following the factor loading value of the group. Table 1.3 showed that there were negative correlation between organizational ethical climate and workplace deviance behavior with a correlation coefficient value -0.207. However, there were positive correlation between organizational ethical climate dimension (Rules, Organizational Concern and Individual Concern) and workplace deviance behavior. The strongest correlations are Rules (0.286), Organizational Concern (0.273) and Individual Concern (0.256).

While, Table 1.4 indicated that one of the dimensions of organizational ethical climate has been significantly related to workplace deviance behavior, which was rules. The result demonstrated that a total variance of 11.8% (R Square = 0.118) organizational ethical climate explain workplace deviance behavior.

Table 1.2: T-test between Age (Generation X and Y) and WDB

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Sig.
WDB	GenY 19-34	173	1.8919	0.65205	-4.577	0.000
	GenX 35-54	37	2.5054	1.06431	-3.373	

Table 1.3: Correlation Results of OEC and WDB

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	WDB	1							
2.	OEC	-.207**	1						
3.	Rules	-.286**	.733**	1					
4.	Org Instrumental	-.036	.677**	.192**	1				
5.	Org Concern	-.273**	.611**	.564**	.257**	1			
6.	Individual Concern	-.256**	.632**	.526**	.205**	.522**	1		
7.	Independence	.036	.572**	.140*	.520**	.130*	.139*	1	
8.	Individual Instrumental	.062	.514**	.121*	.399**	-.008	-.001	.421**	1

p ≤ 0.05

Table 1.4: Multiple Regression Results of OEC and WDB

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig
(Constant)	3.226	.347		9.297	.000
Rules	-.191	.094	-.174	-2.037	.043
Org Instrumental	-.007	.080	-.007	-.090	.928
Org Concern	-.123	.085	-.126	-1.457	.147
Individual Concern	-.094	.073	-.107	-1.301	.195
Independence	.056	.062	.072	.896	.371
Individual Instrumental	.045	.062	.055	.721	.472
R Square =0.118 , F = 4.52, R = 0.092					

$p \leq 0.05$

5.0   Discussion and Conclusion

The result shows that organizational ethical climate has a relationship with workplace deviance behavior Basically, there are six dimension of organizational ethical climate which are rules, organizational instrumental, organizational concern, individual concern, independence and individual instrumental. The positive correlation coefficient of the rules, organizational concern, and individual concern showed that workplace deviance behavior can be reduced if these dimension becomes important consideration among employees and employers in the organization from different generation The highest and positive coefficient between rules and workplace deviance behavior exhibit that when individual follow the rules set up by the organization, it may help to reduce the involvement of employees in deviance behavior. Rules also appear as the important factor that organization emphasized to the employees and its part of the procedures that need to be followed in conducting organizational activities.

When the employees are being exposed with the specific rules and regulation by the organization, they will recognize the benefits of rules need to be followed. However, the organization has set the rules which are reliable and not burden the employees when they put employees' welfare forward and at the same time can give benefits to the organization. It is because, when the employees are comfortable and felt the organizational rules are reliable and can benefit them, it will make them feel valuable and appreciated. Thus, it will help to reduce deviance behavior in the organization because the employees work with full commitment with the right ways and procedures.

The result being in line with studies conducted by Peterson (2002) when revealed that rules influence workplace deviance behavior. Rules being the most important factor in determining whether the employees commit deviance behavior. Rules reflect organizations policies and procedures that have to be followed by the employees. Moreover, employees have to follow all the rules set up that may benefit them and the organization. All the right and wrong decision that they decide were based on the rules. So, they will consider rules as the indicator of their actions taken either will benefit them or not. However, Peterson (2002) stated that, even though the organization emphasize on following rules, it cannot guaranteed that employees will not be involve in deviance behavior. This is because, individual targets are different from others, their perceptions, beliefs, and values are different and this could be the one of the factor that influenced them to be involved in workplace deviance behavior.

Thus, it is the responsibility of the organizations and employees to decide the wrong and right action employees made. Rule set up by the organizations should be able to be followed by the employees and in line with objectives, mission and vision of the organizations. Thus employees must follow rules which may help the organization to meet the objectives. The rules also set direction for the organization and employees for future success that should be follow and obey by all employees in the organizations. Furthermore, research should consider the other factors such as individual and job factors that might influence workplace deviance behavior in the organization.

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