Management Mechanisms and Implications of Workplace Deviance for Green Organisational Behaviour

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Abstract: The prevalence of workplace deviant behaviour such as fraud, theft, withholding effort, aggressive behaviour, and property damaging in the workplace, by the employees is a big challenge for the organizations. It is increasingly important for the managers and their organizations to prevent such deviant workplace behaviours for good reasons. The purpose of this paper is to introduce the concept of deviant workplace behaviour and to investigate into the nature and forms of deviant workplace behaviour being prevalent in the organizations. Since such negative behaviours are associated with huge economic and psychological costs, organizations need to get this problem under control. The main objective here is to explore the strategies and processes to be adopted by the managers and their organizations in order to reduce, manage or prevent deviant behaviours from the workplaces. The possible solutions explored in this study include: ethical organisational culture, effective personnel selection, integrity tests, maintaining psychological contract, organisational justice and adopting green organisational behaviour.

Keywords: deviant workplace behaviour, nature, forms, management mechanisms, green organisational behaviour.

I. INTRODUCTION

Deviant workplace behaviour has been an interesting topic observed by both academicians and practitioners. Employees engage in a wide spectrum of deviant workplace behaviours like theft, sabotaging, abusing, rumor spreading, arriving late, tardiness, disciplinary problems, wasting resources etc., posing a very serious problem in the organizations today. Many executives, administrators, and social scientists see deviant workplace behaviour as a cancer, spreading in the organizations. Authors have made good attempts to classify the deviant workplace behaviour, thereby distinguishing between the concept of property deviance, production deviance, serious and non-serious organisational rule-breaking, while others attempted to publish a list of punishable offenses.

With deviant workplace behaviours being so prevalent and costly to the organizations, it is increasingly important for the managers and their organizations to prevent such employee deviant behaviours for good reasons. This paper introduces the concept of deviant workplace behaviour and identifies the nature and different forms of deviant workplace behaviour that are prevalent in the organizations. Further, the strategies and processes as a management mechanism to be adopted by the managers and their organizations in order to reduce, manage or prevent deviant behaviours from the workplaces have been explored. The possible solutions explored in this study include: ethical organisational culture, effective personnel selection, integrity tests, maintaining psychological contract but also more importantly, providing proper organisational justice and adopting green organisational behaviour to guarantee that employees are satisfied with their organization and contribute to environmental sustainability.

II. DEVIANT WORKPLACE BEHAVIOUR

Research shows that, about 33%-75% of all employees have engaged in deviant behaviours of some sort or other (Harper, 1990) and as many as 75% of the employees have stolen from their respective organizations (McGurn, 1988). Today the estimates may be predicted higher than these because of the advances in technology which precipitate the deviant acts (Lim, 2002), for example cyber crime including hacking, and phishing. Workplace deviance results can be seen in terms of huge costs to the organizations, such as employee workplace theft has been found to range between $10 billion-$120 billion annually (Bourke, 1994; Murphy, 1993). Additionally, deviant behaviours have negative effects on the performance of employees and their organization (Dunlop & Lee, 2004), lowered quality, lost work time, medical & legal expenses, and a damaged public perception (Litzky, Eddleston, & Kidder, 2006; Van Fleet & Griffin, 2006).

Over the years, deviant workplace behaviour have been referred to as by a plethora of names, for example counterproductive work behaviour (Spector, Fox, Penney, Brursema, Goh & Kessler, 2006), antisocial behaviour (Robinson & O'Leary-Kelly, 1998), misbehaviour in organizations (Sagie, Stashevsky, & Koslowsky, 2003), dark side of organisational behaviour (Griffin & O'Learly-Kelly, 2004), organisational misbehaviour (Vardi & Wiener, 1996), non compliant behaviour (Puffer, 1987), and cyber loafing (Lim, 2002). Robinson and Bennett (1995) defined workplace deviance as voluntary behaviour, that violates significant organisational norms and in doing so threatens the well being of an organization, its members, or both. This definition focuses on violation of norms intentionally by employees at the workplace in order to harm the coworkers and organization or both. Employee deviance is considered voluntary may be because employee either lack the motivation to conform to the normative expectations of the social context or they become motivated to violate those expectations (Robinson & Bennett, 1995) and employees believe that they have been wronged by someone and they can blame somebody at the workplace (Aquino, Tripp & Bies, 2001).

Various researchers attempted to define deviant workplace behaviour in their own terms with different names and among some of the definitions include, for example, Vardi and Wiener (1996) define organisational misbehaviour as any intentional action by the members of organizations that defies and violates the shared organisational norms and expectations and/or core societal values, mores and standards of proper conduct. Giacalone and Greenberg (1997) have defined antisocial behaviour as any behaviour that brings harm, or is intended to bring harm, to an organization, its employees, or stakeholders. Andersson and Pearson (1999) defined a different though overlapping construct of workplace incivility as low-intensity deviant behaviour with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect. Whereas, Lawrence and Robinson (2007) proposed that workplace incivility may be a form of organisational resistance. Counterproductive work behaviour is defined as the behaviours by organisational members that are counter to the legitimate interests of the organization (Sackett, 2002). Gruys and Sackett (2003) refer to deviance as an intentional behaviour on the part of an organisational member that the organization views as contrary to its legitimate interests. Thus, all constructs define deviance differently but with overlapping content. Recently, authors defined deviant behaviour with a new term as insidious workplace behaviour which is defined as "a form of intentionally harmful workplace behaviour that is legal, subtle, and low level (rather than severe), repeated over time, and directed at individuals or organizations" (Edwards & Greenberg, 2010).

According to the Robinson and Bennett (1995), the deviant workplace behaviour must go against the organization's norms regardless of the society's norms. The violation of organisational norms is the violation of formal and informal organisational policies, rules, and procedures as prescribed by the organization which are not expected to be violated by its members. This means that the violations must be relatively serious. Robinson and Bennett (1995) also note that deviant behaviours may or may not be ethical. As they point out, behaviours such as blowing the whistle may be viewed as extremely ethical by many, but would also fit the definition of workplace deviance. Lastly, individuals must involve in deviant acts intentionally, harming organization.

III. FORMS OF DEVIANT WORKPLACE BEHAVIOUR

Deviant workplace behaviour has been the topic of several researches. Few authors have made good attempts to classify the deviant workplace behaviour. While building a framework for viewing deviant behaviour in the workplace, it has been divided into two broad categories, property deviance and production deviance (Hollinger & Clark, 1982; Mangione & Quinn, 1974). Property deviance means that employee engage in stealing, damaging the property or assets of their employers, taking money or supplies from the employer, misusing discount privileges, and getting paid for more hours than they actually worked (Hollinger & Clark, 1982). On the other hand production deviance deals with the behaviours which violate norms about the production or work in the organization. This category includes behaviours like absenteeism, tardiness, sick leave abuse, doing sloppy work, and engaging in drug or alcohol use on the job (Hollinger & Clark, 1982). A third category of deviant workplace behaviour categorized as altruistic property deviance was proposed by Hollinger, Slora, and Terris (1992) in addition to the property and production deviance. Altruistic property deviance has been considered as a unique form of property deviance, which includes behaviours which deal with the assets and property of the organization like property deviance.

Later on, two additional categories of deviant workplace behaviour were proposed by Robinson and Bennett (1995) namely political deviance and personal aggression. Political deviance is defined as engagement in social interaction that puts other individuals at a personal or political disadvantage which includes behaviours such as showing favoritism, blaming co-workers, and starting negative rumors about the organization (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Personal aggression is defined as behaving in an aggressive manner towards coworkers in a manner of sexual harassment, verbal abuse or stealing from other employees (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Accordingly, Robinson and Bennett, (1995) empirically developed a comprehensive typology of deviant workplace behaviour that includes all possible negative behaviours with the aid of multidimensional scaling procedure and thereby validated potential methods for measuring workplace deviance. The results produced a two dimensional configuration of deviant workplace behaviours along which deviant behaviour can vary: minor versus serious and interpersonal versus organisational deviance. The four quadrants in the matrix were labeled as follows: Production deviance, Political deviance, Personal aggression and Property deviance (Fig.1).

Typology of Deviant Workplace Behavior[a]

ORGANIZATIONAL

Production Deviance
- Leaving early
- Taking excessive breaks
- Intentionally working slow
- Wasting resources

Property Deviance
- Sabotaging equipment
- Accepting kickbacks
- Lying about hours worked
- Stealing from company

MINOR ← → **SERIOUS**

Political Deviance
- Showing favoritism
- Gossiping about co-workers
- Blaming co-workers
- Competing nonbeneficially

Personal Aggression
- Sexual harassment
- Verbal abuse
- Stealing from co-workers
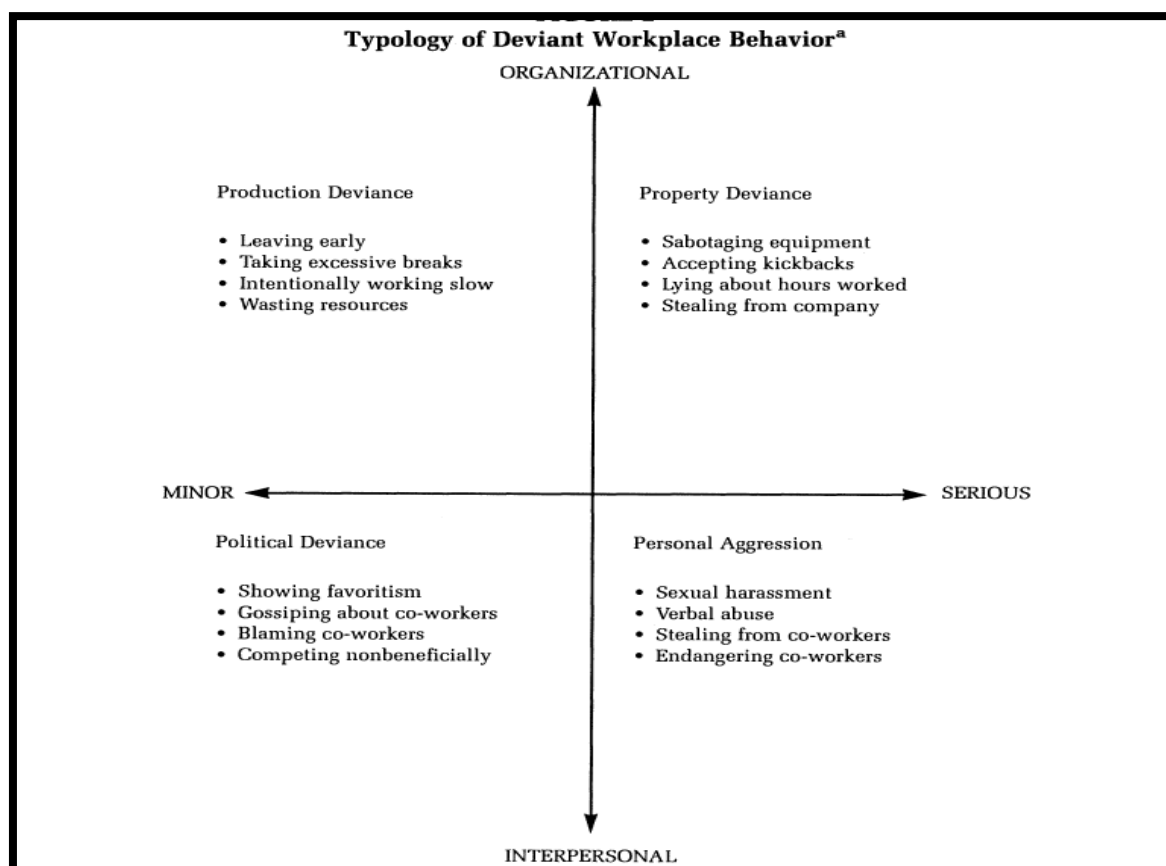- Endangering co-workers

INTERPERSONAL

Fig.1. Typology of Deviant Workplace Behaviour (Source: Robinson and Bennett, 1995)

Production deviance is related to less severe behaviour targeting the organization. Such behaviours directly interfere with work being performed in the organization like wasting the resources, leaving early, taking excessive long breaks, and calling in sick when they are well and so on. Political deviance acts are relatively less severe and target the individuals in the organization, like showing favoritism, blaming co workers and gossiping excessively. Property deviance targets the organization and includes destroying or misusing an organization's property. Employees might indulge in sabotaging equipment, stealing from organizations' property, lying about the hours worked, misusing expense accounts and so on. Personal aggression targeting the individuals is relatively harmful and comprises acts like sexual harassment, physical and verbal abuse, endangering co workers or stealing from co worker at the workplace (Robinson & Bennett, 1995).

On the other hand, Gruys and Sackett (2003) explored workplace deviant behaviours differently along two dimensions namely: interpersonal-organisational and task relevance. The task relevance dimension varies on a continuum from behaviours that are relevant to the task being performed such as quality of work, to those that are less relevant to the direct performance of task such as theft. Spector, et al. (2006) further classify deviant behaviours into specific categories and developed an instrument of 45 and 33 items, named Counterproductive Work Behaviour Checklist, which includes the Robinson and Bennett (1995) organisational and interpersonal dimensions, along with five other categories, that are abuse, production related deviance, sabotage, theft, and withdrawal. Abuse against others consist of harmful behaviours against the coworkers and to inflict physical or psychological harm through threats, inappropriate comments, ignoring or undermining coworker's ability to work efficiently. The production related deviance being relatively more passive include, intentionally not doing the tasks as efficiently as required. Sabotage refers to the physical destruction or damage of property belonging to the employer. Theft relates to stealing of objects and information from the organization and coworkers. Withdrawal consist of behaviours that involve intentionally working slow and less, remaining absent, arriving late to the workplace and taking more frequent breaks than allowed. Due to the lack of studies classifying deviant behaviour in a comprehensive manner there is a need for further exploration towards classification of the deviant behaviours depicting wide range dimensionality of such behaviours.

IV. MANAGEMENT MECHANISMS AND IMPLEMENTATIONS

Since deviant workplace behaviour is associated with enormous economic and psychological costs to the organizations and its employees, managers are not only interested in identifying the factors that lead to deviant workplace behaviour, but they are also interested in identifying solutions to prevent and reduce such negative behaviours. Hence, it is important to have a hand on recommendations about how to prevent deviant workplace behaviours (Punia & Rana, 2013). And this study is a step towards identification & integration of the possible solution sets for preventing deviant workplace behaviours. The possible solutions that can be adopted by management to prevent deviance and covered in this study include: ethical organisational culture, effective personnel selection, integrity tests, maintaining psychological contract but also more importantly, providing proper organisational justice and adopting green organisational behaviour to guarantee that employees are satisfied with their organization and contribute to environmental sustainability.

Green Organisational Behaviour: In order to manage organisational workforce we need to know the nature of behaviours that lead to or detract from environmental sustainability (Ones & Dilchert, 2012). Ones and Dilchert (in press) define employee green behaviours as those scalable behaviours that employees engage in that are linked with and contribute to or detract from environmental sustainability. Keeping this green behaviours' definition in mind, Ones and Dilchert (2012) made an attempt to define deviant behaviours in organizations as scalable actions and behaviours that employees engage in that detract from organisational goals or well-being and which include behaviours that bring undesirable outcomes for the organization and its stakeholders. Employee un-green behaviours' constitute a specific form of deviant workplace behaviours. These behaviours can be characterized as irresponsible environmental behaviours among employees for example polluting, destroying ecosystems, and wasting useful resources. Unfortunately, they are rarely assessed as part of the deviant workplace behaviour domain at the

work settings (Ones & Dilchert, 2012). A research contributed that most negative behaviours, about two-thirds of all environmentally unfriendly behaviours, constitute wasteful use of resources and only a few could be characterized as irresponsible and deviant, that is, it is hard to find examples where employees intentionally use their influence or initiative to do direct or indirect harm to the environment (Ones & Dilchert, 2012). Employee un-green behaviours (or deviant behaviours) can be targeted by behaviour change interventions along with organisational interventions like sustainability awareness, job design and workplace design and making responsible and green options more accessible and available (Ones & Dilchert, 2012). As research suggests that the majority of un-green behaviours among employees are motivated by employees' indifference or a simple lack of alternatives (Klein, D'Mello, Ones, Dilchert, Hill, & Wiernik, 2010). Personality traits that are associated with deviant workplace behaviours, including environmental irresponsibility, may be harder to address once employees are on the job (Ones et al. 1993), and might instead call for better recruiting and employee selection to prevent deviance occurrence.

Ethical Organisational Culture: In order to reduce deviant behaviour at workplace, organizations must adopt a specific organisational culture (Appelbaum, Iaconi & Matousek, 2007). An organisational culture that is centered on extremely important ethical core values (Sinclair, 1993). Ethical core values are established by the management team in order to create a unitary and cohesive organisational structure (Sinclair, 1993). The ethical core values that are shared by the entire organization include both the organisational values and norms which are defined by a clear articulation of corporate strategy, philosophy, or mission (Sinclair, 1993). Therefore, in order to resolve the problems associated with workplace deviance, it is necessary that employees throughout the organization adopt this specific frame of mind. It is imperative that the top management should focus on conveying strong ethical values and norms in order for these norms to trickle down throughout the whole organization (Appelbaum, Deguire & Lay, 2005). In doing so, the employees in question are steered towards helping the organization meet its goals, rather than having a brand new set of values imposed on them (Appelbaum et al., 2007).

Effective Personnel Selection: At the time of hiring, questionnaires are used to identify individuals who have the potential for deviant behaviour and once these are detected, they are eliminated from the hiring process. Instruments that are used include background checks, polygraph tests, employment interviews, and honesty tests. Conducting frequent background checks while hiring assumes that somebody who has been delinquent in the past will act in the same way in the future and such individuals who have done something wrong in the past will not be given a second chance (Greenberg & Barling, 1996). It is imperative in an organization to stop any type of behaviour that would negatively affect it. Psychometric tests being used in personnel recruitment can be written, oral or practical which are able to quantify various types of human behaviour, both normal and deviant. The types of psychometric tests that are most frequently used are aptitude tests, personality questionnaires, and 360-degree questionnaires (Dent & Curd, 2004). The organizations that perform effective pre-employment screening will have fewer problems regarding acts of deviant workplace behaviour (Greenberg & Barling, 1996). Furthermore, managers should also find methods of matching the severity of punishment to the severity of violation of organisational norms (Robinson & Bennett, 1995).

Integrity Tests: The integrity tests are typically used as a pre-employment screening instrument for those who are applying for a position within the organization. The purpose of such tests is to screen out those individuals who would likely to commit acts of deviant behaviour in the workplace. There are two main types of integrity tests, overt tests and personality oriented measures. Overt integrity tests typically have two sections, one which measures an individual's attitudes towards theft and one which specifically asks about admissions of theft and other deviant behaviour. Personality oriented measures include theft and broader things such as conscientiousness etc. (Sackett, 1994). A meta-analysis done by Ones, Viswesvaran, and Schmidt (1993) suggests that the level of validity provided by both overt and personality oriented measures of integrity tests is positive across situations. In addition, the integrity testing field has been active in the prediction of deviant behaviour on the part of employees.

Psychological Contract: Another way of preventing employee deviant behaviour at workplace is to maintain psychological contract with the employees. Psychological contract means implicit agreements that employees develop with their

employers (Rousseau & McLean Parks, 1993). Psychological contracts range from being transactional that are short term, minimal expectations, no trust, to relational. Relational psychological contracts involve personal long term trust based commitments between the employees and employers (Kidder, & Buchholtz, 2002). Such type of psychological contract, which managers develop with their employees, influences the attitudes and behaviours of their employees. As long as the employees view their employers' trust as reciprocal, the relational psychological contract is likely to lead to high levels of involvement and commitment by employees in organization (Robinson, Kraatz & Rousseau, 1994). Therefore, management styles that reflect high levels of trust and low levels of regulation encourage employees to behave responsibly (Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999) avoiding deviant behaviours.

Organisational Justice: Everton, Jolton and Mastrangelo, (2005) use the framework of organisational justice to make recommendations that should foster more positive behaviours while decreasing deviant ones. They emphasized to distribute rewards equitably and do not allow reward programs to be politicized and at the same time communicating the basis of awards (equality, equity, need) ahead of time. The implementation of procedural justice, allow employees to be heard in processes, make sure procedures are unbiased, as valid as possible and allow for corrections. Interactional justice calls for respect of others' dignity, have face time with subordinates, communicate that incivility will not be tolerated, announce the reason why a decision was made, train managers in how to give bad news (by genuinely being empathetic and expressing remorse) or be selective in choosing who delivers bad news. Also reduces the levels of frustration by reducing red tape, making resources easier to obtain and enforce a comprehensive ethics program with clearly tied rewards and punishments. The system of rewards and punishments being practiced in the organizations has a relation with deviant workplace behaviour. With such a system, it is assumed that employees will engage in behaviours for which there is positive reinforcement. Also, it is expected that employees will discontinue those behaviours which are not rewarded and are punished. If employees are not rewarded for their deviant behaviour, then they may discontinue it.

V. CONCLUSION

The study explored nature of deviant behaviours, their forms and management mechanisms to prevent deviant behaviours in the workplace. Whether such negative behaviours involve, vandalism, rumor spreading, theft, gossiping, sexual harassment, remaining absent for no reason, arriving late to work, or corporate sabotage, such unauthorized organisational behaviour has negative consequences for the entity and its members for example causing physiological reactions of changes in blood pressure, high cholesterol levels, and increase in muscle tension. They might also suffer from psychological effects of impaired judgment, irritability, anxiety, anger, inability to concentrate and memory loss. In conclusion, it is important for an organization seeking long term sustainable development to discourage deviant behaviours occurring in the workplace. Organizations who fail to adopt a culture centered on ethical values and do not make an account for fair justice to all employees,   face serious consequences in form of economical and psychological costs to the employees and organizations. Restructuring of an organization's norms, policies, procedures, attitudes and social values is imperative for the survival of that organization. It is therefore in the best interest of the organization's functioning to ensure that even the mildest form of misbehaviour is not condoned. Fortunately, there is much a management can do to reduce the occurrence of employee deviant behaviour for example Everton et al. (2005) stated to be fair, be empathetic, be informative, and be supportive and in short, be nice and Ones and Dilchert (2012) recommends to adopt green organisational behaviour regime to have environmental sustainability. This study calls for the empirical research to investigate further into the presence of different kinds of deviant workplace behaviours and how management can minimize their influence on the employees and the well being of the organizations. The management would benefit from the knowledge provided by this paper and society would learn in general about various forms of deviant behaviours, since such acts may directly or indirectly harm the individuals both internal ad external to the organizations.

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