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Title: Antecedents of Workplace Deviance

Abstract: Workplace deviance occurs in organizations everywhere and has been found to produce detrimental effects to companies such as serious financial loss and higher rates of employee turnover. There has been substantial research conducted investigating different factors that add to the likelihood of employees engaging in deviant behavior. Some of these factors include situational and personality influences, emotions, perceptions, and motivation. By gaining more knowledge of the antecedents of workplace deviance, managers can gain a better understanding of how to both manage and prevent these behaviors. It is important for organizations to find ways to meet the needs of their employees while also motivating them to work hard and in a productive manner. Research has suggested that the behaviors of employees have a large impact on the success of an organization and thus should be prudently evaluated and managed.

Essay:

Introduction The workplace is an environment in which many behaviors are exhibited, and every organization has norms as to what these behaviors are. Deviant workplace behaviors occur when an individual consciously behaves in a way that directly goes against the organizational norms and consequently threatens the welfare of either the organization or of its employees. These deviant behaviors are ubiquitous and continue to rise year after year. Figuring out what leads to these behaviors is becoming increasingly important for managers, as they are causing many consequences such as reputation loss, productivity loss, lower levels of organizational commitment, and significant financial impact (Howlander, Rahman, & Uddine 2018). Current research has suggested explanations of workplace deviance to fall under two main categories of either organizational factors or individual factors (Peterson, 2002). Organizational Culture Some organizational factors contributing to deviance include the culture of the organization and the ethical climate. An organization's culture can have significant effects on several aspects of a company, from employee satisfaction to organizational efficiency. Organizational culture is important to consider when thinking about workplace deviance, as a company's culture directly affects employee behavior. Managers typically strive to create a healthy culture that promotes good company morale and employee motivation, but if not carried out effectively, organizational cultures have the potential to stimulate workplace deviance. There is no customary culture of an organization, as each is unique in its own way and can vastly differ from one to the next. Although society generally values and expects a person to be honest and ethical, some businesses not only accept, but also prefer employees to act deceitfully in order to bring company success (Sims, 1992). For example, the Vice President of Metropolitan Edison had his employees hide information from the press regarding the Three Mile Island nuclear accident (Jansen & Glinow, 1985). When these are the types of norms and expectations that a company creates in its culture, it can cause employees to get in that mindset where they can do whatever they want without caring about the consequences. This careless attitude that can be integrated into a company's culture can influence individuals to become more likely to engage in deviant behaviors in their workplace. Ethical Climate The ethical climate of an organization reflects the predominant ethical values, practices, and policies that structure the company and shape the ethical expectations within it. These principles strongly affect both individual and organizational

behaviors and outcomes. Victor and Cullen (1987) identified different types of ethical climates in their work and found that these different climates resulted in different values and behaviors throughout the organization. Certain types of ethical climates can foster deviant workplace behavior, while other types have been discovered to reduce it. The types of ethical climates have been identified as caring, instrumental, rules, law-and-code, and independence (Victor & Cullen, 1987). An instrumental ethical climate dramatically differs from the caring ethical climate. An instrumental climate emphasizes the individual and encourages independent problem solving; on the contrary, a caring climate focuses on dealing with similar problems or ethical issues collectively (Cullen, Victor, & Bronson, 1993). One study found that the promotion of the pro-social environment found in the caring climate would cultivate pro-organizational behavior and discourage deviant behavior much more than that of an instrumental climate (Pagliaro, Presti, Barattucci, Giannella, & Barreto, 2018). Because of the emphasis on working jointly as a team, employees would more likely come together and make decisions based on what is best for the organization as a whole. Furthermore, climates promoting self-interest can bring about more selfish and deviant behaviors that the individual may find to be personally desirable. Independence, law-and-code, and rules climates focus more on making ethical decisions through an analysis of the company's set standards or of the moral self (Martin & Cullen, 2006). These climates expect employees to remain committed to the organization as a moral obligation. Managers who implement any of these ethical climates generally hope to lead their employees to feel that the set standards were established for the overall benefit of the organization and its members (Kaur, 2017). Kaur (2017) found the ethical climates of independence, law-and-code, and rules to increase feelings of commitment to the organization and thus establish a negative relationship with workplace deviance. Understanding how different types of ethical practices can lead to or prevent deviant workplace behavior is important for managers to consider. Although all types have certain benefits and can lead to positive results, behavior is influenced in different ways and it would be wise for managers to decide which climate to implement that would bring the most overall organizational success to their particular company. Situation-Based Approach Individual factors that can lead to workplace deviance include personality, emotions, motivations and perceptions. Researchers vary on their views of how personality factors affect workplace deviance. Although many believe personality factors play a key role in the likelihood of deviance occurring, some do not see them as being substantial. Appelbaum, Deguire, and Jay (2005) conducted a study that supported what is described as the situation-based approach, wherein they suggested job characteristics and work environment to have a greater effect on employee deviance than characteristics of the individual do. However, Henle (2005) described a different approach with the person-based perspective, in which it is assumed that personality factors rather than environment factors are what ultimately determines deviant behavior. Situational factors are analogous to organizational factors and have been shown to be a noteworthy contributor to workplace deviance. The situation-based approach includes many antecedents of deviant behaviors such as job satisfaction, job burnout, role issues, supervision/leadership, and job insecurity (Gilboa, Shirom, Fried, & Cooper, 2008). This perspective assumes that employees engage in deviant behavior regardless of their individual personality traits, but as a result of their work environment. Several studies have been conducted that support these different situational factors as adding to the occurrence of deviant workplace behaviors. For example, the leadership styles of managers have been heavily researched and have led to the discovery of significant results. Individuals who manage a company represent their organization and heavily influence the behavior of their subordinates. Managers who display authoritarian leadership styles often control their

employees through threats and bullying. These harsh actions can cause negative emotion throughout the organization and can lead to lower rates of job satisfaction and higher rates of organizational cynicism (Jiang, Chen, Sun, & Yang, 2017). The study by Jiang et al. (2017) showed that this reduction of satisfaction and growth of cynicism were both factors that ultimately led to an increase in workplace deviance. Individuals can become unhappy with how they are treated by their manager which could cause them to have less motivation to put in maximum effort or to behave in ways that are consistent with the norms of their organization. Another study showed transformational leadership to affect deviant workplace behavior. Howlander et al. (2018) found that transformational leadership had the ability to strengthen work environments, create individualized feedback, promote intellectual stimulation, and build support throughout the organization. These actions were able to create an encouraging climate for employees where their motivation and attitudes could be cultivated. This type of leadership is able to increase rates of job satisfaction and decrease rates of organizational cynicism, thus declining rates of workplace deviance and rising levels of job performance. This study by Howlander et al. (2018) offered that an essential way to deal with deviant behaviors is to change the type of leadership style; when a more encouraging and inspirational style of leadership is implemented, employees are more apt to feel happy and confident in their positions and strive to maintain organizational harmony throughout their workplace. Person-Based Approach The person-based perspective has also received support from numerous studies. Previous research has found significant relationships between traits from the theory of personality proposed by Goldberg (1990), the five-factor model, and deviant behavior. Traits such as high levels of conscientiousness and agreeableness may yield unfavorable attitudes to aggressive behavior and enhance levels of work engagement, which can lead to lower levels of workplace deviance (Cullen & Sackett, 2003). Individuals who have low levels of conscientiousness and agreeableness are less concerned with avoiding conflicts and more likely to be lazy, break rules, and display other deviant acts (Browning, 2008). Traits apart from the 'Big Five" model can also influence deviant behavior. There have been studies showing that narcissism, Machiavellianism, and negative affectivity can all promote workplace deviance in organizations (Penney & Spector, 2002). Personality traits such as these could foster deviancy because they are internal biological states that influence people to behave in particular ways. Every individual possesses various traits, and different combinations of these traits cause people to act in different ways. Emotions Another factor that can strongly influence how a person acts is emotion. Emotions characterize fundamental aspects of our everyday interactions and are prevalent throughout many social settings. Previous psychological research has found evidence suggesting that emotions and moods guide people to make different decisions depending on their current feeling state because different processing strategies are used (Schwarz & Clore, 1996). An example of emotions directing behavior was found in a study conducted by Drouvelis and Grasskopf (2016) where results showed individuals experiencing positive emotions were more likely to contribute and engage in work and social situations than those experiencing negative emotions. Another study had individuals play a violent video game in an angry state of emotion and discovered the anger enhanced their performance in the game and led the player to kill more of the enemies (Tamir, Mitchell, & Gross, 2008). Emotions evidently affect the ways in which a person thinks and acts and can result in different outcomes depending on what emotion is being experienced. The feeling of anger, in particular, can direct behavior and predispose a person to engage in deviant actions (Fox & Spector, 1999). A reason for the increase in the propensity to exhibit counterproductive work behavior is due to the experienced anger causing the individual to both think and feel in an aggressive fashion (Restubog, Garcia,

Wang, & Cheng, 2010). Along with promoting aggression, Tamir et al. (2008) found anger to increase confrontational behaviors. When in a more confrontational and aggressive state, employees may be less able to maintain their self-control and more prone to acting out physically or verbally against their managers or coworkers. For this reason, learning to actively identify and regulate emotions is imperative for employees in order to prevent any counterproductive actions. Emotion-regulation can be challenging, but acquiring this ability is central to both psychological and physical health of individuals (Desteno, Gross, & Kubzansky, 2013; Troy, Ford, Mcrae, Zarolia, & Mauss, 2017). Without the ability to regulate emotions, it can become more difficult to consciously control behavior and achieve desired goals. How well a person can control their emotions can either foster or hinder goal completion. Emotions can further goal completion by focusing the attention of individuals on relevant aspects of the situation, while other emotions can become distracting and cause the individual to engage in thoughts and actions that are unrelated and unhelpful to their current goal (Côté, Decelles, Mccarthy, Kleef, & Hideg, 2011). When experiencing these distracting emotions, employees may be less likely to follow the normative behavior that they usually demonstrate. Negative feelings can predominate rational ways of thinking, which can lead to deviant acts among employees (Harvey, Martinko, & Borkowski, 2016). Being able to regulate these emotions can allow individuals to channel their motivation into more productive behaviors that are consistent with the organization rather than into behaviors that produce undesirable outcomes. From the standpoint of a manger, emotion-provoked deviance can be difficult to control and resolve. However, there are strategies that individuals can use in order to ameliorate their regulation abilities. Gross (1998) proposed the antecedent-focused and response-focused strategies as two ways in which emotions can become regulated. The antecedent-focused strategy involves modifying the situation or perception that produces the disruptive emotions (Kluemper, Degroot, & Choi, 2011). This includes identifying the cause of the emotion and diverting the attention away from the negative elements of it. The response-focused strategy consists of working to manipulate reactions to the emotion-triggering situations and changing the way emotions are expressed (Gross, 1998). Other successful approaches used to keep emotions in check include positive thinking, engaging in distracting activities, and obtaining social support (Kluemper et al., 2011). Implementation of emotional-regulation strategies can create a more positive atmosphere and provide benefits to the health of the organization and of its members. Perceptions A significant predecessor of emotions is the way that situations are perceived. Research has shown perceptions to greatly influence people's feelings, judgements, thoughts, and motives without people even being aware of this occurrence (Ferguson & Bargh, 2004). One chief antecedent of deviant workplace behavior is the perception of inequity (Colbert, Mount, Harter, Witt, & Barrick, 2004). Perceived unfairness can cause a variety of unfavorable feelings towards both the organization and the self. Feelings towards the self can include self-depreciation, helplessness, and self-destructive behaviors (Cloutier, Vilhuber, Harrisson, & Béland-Ouellette, 2018). These negative mindsets and behaviors can become detrimental to a company, as employees may resultantly display higher levels of absenteeism, decreased levels of performance, and many other deviant behaviors. An individual sensing disparity generally looks for ways to resolve that felt disparity and will make some sort of attitude or behavior change as a response. If individuals do not internalize these feelings, they may act upon them in a manner that is directed towards the organization. The norm of reciprocity states that people should help those who have helped them and retaliate against those who have wronged them (Burger, Horita, Kinoshita, Roberts, & Vera, 1997). Therefore, employees who perceive they are treated unfairly may work to resolve that felt disparity by violating norms that their organization

desires and expects of them. Researchers have suggested the norm of reciprocity may cause employees to determinedly perform deviant behaviors in retribution to perceptions of inequality in order to reestablish equity (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997). Employees exhibiting deviant behaviors have often been found to justify their actions such as theft or withholding effort in response to being underpaid or treated poorly (Restubog, Garcia, Wang, & Cheng, 2010). Further retaliation acts of deviance have been found to be displayed in response to factors such as task difficulty, strict policies, and conflicting rules and procedures and can lead employees to perceive imbalances (Lara & Verano-Tacoronte, 2007). Adams (1965) stated that people do not generally become dissatisfied with injustice and not react. Managers should work to create a fair and favorable work environment for their employees or be prepared to deal with negative retaliations and undesirable behavior. Motivation Another reason managers should strive to maintain a favorable work environment is to foster high levels of motivation. Intrinsic motivation from employees has been shown to increase levels of organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and levels of performance (Lee & Raschke, 2016). These effects of motivation have all been shown to have a negative relationship with deviant behavior, as satisfied and committed individuals tend to desire success and harmony in their workplace and act in ways that are consistent with their organizational norms (Howlander et al., 2018). Three main motivational traits have been described as being important to consider in the workplace including people mastery, competitive excellence, and motivation related to anxiety; however, people mastery was the only trait shown to have a significant relationship with workplace deviance (Diefendorff & Mehta, 2007). People who are high in the motivation trait of personal mastery are generally hard-working, ambitious individuals who aspire to learn and achieve at high levels, while people low in personal mastery are more apathetic and are less likely to put forth effort into obtaining success (Kanfer & Ackerman, 2000). Diefendorff and Mehta (2007) conducted an experiment in which they found results supporting that individuals with low levels of personal mastery were more likely to behave in a deviant manner and individuals with high levels were less likely to be involved in deviant behavior. Motivation for achievement and edification can help to positively guide behaviors of employees. In order to keep employees happy and behaviors productive, managers should consistently be looking for ways to increase motivation within the workplace. To reduce possibilities of deviant behavior, high levels of motivation and satisfaction are crucial. Michel and Hargis (2016) found that intrinsic motivation could, especially, reduce levels of deviant behaviors. Intrinsic motivation refers to people behaving in certain ways due to the internal satisfaction and interest derived from that behavior (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Some ways to cultivate intrinsic motivation is to ensure that employees feel both capable and valued in their jobs and that their work matters (Mcevoy, 2011). This can be done by providing employees with optimally challenging work tasks, providing positive feedback, and enlarging the jobs to stimulate more interest (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Increasing intrinsic motivation can and should be done in many ways in an attempt to promote productive behavior throughout the workplace. Conclusion The behavior of employees is one of the most significant factors that contribute to an organization's success. Establishing encouraging climates where workers are able to feel challenged, motivated, and satisfied are all fundamental to creating a positive atmosphere in the workplace that can generate productive work behaviors. When little attention is paid to the needs of the employees, it can become more difficult to regulate these normative and constructive behaviors that are vital to the life of an organization. Deviant behavior in the workplace is an omnipresent issue for organizations that has continued to proliferate for years. The consequences of employee deviance can be harmful for organizations and is becoming increasingly important to resolve. Fortunately, many strategies and methods have been

observed that can help minimize the effects of several of the precursors. There are both organizational and individual factors contributing to workplace deviance that have been researched and can continue to be further studied to find additional solutions, prevention methods, and ways to attenuate the detrimental effects of counterproductive work behavior. To illuminate potential opportunities for managing workplace deviance, an area for future research could focus more on how emotion and personality are related and how they affect predispositions to engage in deviant behavior.