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COUNTERPRODUCTIVE BEHAVIOR AND JOB SATISFACTION – BASED ON THE STUDY OF POLISH EMPLOYEES

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Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to examine the issue of CWB and job satisfaction. It identifies the relationship between CWB and job satisfaction.

Design/methodology/approach: The study involved 1051 employees of small, medium, and large Polish companies. The theoretical part describes the issues related to counterproductive behavior (CWB) and job satisfaction. The empirical part presents the results of the study on the relationship between these variables. Job satisfaction was measured using the Job Satisfaction Scale (Zalewska, 2001, 2003), consisting of 5 statements regarding the evaluation of the work sphere. CWB was measured using the Counterproductive Work Behavior Checklist (CWB-C) by Spector et al. (2006).

Findings: The study revealed: (a) a negative correlation of CWB with job satisfaction; (b) a positive correlation between job tenure and some dimensions and overall CWB index; (c) a positive relationship between job form and position and CWB.

Research limitations/implications: Among the limitations it should be noted that since all the variables were measured in the same questionnaire, the results may have been influenced by systematic errors due to variances in the common method. In order to overcome this problem (Podsakoff et al., 2012), future research should/could take into account other sources of exploration, such as supervisors' opinions as well as systematic observations. Moreover, the study was based on self-report measures for all variables. Although CWB self-report surveys and job satisfaction may be less prone to halo errors (Fox et al., 2012), it is still possible that some of these results were influenced by errors related to showing your best side, although the survey was anonymous. The studied sample, although quite large, cannot be considered representative of the general population of Polish workers. Future research should seek to recreate and elucidate the association with larger and more diverse samples.

Practical implications: The research presented has several important implications for organizations. Organizations should focus on job satisfaction as an indicator of success in creating workplaces conducive to improved well-being, engagement, and performance. If organizations can anticipate counterproductive behaviors and implement effective interventions and prevention programs they can save significant financial resources.

Organizations that want to eliminate CWB and increase their productivity should pay more attention to addressing organizational constraints, resolving interpersonal issues, and increasing job satisfaction among their employees.

Originality/value: The article deals with a relatively rarely discussed topic in the Polish literature. Topics that are very topical, useful not only for other researchers but also for practitioners. Given the costs and consequences associated with counterproductive behaviors, it can be argued that a management priority should be how to recognize these behaviors and what corrective and proactive actions to take. The results of this study provide a framework for understanding aberrant behaviors and better ways to minimize their occurrence in the workplace.

Category of the paper: Research paper.

Keywords: counterproductive behaviors, job satisfaction, job tenure, employees, management.

1. Introduction

There is a growing interest among many researchers in the issue of workplace behavior of employees (Gruys, Sackett, 2003).

In the literature, these behaviors are defined as, for example, workplace violence, deviancy (Robinson, Bennett, 1995), retaliation (Skarlicki, Folger, 1997), revenge (Bies et al., 1997), bullying, emotional cruelty (Keashly, 1998), mobbing (Zapf, Einarsen, 2005) theft, sabotage (Ambrose et al., 2002), rudeness (Andersson, Pearson, 1999), revenge (Bies, Tripp, 2005).

Counterproductive work behavior (CWB) embedded in the above concepts and the discovery of possible predictors of these behaviors is of particular interest to researchers. Additional studies may increase the understanding of why employees engage in CWB. Some studies have focused on the main effects of stressors and personality (Hershocovis et al., 2007).

Other studies have focused on examining the relationship between CWB and job satisfaction. Much empirical evidence (Dalal, 2005; Judge et al., 2006) revealed that job satisfaction negatively correlated with CWB directed at both the individual and the organization (Mount et al., 2006). In the study presented here, it was hypothesized that job satisfaction has a direct relationship with CWB, such that those who are dissatisfied with their jobs are more likely to engage in CWB that harm the organization and individuals.

2. Theoretical framework

A review of the literature indicates that generally satisfied employees tend to focus on their work and may have a low tendency to engage in counterproductive, deviant behaviors (Sims, 2002). In addition, employees who are satisfied with their job and organization are less likely to violate ethical rules within the organization and less likely to act to the detriment of the

organization. Similarly, it has been found that individuals with high job satisfaction will have positive perceptions so that they will not engage in CWB.

2.1. Counterproductive behaviors

CWBs are often contrasted with organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB), which belong to the positive stream in organizational research (Glinska-Neweś, Lis, 2016). CWB are believed to include voluntary actions that harm the organization, customers, co-workers, and supervisors (Spector, Fox, 2005; Spector, 2011; Spector et al., 2006, 2010). CWB can result in financial, personal, and organizational costs (DeShong et al., 2015). Research on CWB has focused on personality determinants (Bowling, Eschleman, 2010; O'Boyle et al., 2012) and organizational environmental factors (Ones, Dilchert, 2013). Other researchers suggest that these two sets of factors interact with each other (Penney et al., 2011).

One of the most popular models of CWB is the one proposed by Spector et al. (2006). It consists of the following five dimensions:

- 1. Abuse against others physical and psychological aggression directed against coworkers, for example, threats, disparaging comments, ignoring others.
- 2. Production deviance purposeful deviation from or neglect of the standard in fulfilling one's responsibilities.
- 3. Sabotage purposefully destroying or damaging the organization's property.
- 4. Theft stealing the organization's and/or coworkers' property, together with a potential aggressive reaction intended to harm the organization.
- 5. Withdrawal limiting time spent at work to levels below the required norm, for example, through unexcused absences, leaving work early, taking breaks above the allowed time limit, or late arrivals.

This model was empirically verified in numerous studies. These have used most of the aforementioned variables, eliminating the "sensitive" or specific (not suitable for each workplace) ones (Glińska-Neweś, 2017).

2.2. Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is an individualized evaluation of work and includes "the meanings that employees attribute to their work activities" (Kalleberg, 2011, p. 154). The literature points to countless documented benefits of job satisfaction (Johns, 2006).

In the literature, the concepts of job satisfaction and job contentment are often interchangeable. Without going into the differences in the scientific meaning of these terms, it is assumed that job satisfaction, like the concept of job contentment, is "...a pleasant or positive emotional state resulting from an evaluation of one's job or work experience" (Locke, 1976, p. 1304).

Job satisfaction acts as a motivational force that influences an individual's behavior, while a dissatisfied employee is more often an unhappy person.

Researchers cite, among others, the job itself, payment system, promotion, supervisor, attitude of managers, supervisors, co-workers as indicators of employee satisfaction (Supriyanto et al., 2020).

Analyzing the research conducted in the area of job satisfaction, one can notice its diversity. Research is conducted to identify the overall level of satisfaction and individual factors that influence job satisfaction. In her research, Sypniewska (2014, 2017) asked respondents to indicate the ranks of the factors included in the cafeteria that influence their job satisfaction: work atmosphere, salary, promotion opportunities, job content, relationships with supervisor, with co-workers, organization culture, employment stability, and so on.

3. Research model

A systematic literature review methodology (Czakon, 2011) was used to conceptualize the study model. First, using the above methodology, the database and collection of publications were identified and selected. Finally, the publication database was developed, and then bibliometric and content analyses of selected materials were performed using EBSCO and Science Direct databases. Scientific publications containing the phrases *counterproductive behavior* and *job satisfaction* were searched. Publications from peer-reviewed articles written in English were used as the criterion of eligibility. In total, the search resulted in 160 articles. As a result of narrowing the literature review, 120 articles were used for the article.

The presented issues based on the systematic literature review have become the basis for the hypotheses. The authors have focused on the individual employee level of analyses. This results in the main research objective of the article, identification of the relationship between CWB and job satisfaction.

The following research hypotheses were formulated:

H1: CWB negatively correlate with job satisfaction.

H2: Job tenure positively correlates with theft, abuse against others, and withdrawal.

H3: There is a positive relationship between job tenure and CWB and job satisfaction.

4. Methodology of the research/sample characteristic/research tools

A quantitative questionnaire survey was conducted on a sample of 1051 people in 2019. The respondents were selected through non-random sampling. The criterion for selection of respondents was determined by the size of firms according to the criterion of number of employees (micro, small, medium, and large enterprises). As a criterion the authors adopted the structure of companies in the population of enterprises in Poland. Employees of companies that took part in the study constitute a group of 1051 people.

Job satisfaction was measured using the Job Satisfaction Scale (Zalewska, 2001, 2003), consisting of 5 statements regarding the evaluation of the work sphere.

CWB was measured using the Counterproductive Work Behavior Checklist (CWB-C) by Spector et al. (2006). It consists of 32 items. Responses were given on a 5-point scale (never, 1-2 times, 1-2 times per week, 1-2 times per month, every day). This is a shortened version of the measure recommended by Spector et al. The 32 items were divided into five categories: abuse against others, production deviance and sabotage, theft, and withdrawal. A strength of the CWB-C is that its subscales are clearly defined and can be treated as separate. Specific behaviors are classified into one category and do not appear in others. The CWB-C is available in many languages, including English, German, and Spanish (Szostek, 2019).

A total of 1051 people participated in the survey, of which 68.2% were female and 31.8% were male. Most respondents were aged 20-29 years (64.4%). Most (43.3%) respondents were employed in large enterprises (over 250 employees). Most respondents had been employed for up to three years (64.7%), those with three to 10 years were 27.1%, and those with more than 10 years of service were 7.3%.

Data analysis - first, descriptive statistics were calculated for the analyzed variables. Relationships between job satisfaction and intensity of CWB and between job tenure and job satisfaction and intensity of CWB were analyzed using correlation analysis. The relationships between the form of employment and position of the respondents and job satisfaction and the intensity of CWB were analyzed using analysis of variance

5. Research results

In the preliminary analysis descriptive statistics were calculated. Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for analyzed variables, namely: mean values, standard deviations, minimum and maximum values, measures of skewness and kurtosis and Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients.

Table 1.Descriptive statistics for analyzed variables

Variables	M	SD	min	max	S	K	α
Theft	6.42	2.96	4	21	.77	.55	.87
Abuse against others (AAO)	21.72	9.50	14	73	.49	.16	.95
Sabotage	3.71	1.73	1	15	.18	.02	.78
Withdrawal	7.24	3.10	3	20	.08	.81	.76
Production deviance	4.14	1.99	1	15	.24	.24	.79
Counterproductive behaviors overall	43.19	17.28	2	139	.44	.16	.96
Job Satisfaction	21.20	7.39	3	35	30	69	.91

M – mean value; SD – standard deviation; min – minimum value; max – maximum value; S – skewness; K – kurtosis; α - Cronbach's reliability coefficient.

The values of skewness and kurtosis did not exceed the range from -1.0 to 1.0. Therefore, parametric statistical tests were used in the subsequent analysis.

Correlation analysis

Job satisfaction and counterproductive behaviors (H1)

Table 2 shows r Pearson's correlation coefficients between job satisfaction with the severity of CWB.

Table 2. *Correlation coefficients between job satisfaction with severity of CWB.*

	Job S	Job Satisfaction		
Variables	r	р		
Theft	112	.001		
Abuse against others (AAO)	134	.001		
Sabotage	091	.003		
Withdrawal	116	.001		
Production deviance	158	.001		
Counterproductive behaviors overall	143	.001		

r - values of r Pearson's correlation coefficients; p - statistical significance.

Statistically significant but weak negative correlations were found between job satisfaction and all indicators of severity of CWB.

Job tenure and job satisfaction and counterproductive behaviors (H2, H3)

Table 3 shows the ρ Spearman correlation coefficients between the job tenure of the subjects and the severity of CWB and job satisfaction.

 $.01\overline{7}$

.207

.001

.987

.074

.039

.122

-.001

 satisfaction

 Variables
 ρ
 p

 Theft
 .124
 .001

 Abuse against others (AAO)
 .142
 .001

 Sabotage
 .030
 .330

Table 3.Correlation coefficients between the seniority of the subjects and the severity of CWB and job satisfaction

Withdrawal

Production deviance

Counterproductive behaviors overall

Statistically significant positive correlations were obtained between the job tenure of the subjects and scores on the theft, AAO, and withdrawal scales. It was also found that job seniority correlated positively with overall severity of CWB. No statistically significant correlation was found between job tenure and job satisfaction.

6. Discussion and conclusion

Consistent with H1, the results of the study indicate negative correlations between job satisfaction and all indicators of the severity of CWB. This means that employees who are dissatisfied with their jobs are more likely to engage in behaviors that harm the organization. The results of this study are consistent with the literature on the relationship between job satisfaction and CWB (Czarnota-Bojarska, 2015). The study may also contribute to predicting employee behaviors that harm the organization and/or individuals.

Employees who are more satisfied with their work, on the other hand, are more likely to "pay back" the organization with a relatively active and focused state to achieve the company's goal through their work (e.g., higher levels of engagement) and lower levels of behavior that harms the organization.

Dissatisfied employees may engage in CWB as a means of retaliating against employers for creating a hostile work environment. Another possibility is that because job satisfaction includes an emotional component it may influence willingness to engage in CWB. This prediction is consistent with previous theory suggesting that emotions are a direct cause of behavior (Miles et al., 2002; Spector, Fox, 2002) and social psychology research suggesting that negative affect contributes to aggressive behavior.

The results of the presented study indicate that there is a positive correlation of job tenure with the overall intensity of CWB (H3). This means that the longer the job tenure, the higher the intensity of CWB. When interpreting the results, it should be emphasized that longer job tenure also means greater familiarity with the company. More observed negative phenomena,

which consequently lead to CWB. On the other hand, the results indicated no relationship between job satisfaction and job tenure (H3). This means that there are people in the study group who experience job satisfaction or lack of job satisfaction regardless of job tenure. Thus, job tenure is not a determinant of job satisfaction. It can be concluded that although individuals are satisfied (or not) they may engage in CWB because by working in the company for a long time due to observation of negative phenomena and/or behaviors in retaliation they engage in CWB.

The results of the study also indicated that job tenure positively correlates with CWB in terms of scores on the theft, abuse against others (AAO) and withdrawal.

Individuals who engage in actions to the detriment of the organization, for example, stealing and/or avoiding work, may view such actions as legitimate fringe benefits, as a legitimate way to address a problem, such as exploitation, or as restoring a sense of equality and fairness (Kelloway et al., 2010). Similarly, this is also the case with actions concerning the abuse of others. Individuals with a high level of job tenure may respond in this way to situations of conflict, inequality, discrimination, and so on. Although such actions are not related to job satisfaction, individuals with longer job tenure may engage in CWB in accordance with retaliation theory.

There remains the issue of remorse, and the question can be asked as to how employees eliminate it. According to the theory of employee anomie, which also refers to actions that harm the organization, such individuals may make social excuses in groups or internal rationalization by means of statements such as: everyone does it, no one loses out on it, it didn't happen to a poor person (Kosewski, 2008; Sypniewska, 2017, 2020).

Previous research has shown that abuse against others by a supervisor causes employees to engage in CWB and decreases employee satisfaction (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007). According to reciprocity theory, individuals who are targets of negative acts will respond by engaging in negative acts against the abuser/supervisor. However, supervisor abuse is expected to cause subordinates to engage in behaviors directed at harming the organization only to the extent that subordinates make organization-directed attributions-that is, they attribute the supervisor's abuse to the organization (Bowling, Beehr, 2006).

In contrast, through supervisors' honesty, employees can promote positive norms about relationships and commitment. Supervisors' honest and socially congruent behaviors encourage subordinates to reciprocate with favorable work behaviors (Korsgaard et al., 2010; Omar et al., 2011).

Given the costs and consequences associated with CWB, it can be argued that a management priority should be how to recognize these behaviors and what corrective and proactive actions to take. The results of this study provide a framework for understanding aberrant behaviors and better ways to minimize their occurrence in the workplace.

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