



Presented at the DLSU Research Congress 2017
De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines
June 20 to 22, 2017

The Role of Perceived Organizational Support to Organizational Commitment and Counterproductive Work Behavior

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Abstract: This study aimed to investigate the association between organizational commitment, counterproductive work behavior, and perceived organizational support. Aside from extending the current literature on organizational commitment and its relationship to counterproductive work behavior, the proponent's inquiry endeavored to examine how perceived organizational support would affect said relationship. The final number of participants for the study was eighty-seven (87) working adults located in the Philippines. Using opportunity sampling and regression analysis, the results showed that while affective commitment was negatively correlated to the commission of counterproductive work behavior, normative and continuance commitment were positively correlated, albeit not significantly. Further to this, perceived organizational support affected the relationships, by inversely influencing the chances of counterproductive work behavior being committed.

Key Words: organizational commitment, counterproductive work behavior, perceived organizational support

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

One of the variables that has constantly attracted the attention of management researchers is the concept of organizational commitment. In studying the variable, researchers have identified and delineated several levels of organizational commitment, saying that ideally, employees who have high organizational commitment would be more

likely to engage in behaviors that would benefit the organization. However, while this may be true for some forms of organizational commitment, some studies have put forward the idea that other forms may potentially lead to behavior that will harm the organization. This latter phenomenon is called counterproductive work behavior, which is any action committed by an employee that can negatively affect the organization. The crux of inquiry therefore is to explore further which forms of organizational commitment can lead to counterproductive work behavior, and what factors may influence this relationship. In this study, one of those factors being



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examined is perceived organizational support, which is defined as “the global beliefs held by employees regarding the extent to which their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being” (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Based on the auspices of the social exchange theory, perceived organizational support is grounded on the premise that the quality of the relationship between an employee and the organization largely depends on the degree employees believe their organization values them, their contributions, and their well-being (Leveson et al., 2009). Given the far-reaching impact these variables can have on multiple aspects of an organization’s performance, the impetus of this study is to provide new theoretical and actionable insights that managers and management researchers alike can utilize and build further on.

1.2 Review of Literature

Organizational commitment is defined as the condition wherein employees “feel a sense of oneness with the organization and therefore hold beliefs about the organization that become self-referential or self-defining” (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Pratt, 1998). On the other hand, employees deciding to take matters into their own hands and committing acts to harm the organization and its people represent a form of coping that is, for all intents and purposes, maladaptive in nature. These maladaptive actions, taken together, constitute what is known as counterproductive work behavior (CWB). Although past studies have explored the relationship between organizational commitment and counterproductive work behavior, the nuances behind the mechanisms are still not conclusively known. A review of the available studies on the variables show conflicting reports as to whether gender mattered among employees who committed counterproductive work behavior, and the same thing was the case when talking about the employees’ length of service. Contributory to this is the fact that a review of the extant literature will show that researchers have not been consistent in the conceptual treatment and operational analysis of organizational commitment or counterproductive work behavior. A study by Steers & Porter (1983) disputed the way organizational commitment was conceptually defined and analyzed

in research, while Price (1977) felt that using absenteeism as a key measure for counterproductive work behavior was insufficient. These are representative of the studies that have highlighted how organizational commitment is an important factor to consider in the commission of counterproductive work behavior. In these studies, it was shown that organizational commitment, as a concept, generally affected various types of counterproductive work behavior. Thus, previous work has not effectively resolved opposing findings that show how some forms of organizational commitment can have an influencing effect on the commission of counterproductive work behavior, while others do not.

1.3 Objectives and Scope

The effects of organizational commitment on counterproductive work behavior, from multidimensional perspectives, have constituted some of the emerging topics for research in the fields of business management and Industrial-Organizational Psychology. Studies have revealed that up to thirty percent of all businesses fail due to the commission of counterproductive work behaviors by trusted employees (Moretti, 1986). Research also shows that counterproductive work behavior in organizations has resulted in billions of dollars in stolen property and lost productivity (Mount et al., 2006). This is where the importance of this study lies, such that the phenomenon it seeks to examine and look at in more detail revolves around the behavior of employees and its wide-ranging effects to the organization. The results in studies like this one can be useful in helping human resources professionals screen employees for the potential to commit CWB, as well as aid management practitioners on proactive methods by which CWB could be decreased in the workplace. Theoretically, the findings of this study can also contribute to the foundational theories that are usually touted to explain counterproductive work behavior, namely the stressor-emotion model of Spector and Fox (2005) and the causal reasoning theory by Martinko, Gundlach, & Douglas (2002). In both theories, researchers postulate that CWB occurs as the end result of a process where the employee’s appraisal of a work event leads to a negative emotional experience, which in turn leads to CWB. However, in this study, the proponent examines how



an underlying condition, and not necessarily any event that may have happened in the workplace, becomes the source of CWB, thus providing a relatively new angle by which to examine the interrelationships between variables and models.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study utilized a cross-sectional explanatory design because the data on levels of organizational commitment, counterproductive work behavior, and perceived organizational support were collected over a single, and relatively brief, time period.

To accomplish this study, working adults from an online pool from which the proponent had access to were selected via the opportunity sampling method, who then took a total of three (3) instruments. The proponent ensured that the instruments were available to respondents who were already employed as the variables being studied in this paper are all of an organizational nature. To ensure proper documentation, the instruments were administered to all participants via the use of Google Forms, with the responses reflected accordingly in spreadsheet and statistical software for analysis. At the end of the data collection period, eighty-seven (N=87) respondents provided completed survey responses, which then became the subject of all analyses in this paper.

Three standardized psychometric instruments were used, namely the Three-Component Organizational Commitment Questionnaire by Allen & Meyer (1990), the Counterproductive Work Behavior Checklist by Spector et al (2010), and the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support by the University of Delaware (1984).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After the data had been collected and subsequently analyzed, this paper validated the roles

organizational commitment played in the commission of CWB. Similarly, measuring across three types of commitment, namely affective, normative, and continuance, it was revealed that continuance commitment was indeed the largest contributor to the commission of counterproductive work behavior. This means that among the respondents, it is employees who manifest this least profound form of organizational commitment that could prompt the commission of actions that would harm colleagues or their organization. Conversely, as affective commitment goes up, the propensity to commit counterproductive work behavior reduces, and vice-versa.

On demographics, for gender split among the respondents, more than half were female (N=48), while the remainder were male (N=39). Age-wise, majority were from the ranges of 21-30 years old (N=58), with the remainder within the ages of 31-40 years old (N=29). Across tenure, nearly half the participants had been at their company for more than a year, but less than 5 years in total (N=42). Other respondents had been with their company for less than a year (N=18), more than 5 years but less than 10 (N=20), and more than 10 years (N=7). In terms of rank in the company, majority of the participants were split between the rank and file (N=35) and supervisory levels (N=31), with the remainder occupying a managerial level position (N=21).

Table 1. Regression Summaries of Demographics and Affective Commitment, Normative Commitment, and Continuance Commitment

Variable	b*	Std. error		
		of b	t(79)	p-value
Gender	0.10	0.59	1.69	0.096
Age	2.66	0.69	3.83	0.000
Tenure	-1.30	0.38	-3.39	0.001
Rank	0.95	0.40	2.36	0.021
AC	-0.12	0.67	-1.80	0.076
NC	0.03	0.44	0.76	0.451
CC	0.13	0.45	2.92	0.005



Table 1 above shows the relationships between the variables, and while the data for Gender, Age, Tenure, and Rank cannot be interpreted literally due to the categorical nature of the variables, it shows that males more than females were more likely to commit CWB, employees aged 21-30 were also more prone to commit CWB, the longer an employee's tenure, the lower the likelihood to commit CWB, and that rank and file employees were more likely to commit CWB compared to other employment groups. Consistent with the earlier correlational findings, affective commitment negatively impacts CWB, while normative and continuance commitments positively influence it, with continuance commitment again playing a more dominant role.

The mean of Affective Commitment was 31.70 (SD = 5.97), the mean of Normative Commitment was 33.43 (SD = 7.02), the mean of Continuance Commitment was 34.71 (SD = 7.60), the mean of Counterproductive Work Behavior was 16.44 (SD = 3.21), and the mean of Perceived Organizational Support was 23.91 (SD = 5.21). All of the variables, except for normative commitment, manifested a significant correlation in the hypothesized direction. Affective commitment is shown here to be negatively correlated to the commission of counterproductive work behavior, while normative and continuance commitments were positively related to counterproductive work behavior, with the latter being more strongly related.

Table 2. Interaction between Affective Commitment and Perceived Organizational Support on Counterproductive Work Behavior

Variable	b*	Std. error of b	t(85)	p-value
AC x				
POS	0.006	0.001	3.36	0.001

Table 2 above shows a significant relationship between the interaction of affective commitment and perceived organizational support on counterproductive work behavior, supporting the original hypothesis in the study.

Table 3. Interaction between Normative Commitment and Perceived Organizational Support on Counterproductive Work Behavior

Variable	b*	Std. error of b	t(85)	p-value
NC x				
POS	0.006	0.002	4.36	0.001

Table 3 above shows a significant relationship between the interaction of normative commitment and perceived organizational support on counterproductive work behavior, supporting the original hypothesis in the study.

Table 4. Interaction between Continuance Commitment and Perceived Organizational Support on Counterproductive Work Behavior

Variable	b*	Std. error of b	t(85)	p-value
CC x				
POS	0.004	0.001	3.38	0.001

Table 4 above shows a significant relationship between the interaction of continuance commitment and perceived organizational support on counterproductive work behavior, supporting the original hypothesis in the study.

4. CONCLUSIONS

With a final count of eighty-seven (N=87) respondents, the data gathered revealed that continuance commitment, among the other forms, had the highest chance to influence the commission of counterproductive work behavior. Similarly, the data showed that when perceived organizational support was considered, its presence effectively moderated the relationship between organizational commitment and counterproductive work behavior. Given the results, the proponent concludes that certain guided assumptions can be made such that gender, age, rank, and tenure may be related to higher incidents of CWB, and that both normative and continuance commitment have an effect towards the commission of counterproductive work behavior. Further, there is evidence to show that perceived organizational support could potentially



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moderate the relationship between organizational commitment and counterproductive work behavior. Given these findings, and increased cross-border business due to the ASEAN integration, there is an inherent benefit to utilizing the findings in this study to help companies and their employees understand the value of organizational commitment and the role perceived organizational support plays towards increasing employee competitiveness.

5. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The completion of this study would not have been possible without God; my professors who encouraged me to write and submit this for consideration, Dr. Raymund Habaradas and Dr. Brian Gozun, and my mom. In your own unique ways, you all helped make this study a reality.

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