

## Relationship of Work Environment Variables and Job Satisfaction of Employees with Counterproductive Work Behaviors: A Study of Non-Governmental Non-Benefit Islamic Azad University Employees in West Mazandaran

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**Abstract:** This study aimed to determine the relationship of work environment variables (including organizational justice, interpersonal conflict and organizational constraints) and job satisfaction with counterproductive work behaviors of employees. 124 employees working in non-governmental non-benefit Islamic Azad Universities (IAU) of West Mazandaran were selected through stratified random sampling and responded to Workplace Deviance Scale, Organizational Justice Scale, Job Stressors (Organizational Constraints) Scale, the Scale of Interpersonal Conflict-at-Work and Job-in-General Satisfaction Scale. The Cronbach's Alphas ranged between .78 to .95. The results of data analysis showed meaningful relationship between work environment variables and counterproductive work behaviors, but there was no meaningful relationship between job satisfaction and counterproductive work behaviors. In addition, organizational constraints and organizational justice were able to significantly predict counterproductive work behaviors and could explain 34% of the variance related to them. The findings indicated that interpersonal conflict, injustice in the workplace and organizational constraints can lead to significant increase in counterproductive work behaviors of the employees.

**Key words:** Employee attitude % Personality traits % Unfavorable outcomes % Frustrating organizational conditions % Internal locus of control % Beneficiaries in higher education

### INTRODUCTION

Anderson *et al.* [1] generally define counterproductive workplace behavior as "intentional behavior on the part of an organization member viewed by the organization as contrary to its legitimate interests". The premeditated and deliberate breach of safety measures in a workplace is an example of a counterproductive behavior. This is because such behaviors put the individual and the organization at risk. Gruys [2] identified 87 counterproductive behaviors in the literature and grouped them into 11 separate categories using a rational sort and factor analytic techniques, namely, theft and related behavior, destruction of property, misuse of information, misuse of time and resources, unsafe behavior, poor attendance, poor quality work, alcohol use, drug use, inappropriate verbal actions and inappropriate physical actions.

As Spector *et al.* [3] put it, "counterproductive work behavior (CWB) has emerged as a major area of concern among researchers, managers and the general public. These behaviors are a set of distinct acts that share the characteristics that they are volitional (as opposed to accidental or mandated) and harm or intend to harm organizations and/or organization stakeholders, such as clients, coworkers, customers and supervisors" (p. 447). A similar statement is made in Spector and Fox [4]. The writers state that "CWB consists of volitional acts that harm or intend to harm organizations and their stakeholders (e.g. clients, coworkers, customers and supervisors) (p.151).

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Sample and Procedure:** The population of the present study (N= 605) consisted of all employees of Islamic Azad Universities of West Mazandaran (cities: Noor, Chaloos,

Tonekabon and Ramsar) in 2011-12 (1390-91) academic year. A sample of 150 employees was selected through stratified random sampling, taking into account their gender and workplace. Due to personal reasons or absence from their workplace, 26 of them refrained from responding to questionnaires. Therefore, the number of sample reduced to a final 124. A description of the sample is seen in Table 1.

IAU of Ramsar Branch with 8 and IAU of Chaloos Branch with 74 participants had the smallest and largest samples, respectively.

**Instruments and Measures:** Five questionnaires were used to collect data for the present study, namely (a) Workplace Deviance Scale (Bennett and Robinson), (b) Organizational Justice Scale (Colquitt), (c) Job Stressors (Organizational Constraints) Scale (Spector and Jex), (d) the Scale of Interpersonal Conflict-at-Work and (e) Job-in-General Satisfaction Scale (Ironson *et al.*). To value the questionnaires, five-level Lickert items were employed (Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never). The Cronbach's Alphas for the questionnaires were between .78 and .95. Pearson Correlation and Multivariate Regression Analysis were used to analyze data.

**Hypotheses:** We believed that there is meaningful relationship between environmental variables and CWB of employees. Therefore, we derived our hypotheses as follows:

- C There is significant relationship between organizational justice and counterproductive work behaviors of employees.
- C There is significant relationship between interpersonal conflict and counterproductive work behaviors of employees.
- C There is significant relationship between organizational constraints and counterproductive work behaviors of employees.
- C There is significant relationship between job satisfaction and counterproductive work behaviors of employees.

**Findings:** Table 2 contains the correlation matrix of variables and includes descriptive information regarding the means and standard deviations, too.

According to the results obtained, the predictive variable of organizational constraints had the highest correlation with CWB. The second and third highest

Table 1: Descriptive data of the sample

City	Female	Female Sample	Male	Male Sample
Ramsar	7	2	21	6
Tonkabon	93	23	118	29
Chaloos	89	22	211	52
Noor	21	5	45	11
Total	210	52	395	98

Table 2: The correlation matrix of variables including descriptive information of the research variables Correlations (N = 124)

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Interpersonal Conflict	6.9	3.1	$r = --$ $p = --$				
2. Organizational Justice	56.1	12.6	$r = -.493^{**}$ $p = .000$	--			
3. Organizational Constraints	22.6	7.1	$r = .526^{**}$ $p = .000$	$-.597^{**}$ .000	--		
4. Job Satisfaction	47.3	5.6	$r = .024$ $p = .789$	$.334^{**}$ .000	$-.039$ .663	--	
5. Counterproductive Work Behaviors	23.4	10.1	$r = .450^{**}$ $p = .000$	$-.512^{**}$ .000	$.533^{**}$ .000	$-.040$ .657	--

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 3: Stepwise regression analysis of organizational constraints and organizational justice with counterproductive behaviors

Step	Predictive Variable	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	SE
1	Organizational Constraints	.533	.285	.279	8.569
2	Organizational Justice	.586	.343	.332	8.246

Table 4: The ANOVA results obtained from 2-model regression (ANOVA<sup>c</sup>)

Model	Sources of Variations	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	F	Sig
1	Regression	3564.063	1	3564.063	48.532	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	8959.356	122	73.437		
	Total	12523.419	123			
2	Regression	4295.679	2	2147.840	31.587	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	8227.740	121	67.998		
	Total	12523.419	123			

correlations belonged to organizational justice and to interpersonal conflict with CWB, respectively. The present study found no significant relationship between job satisfaction and counterproductive work behaviors of employees.

Table 3 summarizes the stepwise regression analysis of organizational constraints and organizational justice with CWB.

As indicated in Table 3, in the first step, organizational constraints could justify 28% of the variance ( $R^2=.285$ ). In the second step, the organizational justice added 6% to the variance ( $R^2=.343$ ).

Table 4 demonstrates the ANOVA results obtained from the 2-model regression.

- C Predictors: (Constant): Organizational Constraints
- C Predictors: (Constant): Organizational Constraints, Organizational Justice
- C Dependent Variable: CWB

Table 4 shows the results of variance of the 2-model regression. In model 1, we inferred that there is a meaningful relationship between organizational constraints and CWB and that the organizational constraints (the independent) variable has the power to predict CWB (the criterion variable) ( $F = 48.532, p < .01$ ). Similarly in model 2, we inferred that there is a meaningful relationship between organizational justice and CWB and that the organizational justice (the independent variable) is able to predict the CWB (the dependent variable) ( $F = 31.587, p < .01$ ).

## CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study demonstrate a relationship between CWB of the employees and the environmental variables (organizational justice, interpersonal conflict and organizational constraints). They, in fact, confirm the first three hypotheses of the

present study. The present findings are also consistent with those of Jex and Beehr [5], Fox, Spector and Miles [6] and Berry, Ones and Sackett [7] concerning relation between CWB and organizational injustice.

The present study did not find any meaningful relationship between job satisfaction and CWB ( $r = .04, p = .328$ ). The related findings of this study are in contrast with those of Sabahi [8], Hashemi Sheikhshabani *et al.* [9] and Dalal [10], who reported a meaningful relationship between job satisfaction and CWB.

Jex and Britt [11] refer to Spector's model and state that job dissatisfaction by itself does not necessarily result in counterproductive behaviors. In fact, they believe, individuals with job dissatisfaction commit counterproductive behaviors when they have an external locus of control. Jex and Britt state that "[t] hose with an external locus of control tend to respond to frustration through theft and other forms of destructive behavior because they do not believe that frustrating organizational conditions can be changed through more constructive means. In contrast, those with an internal locus of control are more likely to believe that they are able to change frustrating organizational conditions constructively." It is therefore suggested that the future studies pay attention to personality traits and the locus of control of the individuals being studied so as to measure the amount of the effect of these factors as well.

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