International Journal of Business and Development Studies **Vol. 8, No. 1,** (2016) pp 117-139

Effects of Job Characteristics on Counterproductive Work Behavior among Production Employees: Malaysian Experience

Abdul Rahman Abdul Rahim* Alwi Shabudin** Aizzat Mohd Nasurdin***

Abstract:

This study seeks to investigate the impact of job characteristics on counterproductive work behaviour (CWB). Three forms of CWB are identified: interpersonal CWB, production CWB, and property CWB. The regression analysis carried out on a sample of 355 employees showed mixed results. Job significant demonstrated a significant and negative relationship with production CWB. The relationship between job feedback, interpersonal CWB and property CWB was as postulated. In similar not, job identity demonstrated a significant and negative relationship with organizational CWB. However, job autonomy does not show any significant relationship. Implications, limitations, and suggestions for future research are discussed.

Introduction

Since last decade, counterproductive work behaviour has consistently become a topic of study among organizational behaviour scholars due to its pervasiveness and costly problem confronted by today's organizations (Aquino, Galperin & Bennett, 2004; Krischer, Penney,& Hunter, 2010; Penny & Spector, 2005). Counterproductive work behaviour (CWB) is a common occurrence in organizations that may range from minor (e.g. taking long breaks during working hours) to severe (personal aggression) type of CWB. In addition, previous studies revealed that majority of employees were reported to engage in some form of CWB such as filing fake accident claims, absenteeism, abusing sick day privileges and stealing company's property (Bolin & Heatherly, 2001, Giacalone, Riordan & Rosenfeld, 1997). The consequences of CWB are very detrimental to the organization in terms of low productivity, higher maintenance cost due to lost or damage property, and tarnishing the company's image (Aquino, Galperin & Bennett, 2004; Robinson & Bennett, 2000; Vigoda, 2002).

* Corresponding author, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia, email: aman@salam.uitm.edu.my
** Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia
*** Universiti Sains Malaysia

Moreover, the employees were also affected by the act of their colleagues' CWB such as feelings of dissatisfaction, job stress, and frustrations (Fox & Spector, 1999; Fox, Spector & Miles, 2001; Kwok, Au & Ho, 2005; Penny & Spector, 2005). Being common occurrences in organization, the issue of CWB in Malaysia is not exceptional. This is evident from the frequency of reports in the newspapers and other public media concerning cases involving dishonesty (New Straits Times, 2010), poor work attitude (New Straits Times, 2005), social and moral problems (New Straits Times, 2005), and fraud (Utusan Malaysia, 2004; New Straits Times, 2009). In addition, a review of the Industrial Law reports from 2000 to 2009 has indicated the existence of a variety of CWB among Malaysian employees (The Malaysian Current Law Journal, year 2000 – 2009). Sabotage, fight at work, threat, assault, harassment and use of abusive language are among the cases of CWB reported to the Malaysian Labour Department. Unfortunately, there is no formal statistics on the phenomenon of CWB produced by the Labour Department (Shamsudin & Rahman, 2006). This could be due to companies' unwillingness to report negative incidences at workplace as it may tarnish the company's image (Atkinson, 2000).

In Malaysia, studies on CWB are still scarce. Moreover, existing studies are more focused on the individual and organizational factors as predictors of CWB (e.g. Radzi & Din, 2005; Razali, 2005; Sien, 2006; Shamsudin, 2003). In this study, we enriched this study by investigating the impact of work related variable on employees' CWB at workplace. The main reason for investigating the influence of work related variable on CWB is because the work related variable, specifically the job characteristics, can have motivational functions for employees. In addition, job characteristics constitute a set of variables that are widely thought to be important causes of employee behaviour (Friday & Friday, 2003; Hackman, 1976; Spector & Jex, 1991). As such, this study investigated the influence of job characteristics on CWB among employees in the manufacturing sector.

Literature Review

Counterproductive Work Behaviour

Counterproductive work behaviour (CWB) refers to "intentional employee behaviour that is harmful to the legitimate interests of an organization (Gruys & Sackett, 2003; Marcus & Schuler, 2004; Fox, Spector & Miles, 2001). Examples of such behaviours include absenteeism (Henle, 2005),

theft (Greenberg, 1997) and sexual harassment (Paetzold, 2004). Researchers have used different terms to denote these CWB behaviours such as misbehaviour (Ackroyd & Thomson, 1999), retaliation (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997), antisocial behaviour (Giacalone & Greenberg, 1997); deviance (Bennett & Robinson, 1995, 2000; Martinko, Gundlach & Douglas, 2002; Sackett & DeVore, 2001) and aggression (Baron & Neuman, 1998).

A review of past literature showed that regardless of the different terms that have been employed, these behaviours share some common characteristics namely: (1) it reflects any form of behaviour that violates customary norms or values either dominant organizational norms, societal norms, or violates both norms, (2) it indicates intentions that could be either voluntary or intentional that will or cause harm to the organization, its members or both; and, (3) it results in negative consequences to the organization, its members or even other people that have direct connection with the organization. CWB can vary based on its target: organizational and individual (Fox, Spector & Miles, 2001; Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Organizational targets can be further categorized into property CWB and production CWB. Property CWB refers to incidences where the employee violates the organizational norms by acquiring or damaging the organization's tangible assets. Production CWB refers to employee behaviours that violate organizational norms with regard to the quality and quantity of work to be accomplished. Individual targets are categorized as political CWB and personal aggression. Political CWB refers to behaviour that causes other individuals a political disadvantage. Personal aggression refers to acts of hostility toward other individuals. In summary, based on past research, this study conceptualized CWB based on its target namely organizational CWB (CWBO) and interpersonal CWB (CWBI).

Numerous studies (e.g. Lau, Au & Ho, 2003; Marcus & Schuler, 2004) have investigated the antecedents of CWB. These factors can be subsumed under four major categories namely: (1) personal-related which includes personality traits such as anger and anxiety (Fox and Spector, 1999), and the big five personality (Salgado, 2002), (2) organizational-related which includes organizational justice (Skarlicki and Folger, 1997) and workplace changes (Baron & Neuman, 1998). (3) job-related factors which include job demands (Grunberg, Moore and Greenberg, 1998), and job insecurity (Lim, 1996), and (4) environmental related such as lifestyles (Burke, 1987), family conflict (Anderson, Coffey & Byerly, 2002), and customer

behaviour (Harris and Reynolds, 2003). Of the various antecedents and variables, empirical evidences indicated the salient role of job-related factors in influencing employees' CWB at work (Berg & Feij, 2003; Zhang & Snizek, 2003). This is because employees spend most of their time at the work place (Schor, 1992; Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman & Johnson, 2005) and hence, are more inclined to be affected by factors within the job itself. One important aspect of the job relates to employees' perception on the characteristics of the job itself. Using Hackman and Oldham's (1975; 1976; 1980) job characteristics model, this study investigated the impact of job characteristics on CWB.

Job Characteristics

Job characteristics are the attributes of a job that can have motivational functions for employees. The job characteristics constitute a set of variables that are widely thought to be important causes of employee attitude and behaviour (Friday & Friday, 2003; Spector & Jex, 1991; Hackman & Oldham, 1972; 1976; 1980). According to the job characteristics model (JCM), job attitudes and behaviours are affected by five core job characteristics (Hackman and Oldham, 1976). These core job characteristics are skill variety, job identity, job significance, job autonomy, and feedback from the job influences an employee's internal motivation. These five core job characteristics can be combined into a single index of motivating potential score (MPS) that reflects the overall potential of a job to influence the individual's behaviours.

The JCM specifies three psychological states that must occur for a job to be internally motivated. First, the employee must perceive the job as meaningful. Second, the employee must experience responsibility for the job outcomes. Finally, the employee must have knowledge of results, that is, to know how well he/she is performing his/her jobs (Friday & Friday, 2003).

Another popular job characteristics model was developed by Karasek (1979) which proposed two scales of job characteristics that are psychological job demands and job control. Gelsema et al. (2005), and Yperen and Hagedoorn (2003) used Karasek's JDC (1979) model in their investigations on job satisfaction, stress, internal motivation, and fatigue at work. However, Fried and Ferris (1987) in their meta-analysis of 200 studies indicated that a large amount of research had been generated based on Hackman and Oldham's JCM (1976). As such, this study used

Hackman and Oldham's model (1976) for investigating the association between job characteristics and CWB.

Scholars such as Hackman and Oldham (1976), Spector and Jex (1991) and Kahya (2007) posited that the better these five core characteristics can be designed into the job, the more the employee will be motivated, and the higher their performance quality and satisfaction would be. The effects of job characteristics on employee's behaviour and performance have been investigated in terms of production productivity (Parker, Wall & Codery, 2001), organizational citizenship behaviour (Chiu and Chen, 2005; Piccolo & Coloquitt, 2006), task performance (Piccolo & Coloquitt, 2006) and job performance (Demerouti, 2006; Kahya, 2007; Kuo & Ho, 2007). Many studies has also been conducted to investigate the relationship between job characteristics of specific type of deviant behavior such as absenteeism (Rentsh & Steel, 1998; Spector & Jex, 1991), procrastination (Lonergan & Maher, 2000), employee turnover (McKnight, Philips & Hardgrave, 2005), and work alienation (Banai & Reisel, 2007). These indicated a general acceptance that job characteristics act as a precursor of various job-related behaviours and performance. However, the past studies have focused on task performance, specific type of CWB, and organizational citizenship behaviour which have been conceptualized as positive work-behaviour (Lee & Allen, 2002; Miles, et al., 2002; Spector & Fox, 2002; Piccolo & Coloquitt, 2006). Hence, there is a great need to confirm the influence of job characteristics on one of the neglected dimensions on employees' work behaviour, specifically CWB, which is negative work behaviour .

According to some researchers (Dodd & Ganster, 1996; Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Parker, Wall & Cordery, 2001), employees whose job design consists of high levels of the five core job characteristics should have high performance and satisfaction, low turnover, low sick leave and absenteeism. Rentsh and Steel (1998) demonstrated that the dimensions of job characteristics, that are skill variety, task identity, job autonomy and job scope were negatively and significantly related to measures of absenteeism in terms of time lost at work and absence frequency. In contrast, Spector and Jex (1991) failed to find any significant relationship between job autonomy, job significance, job feedback, job scope and absenteeism. In the same study, Spector and Jex (1991) empirically demonstrated a significant and negative relationship between job autonomy, job identity, job feedback, and intention to leave. In similar note, Landeweerd and Boumans (1994) found a negative and significant

relationship between job feedback, job autonomy, and health complaints. Lonergan and Maher (2000) empirically demonstrated that when task significance and job feedback is high, employees' procrastination at work was found to be low. However, Lonergan and Maher (2000) found no significant relationship between job autonomy and procrastination.

Fried and Ferris (1987) reviewed 200 relevant studies on the JCM model. They concluded that job characteristics (skill variety, job identity, job significance, job autonomy, job feedback) were correlated to behavioural outcomes such as productivity, job involvement, job performance, and turnover. Results of a meta-analysis by Spector (1986) revealed that higher perceived autonomy was related to job performance. Landeweerd and Borman (1994) found that nurses who had low preference for job autonomy had higher absenteeism. Rentsch and Steel (1998) demonstrated that employees with motivating job characteristics continued to correlate negatively and significantly with a measure of absence and time-lost absence frequency and health complaints up to six years after the job characteristics had been assessed. In addition, Lonergan and Maher (2000) found a significant and negative relationship between job autonomy, job significance, job feedback and procrastination. However, Fox, Sector, and Miles (2001) found no significant relationship between job autonomy and personal counterproductive behaviour. In contrast, Chiu and Chen (2005) and Piccolo and Coloquitt (2006) found a significant positive relationship between job variety, job significance, job feedback, and OCB. OCB has been conceptualized as the opposite construct of CWB (Kelloway, Louglin, Barling & Nault, 2002; Lee & Allen, 2002; Miles, Borman, Spector & Fox, 2002).

The above discussion indicated a general acceptance that job characteristics act as a precursor to various job-related behaviours and performance. From the discussions, this study argued that high level of the core job characteristics will be negatively correlated with CWB. Hence, it is postulated:

H1: There is a significant negative relationship between Job Characteristics (job autonomy, job identity, job feedback, job significance, skill variety) and CWB (CWBO, CWBI).

H1a: There is a significant negative relationship between job autonomy, and both CWBO and CWBI.

H1b: There is a significant negative relationship between job identity, and both CWBO and CWBI.

H1c: There is a significant negative relationship between job feedback, and both CWBO and CWBI.
H1d: There is a significant negative relationship between job significance, and both CWBO and CWBI.
H1e: There is a significant negative relationship between skill variety, and both CWBO and CWBI.

Methodology

Sample

Respondents in the study were employees attached to 100 large companies (which employ more than 500 people) which are members of the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers (FMM). A systematic sampling procedure was utilised to select the 100 out of 262 large companies identified from the FMM list. A total of 1500 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents with the help of the firms' human resource managers. Respondents were given two weeks to answer the questionnaires. In all, 31.5% of the questionnaires were returned. However, only 355 were useable for further analysis.

Measurement

The predictor variable used in this study is job characteristics. To measure job characteristics, items developed by Hackman and Oldham (1974) and Sims, Szilagyi, and Keller (1976) were used. Taking into account the nature of the job in the production department and the findings of Lonergan and Maher (2002), four dimensions with 18 items were used to measure job characteristics. The four dimensions are job significance, job identity, job feedback, and job autonomy. A sample item of job significance is: "My job is so important for organizational or departmental achievement". One of the job identity sample item is: "I have the opportunity to do a job from the beginning". A sample item of job feedback is: "I can find out how well I am doing in the job I'm working on". Meanwhile, a sample item of job autonomy is: "I have the freedom to do pretty much what I want on my job". The reliability of job characteristics dimensions range from 0.60 – 0.93. The responses range from 1 = "very little", and 7 = "maximum amount."

The criterion variables related to CWB were gauged via supervisory ratings. 27 items developed by Robinson and Bennett (1995) were used. Items were scored on a 7-point likert scale ranging from 1 = 'never' to 7 = 'more than 15 times .'

Method of Analysis

The hypotheses of the study were tested via hierarchical regression (Hair et al., 2006). Previous studies have shown that gender, age, tenure, and job position were significant predictors of CWB (Douglas & Martinko, 2001; Lau, Au, & Ho, 2002; Martinko, Gundlach, & Douglas, 2002; Thoms, Wolper, Scott, & Jones, 2001). Hence, these four demographic variables were controlled in the statistical analyses .

Results

Sample Profile

A total of 355 respondents (subordinates) participated in this survey where 59.4% were males, 40.6% were females, and 56% of them were married. The average age was 30.19 years old (SD= 6.9) and ranged from 19 to 57 years old. Approximately 64.5% had educational qualification up to secondary school level, and the remaining respondents (35.5%) had a certificate, diploma, or degree qualification. In terms ethnicity, majority of the subordinates were Malays (84.5%), followed by Chinese (6.5%), Indian (6.2%), and others (2.8%). The respondents average organizational tenure was 7.93 years (SD = 6.2).

The average age of the superiors who were responsible in evaluating the respondents was 35.2 years (SD = 6.3) and 84.2% of them were married. Majority of the superiors were male (79.7%). In terms of educational qualification, 32.9% of the superiors possessed secondary school level qualification, 24.8% held diploma, 35.5% had bachelor degree and 6.7% had other qualifications. Majority of the superiors were Malay (74.1%), followed by Indians (14.6%) and Chinese (11.3%). Their average organizational tenure was 9.7 years (SD = 7.1).

Factor Analysis of Counterproductive Work Behaviour (CWB)

In order to identify appropriate factors for subsequent analyses, data reduction was employed. In conducting the data reduction process, this study complies with Hair et al.'s (2006) guidelines. A factor with less than three items was excluded from further analysis because it is considered weak and unstable (Castello & Osborne, 2005). Reliability test were subsequently carried out after factor analysis. Exploratory principal component factor analysis was employed in order to assess the validity of the CWB construct. Table 1 provides the results of factor analysis on CWB variables. As shown in Table 1 below, the KMO measure of

sampling adequacy value for the items was .862 indicating that the items were interrelated and they shared common factors. Bartlett's test of sphericity was also found to be significant (Approx. Chi-square = 2719.64, $p < .001$) indicating the significance of the correlation matrix and thus the appropriateness for factor analysis. The individual MSA values for all items exceed .50, ranging from .74 to .94, suggesting that the items represent the underlying structure of the new factors. Results of the varimax rotated analysis indicated the existence of three significant factors with eigenvalues greater than one that explained 65.54 % of the total variance .

Table 1: Results of Factor Analysis on Counterproductive Work Behaviour

Items	F1	F2	F3
Factor 1: Interpersonal CWB			
Makes fun of someone at work	**.76**	.03	.22
Publicly embarrassed someone at work	**.83**	.17	.16
Plays a mean prank on someone at work	**.79**	.32	.14
Swears/curses at someone at work	**.61**	.34	.38
Factor 2: Production CWB			
Takes an additional break or a longer break than is acceptable at workplace	.08	**.72**	.17
Leaves his or her work to someone else to finish	.45	**.57**	.06
Taking unnecessary sick leaves	.24	**.66**	.394
Spent too much time fantasizing or daydreaming instead of working	.36	**.67**	.252
Intentionally works slower than he or she could have worked	.25	**.79**	.11
Factor 3: Property CWB			
Tells someone about the lousy place where he or she works	.36	.07	**.64**
Takes office equipment/property without permission	.03	.11	**.86**
Falsifies information (e.g., a receipt claimed or number of hours worked) to get reimbursed for more money than deserves	.28	.44	**.55**
Discusses confidential organizational information with unauthorized person	.46	.42	**.55**
Use office facilities for personal use	.19	.29	**.75**
Eigenvalues	6.47	1.33	1.23
Percentage Variance Explained	22.62	21.88	20.04
Total Percentage Variance Explained	65.54		
KMO	.862		
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	2719.64***		
Cronbach's Alpha	.82	.79	.81

Note. N=355. Bold loadings indicate the inclusion of that item in the factor; *p<.05; **p<.01, ***p<.001.

Restatement of Hypotheses

Based on the output of the factor analyses, the initial hypotheses were restated as follows.

H1: Job Characteristics (job autonomy, job identity, job feedback, job significance, skill variety) will be negatively related with production CWB (CWBPo). CWBPr, CWBI).

H 1.1: Job characteristics will be negatively related with interpersonal CWB (CWBI)

H 1.1a: Job significance will be negatively related with **CWBI**.
H 1.1b: Job feedback will be negatively related with **CWBI**.
H1.1c: Job identity will be negatively related with **CWBI**.
H 1.1d: Job autonomy will be negatively related with **CWBI**.

H 1.2: Job characteristics will be negatively related with production CWB (CWBPo)

H 1.2a: Job significance autonomy will be negatively related with CWBPo.
H 1.2b: Job feedback will be negatively related with CWBPo
H 1.2c: Job identity will be negatively related with CWBPo
H 1.2d: Job autonomy will be negatively related with CWBPo.

H 1.3: Job characteristics will be negatively related with property CWB (CWBPr)

H 1.3a: Job significance will be negatively related with CWBPr.
H 1.3b: Job feedback will be negatively related with CWBPr.
H 1.3c: Job identity will be negatively related with CWBPr.
H1.3d: Job autonomy will be negatively related with CWBPr.

Descriptive Statistics, Intercorrelations, and Reliabilities

The means, standard deviations, intercorrelations, and reliabilities for the measures used in the study are reported in Table2.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics, correlations, and reliabilities

Vr	Mean	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	1.36	.69	(.82)						
2	1.62	.77	.61**	(.79)					
3	1.40	.72	.62**	.65**	(.81)				
4	5.11	1.22	-.07	-.11**	-.17**	(.84)			
5	4.57	1.29	-.08	.10**	-.09***	.19**	(.84)		
6	5.38	1.02	-.05	-.08	-.15**	.25**	.26**	(.82)	
7	4.20	1.21	-.06	-.10**	.02	.28**	.09	.21**	(.73)

Note: N= 355, *p < .01; **p < .05, ***p < .10. Reliabilities are provided in parentheses. Vr = Variable, 1= Interpersonal CWB, 2= Production CWB, 3 =Property CWB, 4= Job Significance, 5= Job Feedback, 6= Job Identity, 7= Job Autonomy

As shown in Table 2, the respondents of this study indicated that the mean score for CWBI was 1.36 (SD = 0.69), CWBPo was 1.62 (SD = 0.77), and CWBPr was 1.40 (SD = 0.72). In general, the mean score for interpersonal CWB, production CWB, and property CWB in this study is low. The respondents of this study had shown a relatively high level of job characteristics with regard to job significance (mean = 5.11), job feedback (mean = 4.57), and job identity (mean = 5.38) and job autonomy (4.20). The reliability coefficient for all variables is acceptable as it is higher than 0.7 (Hair et al., 2006).

Regression Results

The Influence of Job Characteristics on CWB

Table 3 shows the results of the regression analysis between the independent variables (comprising of the four dimensions of JC) and the dependent variables (comprising of the three forms of CWB namely CWBI, CWBPo, and CWBPr). As depicted in Table 3, none of the control variables is found to have a significant impact on the forms of CWB. Table 3 also demonstrates that the model variables explain 23 percent of the variation in CWBI (ΔR^2 = 0.21, p < .01). Job feedback shows a negative and significant relationship (β = -0.22, P < .01) with CWBI. This indicated a support for H 1.1b. In contrast, there is no significant relationship between job significance, job identity, job autonomy, and CWBI. Hence, hypothesis H 1.1 is partially supported.

Table 3: Results of Regression Analysis: Impact of JC on CWB

			Dependent Variables			
	Interpersonal CWB		Production CWB		Property CWB	
Step 1: Control Variables	β		β		β	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Organizational Tenure	-.04	-.13	.16	.19	.05	.04
Age	-.06	-.02	-.05	-.08	-.06	-.05
Job Position	.01	.02	-.10	-.16	.06	.04
Gender	.11	.15	-.15	-.16	.01	.03
Step 2: Independent Variables						
Job Significant ***a***		.00		.13**		-.03
Job Feedback ***a***		-.22*		.04		-.12**
Job Identity ***a***		-.04		-.09***		-.10***
Job Autonomy ***a***		.06		.03		.05
R^2	.02	.23*	.05*	.14**	.01	.11*
ΔR^2		.21*		.09**		.10*
F	1.33	4.35*	3.52*	2.47*	.37	2.11*

Notes: N = 355; **a** = Job characteristics; CWB = Counterproductive Work Behaviour; *p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.10.

Table 3 also indicated that the model variables explain 14 percent of the variation in CWBPo (ΔR^2 = 0.09, p < 0.05). Job feedback and job autonomy demonstrated a non significant relationship with CWBPo. Only job identity demonstrated a significant and negative relationship which supported H 1.2bc. Interestingly, job significant demonstrated a positive and significant relationship with CWBPo. Thus, hypothesis H 1.2 is partially supported.

For CWBPr, it was explained by 11 percent of the model variables (ΔR^2 = 0.10, p < .01). . Table 3 also depicted that job feedback (β = -0.12, P < .01) and job identity (β = -0.10, P < .01) had significant and negative relationship with CWBPr. On the other hand, no significant relationship between job significance, job autonomy and CWBPr was indicated. Only H 1.3b and H 1.3c were supported. Therefore, hypothesis H 1.3 is partially supported.

Discussion, Implication, Limitations, and Conclusion

Factor analysis of the data collected revealed three dimensions of CWB namely, interpersonal CWB (CWBI), production CWB (CWBPn), and property CWB (CWBPr). The two dimensions of organizational CWB (CWBO) identified were production CWB (CWBPn) and property CWB (CWBPr) that concurs with that of Robinson and Bennett's (1995). On the

other hand, interpersonal CWB (CWBI) remains as a single dimension instead of two dimensions originally identified by Robinson and Bennett (1995). This finding may be culture-bound. According to Abdullah (1992), Malaysians are relationship-oriented and value harmony. Hence, they tend to avoid sensitive interpersonal issues (such as to act rudely toward someone at work, or making an ethnic or religious joke).

The result of the regression analysis provided partial support for a significant and negative relationship between JC and CWB. Only four sub hypotheses were supported (H 1.1c, H1.2b, H1.3b, and H1.3c). These findings concur with past studies (Landeweered & Borman, 1994; Lonergan & Maher, 2000). As conceptualized, job feedback demonstrated a significant and negative relationship with CWBI ($\beta = -0.22$, $P < .01$) and CWBPr ($\beta = -0.12$, $P < .01$). When employees receive feedback from their supervisor, they are able to access their performance. Subsequently, feedback from their supervisor regarding their job may be viewed as avoidance of unfavourable evaluation. Receiving job feedback will also enable employees to access their own performance. Hence, job feedback will reduce any evaluation hesitation and enhance motivation in performing the job. Indirectly, this makes them less to act deviant and particularly their CWBI and CWBPr is reduced.

Past studies (Dodd & Ganster, 1996; Fried & Ferris, 1987; Hackman & Oldham, 1976, Parker & Cordery, 2001) showed that JC are related to outcomes, regardless of whether variance in the characteristics is attributable to job class or to a specific job. The findings of this research, however failed to fully support such prediction. Findings of this research revealed no significant relationship between job autonomy and CWB (CWBI, CWBPo CWBPr). The reason for this could be due to the demographic characteristics of the respondents. It was identified that nearly 80 percent of the studied respondents were production operators. Production operators are lower level employees who have more structured job scope and receive less autonomy in performing their job. Furthermore, being lower level employees, the production operators would prefer to accept instructions from their supervisors/superior (Abdullah, 1996; 2003). This finding also concurs to Lundberg and Peterson (1994) who found indicated that Asian employees consider job autonomy as less important in their employment relationship.

By conceptualizing the social exchange theory, this study expects that job identity will be negatively related to CWBO (CWBPo and CWBPr).

This study empirically demonstrated that job identity had a significant and negative relationship with CWBPr and CWBPo. It is presumed that when job identity is high, the employee will be involved in doing and completing the job from the beginning. Having high involvement in doing and completing a job will create a sense of self-satisfaction. Subsequently, the act of counterproductive will be reduced. This finding concurs with Fried and Fried (1987) meta-analysis that found job identity in comparison to other measured job characteristics, shows the highest relationship with work performance. Rentsch and Steel (1998) empirically proved the existence of a significant and negative relationship bob identity and forms of CWB such as absenteeism.

This study empirically showed that job significant had no relationship with CWBI and CWBPr. Meanwhile, job feedback had no significant relationship with CWBPo. It was also revealed that job identity had no significant relationship with CWBI. The difference between the findings of this study and past research (such as Bolin & Heartherly, 2001; Martin, Blum, & Roman, 1992; Zhang & Snizek, 2003) may be due to the characteristics of the respondents of this study. Respondents of this study consisted of production operators, line leaders/assistant supervisors, and production technicians from different types of work settings. These three different levels of job category, different nature of job context and different job scope may further contribute to the non significant relationship between these variables (job significance, job identity, and job feedback) and CWB. These findings were consistent with the findings of Lonergan and Maher (2000) and Spector and Fox (1991) that there was no significant relationship between job autonomy, job feeback, job scope, and forms of CWB such as absenteeism, and procrastinations.

Findings of this study suggest that the management should conduct a more frequent job feedback exercise. Frequent job feedback exercise enables the supervisors to provide more opportunity for the employees to know how well they are performing a job. Providing job feedback will help employees understand the actual results of their work activities. Having such knowledge, they will strive to minimize job flaws and enhance their performance. Failing to provide job feedback may lead employees to engage in CWBI and CWBPr.

Besides providing the employees information in relation to their job/work, they should also be informed about the organizational development as a whole. For example, the employees should know about

new appointments of key personnel to changes in organizational procedures and regulations. Hence, providing employees with more information regarding their jobs, other members' role, and about the organization itself may help the organization curtail incidences of CWBI such as making funs of others, cursing others at work and playing a mean prank on someone.

Job identity is another characteristic of a job that has a negative impact on CWBO (CWBPo and CWBPr). The results empirically demonstrated that an employee whose job lack identity will engage in CWBO. The employee may steal from the organization, use office facilities for personal use, taking unnecessary sick leave or leave work early. One approach that could be adopted by management is by giving an opportunity to every employee to experience every stage of the production process. This approach, known as job rotation, will involve employees in the whole production process, thus enhancing their level of product knowledge and appreciation of other employees' role in the production process.

Like all studies, this study is also subjected to some limitations. First, this study adopted supervisory rating method in order to reduce common method bias. However, it may be unlikely for supervisors to know all incidences of CWB because employees are inclined to be tactful when doing such acts. Future research should adopt superior-subordinate dyadic method rating to further reduce the extent of common method bias. Second, the characteristics of the sample may limit the generalizability of the findings. This is because nearly 85% of the respondents were Malays relative to other ethnic groups like the Chinese and Indians. To avoid any biasness, future researchers should ensure an equal distribution of respondents from various ethnic groups. Third, the sample of this study was solely taken from the manufacturing industries. Vardi and Weitz (2004) indicated that CWB is a universal problem and occur in any organization. However, the work nature and work environment between the service and production organizations differs. Moreover, Aryee, Budhwar, and Chen (2002) and Lowe, Kroeck, and Sivasubramaniam (1996) emphasized that work nature and work environment between the public and private sector is also different. Therefore, future research should also investigate the occurrences of CWB for the both public and private sector.

In conclusion, despite several limitations, this research provides evidences of how job characteristics can affect employees' CWB. All the

studied variables except job autonomy do influence employees' act of CWB either by displaying such act targeted at the organization's production, property and/or individual. Hence, the management should ensure that the job, specifically the job characteristics, have motivational functions for employees. Changes in the motivational functions of a job may be due to improved learning and proficiency in doing a job. One way of achieving this is by conducting job analysis exercise where information regarding the core dimensions of job characteristics can be reviewed and redesigned accordance to an employee's learning and proficiency level.

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