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Workplace Deviant Behavior: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

This paper aims to elucidate the notion of deviant workplace behavior by comprehensively examining prior research in the field and comprehending its dynamics. Initially, the researcher addresses the necessity for further investigation into deviant workplace behavior exhibited by employees, with a specific focus on comprehending the influence of diverse factors on such behavior. Furthermore, the investigation commenced by conducting a comprehensive literature review on deviant workplace behavior. It summarizes the literature review's pertinent antecedents of DWB and its associated prevalence cost. Thirdly, the present research exclusively utilizes secondary data sources, including compiling information from websites and journals to which it is referred. In conclusion, the research paper discusses the implications, potential future directions, limitations, and conclusion of the study concerning deviant workplace behavior within public organizations.

Keywords: Deviant behavior, Individual factors, organizational factors

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Background

Examining individual behavior in the workplace has become crucial in the contemporary era due to globalization, industrialization, and technological progress. Deviant workplace behavior (DWB) is a critical area of study that has significant implications for organizational health and employee conduct in the workplace. The investigation of DWB is of utmost importance owing to its dynamic nature, increasing magnitude, and potential impact. DWB is not a novel concept to be discussed in the business world (Thiel & Bonner, 2023). However, as time and circumstances pass, the resources contributing to DWB continue to provide a fresh perspective on investigating new dimensions.

Diverse scholars have defined DWB and clarified its consequences through their reviews of the relevant literature (Malik & Sinha, 2021). However, research concerning deviant behaviors in the workplace remains to be examined. Deviant destructive behaviors in the workplace are among the most significant research topics affecting organizational performance and norms (Deng & Cherian, 2022). Deviant conduct in the workplace is regarded as a critical issue for all organizations. Consequently, comprehending these attitudes and behaviors in the workplace that are associated with work has emerged as a noteworthy field of study and a developing phenomenon. Most deviant workplace conduct, whether organizational or internal, transpired among the workforce (Maas & Yin, 2022). Alternative terminologies for DWB include organizational misbehavior, retaliation, dysfunctional behavior, counterproductive workplace behavior, and DWB (Xu & Zuo, 2022). Robinson and Greenberg assert that a universally accepted definition of workplace deviance is lacking due to the nascent research stage in this field. They cite the definitions of two distinguished scholars who have expounded upon the concept of DWB, operationalized its key dimensions, and established its boundaries (Fernández et al., 2021).

Deviance in the workplace behavior (DWB) was defined by eminent researchers Robinson and Bennett as "an employee's voluntarily engaging in conduct that is in opposition to significant organizational norms and is deemed to be detrimental to the organization and/or its members." (Bennett & Mulang, 2022, p. 165). According to Griffin and Lopez, any individual can enter a working organization and demonstrate this detrimental behavior, which is classified as minor or major deviance (Načinović, 2020). The initial minor production deviance consists of purposefully working slowly, taking excessive breaks, engaging in gossip with colleagues about non-work-related matters during official working hours, arriving late to the workplace and departing early, daydreaming while on duty, and cyberloafing (Arnéguy & Ohana, 2020).

The second main is production deviance, which includes theft from the organization, working slowly to obtain overtime pay for unnecessary tasks, using

photocopiers for personnel purposes without authorization, and bringing office supplies or equipment home (Fernández et al., 2021). Conversely, there are two classifications of interpersonal deviance: major and minor. To begin with, political deviance encompasses behaviors such as ridicule, impoliteness, and attributing errors committed on the job to colleagues; it also involves disregarding supervisory directives and instructions. The second type of aggression is considered major. It includes acts such as cursing, humiliating, bullying, stalking, saying hurtful things to colleagues, and assaulting them with physical harm (Bennett & Marasi, 2022).

Objective of the Study

The primary objective of the systematic review is to ascertain and delineate the factors that precede and encourage employees to engage in deviant conduct within the workplace. The subsequent aim of this systematic review is to comprehend, delineate, and elucidate the intricacies of DWB and its contributing factors. Understanding the knowledge of the research area regarding the mediating and moderating effects of various other factors on DWB is the third objective of this study. Fourthly, acquire knowledge of the diverse theoretical frameworks that support the theoretical perspective on DWB. Furthermore, the investigation will enhance comprehension of prior DWB research and related fields of study. Lastly, the current investigation into systematic reviews will establish a research gap that will catalyze future scholars to delve deeper into the subject matter.

Research Methodology

Databases containing published studies on employee behavior, such as DWB, counterproductive workplace behavior, unethical behavior, and so forth, were queried electronically. The scope of the queries was restricted to scientific papers and articles that were published in English using the full text from January 2016 to October 2021. The query comprised Deviance in the workplace, counterproductive workplace behavior, malfeasance in the workplace, misbehavior, unethical behavior, or workplace violence. Furthermore, literature evaluations have been conducted regarding five to six additional factors. These factors comprise organizational and individual elements: organizational injustice, oppressive supervision, transformational leadership, DWB, counterproductive workplace behavior, and the Big Five and dark triad personality traits, respectively.

The current study incorporated empirical, original, and review articles/papers that specifically address DWB. Four phases were utilized in the selection of DWB-related articles and papers. Identification comes first, followed by screening according to the title and abstract. Thirdly, assessment of eligibility via analysis of the complete texts; and fourthly, incorporation of articles into the current paper based on empirical

research or reviews about the subject matter of DWB. Finally, the research centers on articles and papers of the DWB and related fields that were discovered via the Google and Google Scholar search engines.

Significance of the Study

The current investigation will augment the scholarly discourse on counterproductive or deviant workplace conduct and deepen the comprehension of researchers, practitioners, and managers regarding the deviant behavior exhibited by employees. The research will also elucidate the factors contributing to workplace deviance within public organizations. Another significant finding derived from this systematic literature review is the need to determine the correlation between DWB and additional mediating and moderating factors. The costs and prevalence of workplace deviance are detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Cost of Workplace Deviance (Gökoğlu and Öztürk 2020)

Source	Cost of Workplace Deviance
Akella and Lewis, (2019)	The World Economic Forum estimates that corruption accounts for 5% of the global GDP, with an excess of US $1 trillion being paid in bribes annually (Hoang et al., 2022). It is estimated that corruption in the African region alone results in the loss of ODA funds ranging from US $15 to $20 billion. According to a report by the Express Tribune in 2014, a government officer in Pakistan has been accused of corruption amounting to 42 billion Pakistani rupees, which is equivalent to approximately 420 million US dollars (Timofeyev, 2015).
Alias and Rasdi (2017)	71% of the respondents reported experiencing workplace incivility (Omar et al., 2016)
Abbasi et al. (2022)	It has been reported that around 1.7 million individuals in the United States and 11% of employees in the United Kingdom have experienced various forms of workplace bullying. These forms may include physical assault, non-verbal behavior, threats, intimidation, humiliation, sabotage, interference with production, and exploitation (Schilpzand et al., 2016).
Appelbaum et al. (2020)	It has been reported that around 1.7 million individuals in the United States and approximately 11% of employees in the United Kingdom have encountered workplace bullying (Steinberg, 2019).
Bensimon (1994)	An estimated 1.5 million Americans fall victim to workplace violence and organizational aggression, resulting in an annual cost of $4.2 billion (Hoang et al., 2022).
Bolin and Heatherly (2023)	Deviant behavior in the workplace is a prevalent issue that can be costly to organizations. Research indicates that approximately 34% of employees engage in some form of deviant behavior (Malla & Malla, 2022).

Berry, et al. (2022)	A financial loss of $200 billion has been reported due to employee theft. The total amount of funds lost due to various types of fraudulent activities is estimated to be $400 billion (Liang et al., 2021).
Carter and Baghurst (2019)	An estimated annual loss of $50 billion is attributed to counter-workplace behavior, which includes employee theft and fraud. This type of behavior is responsible for nearly 20% of business failures (Sustiyatik, Setiono et al. 2019).
Chen, el al. (2018)	Fraudulent activity is estimated to result in annual losses of approximately $2.9 trillion (Patise'Cunningham, 2017).
Cullen and Sackett (2023)	In Australia, it has been estimated that employers bear costs ranging from 6 to 13 billion Australian dollars annually due to acts of dishonesty, such as theft, and workplace bullying (Griep et al., 2022).
Cohen (2023)	Research suggests that a significant proportion of employees, ranging from 33% to 75%, engage in deviant behaviors such as abuse towards others, bullying, production deviance, sabotage, theft, and withdrawal (Maas & Yin, 2022).
Chernyak-Hai et al. (2019)	Over the past five years, 71% of respondents have reported experiencing incivility in public service organizations in the United States. Of those respondents, 6% reported personally experiencing negative behaviors (Ilyas et al., 2022).
Hollinger and Clark (2021)	In 2010, it was reported that US retailers acknowledged a nearly 45% inventory shortage, resulting in a prevalence and burden of approximately $15.9 billion on the retail industry due to employee theft (Hashish, 2020).
Nagin & Telep (2020)	According to a study conducted by the Conference Board of Canada, the Canadian economy experienced a loss of $16.6 billion in 2012 due to workplace deviance absenteeism (Baker et al., 2020).
Pate (2006)	According to surveys conducted among public-sector employees in Canada and the United States, 69% of respondents reported experiencing some form of verbal aggression in the workplace (Oliveira et al., 2020).
Robinson, et al. (2014)	An amount of $200 billion has been reported as lost due to employee theft. The estimated fraudulent activities cost $400 billion (Načinović et al., 2020).
Robinson and Greenberg (2016); Taylor (2018)	Workplace violence results in an estimated annual cost of $4.2 billion for organizations (Wolfe & Lawson, 2020). In the United Kingdom, there is estimated to be a loss of approximately $600 million in productivity per year due to employees engaging in web surfing activities during work hours (Baker et al., 2020).
Verton (2019)	There has been a decrease in productivity ranging from 33% to 40% due to engaging in virtual activities (Baker et al., 2020).

Table 2 provides a comprehensive summary of all studies conducted on deviant employee behavior in the workplace since the year 2000.

Table 2

Summary of the Research Published on Deviant Behavior

Article Source	**Main Findings**	**Limitations**	**Moderator / Mediator**
Adejoh and Adejoh (2013)	Employees ' perceptions of justice and sentiments of PC violation mediated the relationships among employers' PC fulfillment, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment.	The limitations of the study include the use of a cross-sectional design, the focus on employees' perceptions without considering the employers' perspective, the use of a composite measure of overall justice perceptions, the need for studies in work settings with more explicit PC violations, and the importance of including social context in the analysis of PC.	PC Violations
Načinović et al. (2020)	Individual-related factors, such as age, gender, and personality traits, are greater predictors of workplace deviance than organizational culture. Personality variables have been extensively researched as determinants of workplace deviance on the individual level. Overall, an individual's demographic and personality contribute more to their deviant behavior than environmental factors of the workplace.	Small and gender-biased sample Possibility of sampling bias due to the snowball sampling technique There is a need for a wider sample to make more generalizations based on hierarchical linear regression models. Only a small number of respondents reported deviance	N/A
Vasconcelos (2020)	Workplace incivility is a highly relevant topic in organizational behavior studies, with growing academic interest from 2015 onward.	The study's limitations include a focus on peer-reviewed journals and articles written in English, a lack of qualitative and meta-analytic studies, limited investigation in a few nations and regions, and the need for more research on workplace incivility's effects and coping strategies. The study also underlines the relevance of context in understanding party exchange and organizational influences on	N/A

		workplace incivility.	
Bouazzaoui et al. (2020)	The importance of justice in enhancing inter-organizational relationships and the potential negative consequences of neglecting justice. The evolution of the understanding of organizational justice from an employee's perception to the categorization	The paper's limitations include the possibility of omitting relevant studies due to database selection and filtering, article quality variation, and the need for future studies to assess results' reliability and validity by focusing on similar management journals. The report also notes that the comprehensive analysis and synthesis framework may have found some under-researched links but missed others.	Organizational Justice
Bonath et al. (2020)	The main findings are related to the impact of organizational justice on workplace deviance and the mediating role of job satisfaction.	The study's limitations include the need for a more diverse sample size, the recommendation for future research to use case studies and qualitative methods in Malaysia, and the significance level of procedural justice and distributive justice affecting workplace deviance being only 0.1, suggesting that bigger samples and more systematic sampling could yield better results.	Job Satisfaction
Graso et al. (2020)	It was found that workplace deviance is a matter of major concern for modern organizations.	Data was collected once. Data may be obtained multiple times for such investigations. The study's limitations include sample representativeness and generalizability, self-reported measures, cultural bias due to its Pakistani location, and the need to consider higher education's context and culture when generalizing the results to other organizations.	Workplace Deviance
Gamb et al. (2020).	PC violation has a strong negative effect on organizational justice Normative contract has a positive effect on organizational justice Normative contract moderates the relationship between PC violation and organizational justice.	The limitations of the study include the use of a cross-sectional design, the focus on employees' perceptions without considering the employers' perspective, the use of a composite measure of overall justice perceptions, the need for studies in work settings with more explicit PC violations, and the importance of including social context in the analysis of PC.	Normative Contracts

Chin et al. (2019)	Both distributive justice and procedural justice resulted in an increase in organizational commitment. Procedural justice has a greater effect on organizational commitment than distributive justice.	Using only statistical data may limit the accuracy of identifying the relationship between variables. Further interviews with government employees are needed to enhance the explanation and validity of the analysis results.	N/A
Fagbohungbe et al. (2012)	The importance of justice in enhancing inter-organizational relationships and the potential negative consequences of neglecting justice. The evolution of the understanding of organizational justice from an employee's perception to the categorization	The paper's limitations include the possibility of omitting relevant studies due to database selection and filtering, article quality variation, and the need for future studies to assess results' reliability and validity by focusing on similar management journals. The report also notes that the comprehensive analysis and synthesis framework may have found some under-researched links but missed others.	N/A
Baharom et al. (2017)	Favoritism significantly and positively impacts workplace deviance, and negative emotions partially mediate this relationship.	The study's limitations include snowball sampling's potential bias, the need for future research using random sampling methods, the need to investigate employee groups' perceptions of favoritism, the need to analyze demographic variables and patronage, and the need for longitudinal research. The study also states that the results will be used for variable analysis.	Nepotism
Wu and Talhelm (2021).	Organizational justice is a significant predictor of workplace deviance Organizational citizenship behavior is also a significant predictor of workplace deviance. Promoting justice and fairness in the workplace can lead to increased efficiency.	The limitations of the study include: Focus on organizational justice and workplace deviance may overlook other relevant factors. Data collection over a relatively short period may not capture potential variations in employee reactions over time. Limited generalizability of findings to other types of employees or institutions Potential bias due to the recruitment method. Further research could investigate the influence of education level in universities on	N/A

		workplace deviance.	
Vasconcelos, (2020)	Workplace incivility is a highly relevant and growing topic of interest in organizational behavior studies, particularly from 2015 onward. The focus of the investigations in this area has been primarily on the antecedents and consequences of WI.	The limitations of the study include the focus on peer-review journals and articles written in English, shortage of qualitative and meta-analytic studies, modest preference toward qualitative studies, limited number of nations investigated, and the opportunity to enhance knowledge about the effects and the copying strategies people use to deal with workplace incivility.	N/A
Kakemam et al. (2021)	Nurses had a moderate perception of organizational justice and a low level of perception regarding the occurrence of WDBs. There was a significant reverse correlation between perceived organizational justice, WDBs, and the level of perceived organ.	The limitations of the study: - The cross-sectional design, which does not indicate causal relationships The use of self-reported questionnaires, which may compromise the validity and reliability of the findings Caution is needed in generalizing the findings to other hospitals at a national level due to the specific sample used in the study.	Perceived Organizatio nal Support
Hashim et al. (2019)	The study found that supervisory support and organizational trust increase psychological contracts and reduce workplace deviant behavior among lecturers. Psychological contracts are important for the formation of employees' behaviors, especially in	The report lists as study constraints the difficulty of researching corruption due to its multidimensional, secretive, and possibly embarrassing nature, as well as answer style and typical technique variance issues. The report also notes property deviance's low Cronbach's alpha measurement and proposes more research on scale expansion to improve measurement robustness. The report also analyzes other aspects of organizational justice and emphasizes conservation ideals. The study also advocates extending corruption to cultures and ideals. (confidence 90)	Psychologi cal Contract
Malla and Malla (2022)	The study found that perceived organizational injustice, specifically distributive injustice, significantly	The study is cross-sectional, so causality cannot be directly determined. All measures are self-reported, which introduces the risk of	Moral Disengage ment

	affects deviant behavior at work. Additionally, moral disengagement moderates the relationship between perceived organizational injustice and deviant behavior. However, perceived procedural and interactional injustice did not significantly affect deviant behavior. The study's novelty lies in its investigation of the effect of organizational injustice on deviant work behaviors.	common method variance bias.	
Malik, et al., (2021)	The paper contributes to the understanding of the relationship between psychological contract breach, organizational justice, and emotional well-being at work. The study supports the hypothesis that breach partially mediates the relationship between	The limitations of the study include the use of a cross-sectional design, potential differences in results for employees engaged in contingent employment, concerns related to common-method variance due to self-reported data, and the need for constant vigilance in revising psychological contracts. The paper also suggests aligning psychological contracts with strategy, translating HR systems into firm performance, and prioritizing employee well-being in organizations. (Note: The paper does not explicitly list limitations, but these points can be inferred from the text.)	Psychological Contract Breach
Thrasher et al. (2020)	The study's main findings are that organizational identification and informational justice are positively related to employee voice intentions. However, power distance did not moderate the relationship between organizational identification and	Measuring voice intentions may not fully capture voice behavior Sample demographic breakdown not entirely representative Power distance scale did not show strong internal reliability. Future research should include sampling from multiple organizations.	Power Distance

	voice, nor did it moderate the relationship between informational justice and voice.		
Balogun et al. (2018)	Psychological contract breach is positively related to feelings of violation and workplace deviance. Emotional intelligence buffered the negative effect of psychological contract breach. Employees with higher emotional intelligence were less likely to	The limitations of the study include overreliance on self-report scales, the study being conducted only among public organization employees, the small sample size, and the need for future studies on larger sample sizes. The paper also suggests adopting a non-self-report measure for workplace deviance and replicating the study in other sectors for generalization.	Emotional Intelligence
Rai and Agarwal (2018)	The paper highlights the lack of research on mediators and moderators in antecedents-bullying relationships despite a reasonable number of studies examining these roles in bullying-outcomes relationships. The authors suggest that the focus is on examining the relationship by introducing new variables, e.g., PCB.	The limitations are related to the lack of comprehensive examination of the interaction between individual and work environment factors, limited research efforts in examining mediators and moderators, and the need for future studies to explore the proposed potential variables.	N/A
Saba et al. (2019).	The main findings of the study are: The developmental psychological contract is significantly related to affective and normative organizational commitment and job satisfaction, while socioemotional fulfillment is not related to affective	The study's limitations include the research's cross-sectional nature, potential biases due to single-source data collection, the use of self-report measures, and the need for future research to incorporate supervisor-rated measures and longitudinal studies.	Perceived Supervisor Support

	commitment.		
Neto et al. (2021)	The importance of justice in enhancing inter-organizational relationships and the potential negative consequences of neglecting justice. The evolution of the understanding of organizational justice from an employee's perception to the categorization	The limitations mentioned in the paper include the possibility of omitting relevant studies due to the database selection and filtering processes, potential variation in quality levels of selected articles, and the need for future studies to assess the reliability and validity of results by focusing on management journals of similar standing. The paper also acknowledges that the comprehensive analysis and synthesis framework may have highlighted some previously under-researched linkages while failing to capture others.	N/A
Fink et al. (2020)	- Older employees were less likely to take short, non-certified sickness absences from work.- Age moderates the association between perceptions of procedural justice and long sickness absences, with older employees being 12 percent less likely to miss.	The limitations mentioned in the paper include cohort effects, potential ineffectiveness of studying the two components of organizational justice separately, need for explicit testing of proposed mechanisms, exploration of individual job control factors and psychosocial factors, and the necessity for additional research in different contexts.	Age
Baruch and Rousseau (2019)	The main findings are that there are substantial differences in males' and females' responses to organizational justice, and that assessing all four justice factors can help organizations improve employee relationships with improved job satisfaction and commitment.	The limitations of the study include conducting the research in only one organization, the broad range of occupations represented in the sample, the use of cross-sectional data, and the reliance on self-report survey responses.	N/A
Song et al. (2020)	The study supports hypothesized interactions involving aggressiveness, social status variables, and interactional justice.	The limitations include: Cross-sectional nature of the data Reliance on self-reported deviant behavior. Inability to fully explain differences in reactions between Whites and African Americans	Interaction al Justice

	The findings offer practical implications for organizations to reduce the frequency of deviant acts.	Potential inflation of observed correlations due to single-source data

Discussion

Future Directions and Limitations

The current study has offered corroboration for several hypotheses put forth by other researchers regarding the interplay between exogenous, endogenous, and intervening factors that are associated with deviant workplace behavior. This study systematically examines organizational and individual factors—abusive supervision, transformational leadership, and organizational injustice and abusive supervision.

Nonetheless, the results of a systematic review of numerous studies on DWB must be interpreted with the following limitations in mind: To begin with, this study operates under the assumption and utilizes a cross-sectional research design, like most previous investigations that employed convenience sampling and self-administered questionnaires to gather data. This approach precludes making hasty conclusions about the targeted population. As a result, it is necessary to contemplate a longitudinal research design in the future to assess the theoretical constructs at various time points and thereby validate and extrapolate the results of the current investigation.

Furthermore, it is crucial to note that the reported DWB in the current investigation was of a subjective nature. As demonstrated by the findings of this study, subjective data can be relied upon to characterize deviant workplace conduct accurately. Therefore, the results of the present study may be replicated in the future by applying objective measures of DWB. Previous research has referred to DWB by various terms, including misbehavior, unethical workplace behavior, and counterproductive behavior (CWB). Consequently, there exists a potential for oversight of certain publications, papers, or articles pertaining to DWB, which would not encompass the entirety of the study's subject matter.

Furthermore, the outcomes derived from credible and satisfying studies utilizing secondary data sources would have impacted the search strategy and evaluation criteria for the quality of research. Furthermore, the generalizability of the findings from the current study is considerably restricted due to its primary focus on five to six factors. To generalize the findings, it will be crucial to incorporate additional pertinent factors, such as antecedents, e.g., CSR, organizational identification (John et al., 2019; 2023), and future DWB dimensions. Furthermore, while the current systematic review encompasses information regarding the dimensions of DWD,

mediating and moderating variables, and supporting theories, it fails to incorporate the results of empirical studies. Consequently, it is imperative that researchers incorporate the outcomes of each empirical study into their system reviews of the literature.

The ultimate purpose of this systemic review is not to provide a comprehensive understanding of DWB; rather, it serves as a foundation for future investigations in the field of DWB. It is important to note that while DWB is not a completely preventable issue, it can be managed or reduced by implementing appropriate measures.

Conclusion

The present study has contributed further evidence and indications to the expanding corpus of knowledge concerning DWB. Notwithstanding certain constraints of the current investigation, the study's findings substantiate the theoretical assertions, primary aims, and resolved research inquiries while also illuminating the way forward for further exploration in the field of DWB. Despite this, many studies have been conducted to investigate the fundamental causes and precursors of DWB and the factors that contribute to it. In contrast, this study filled a theoretical void by examining the relationship between individual factors contributing to DWB and transformational leadership as a moderating variable. Additionally, the current research provides empirical and theoretical support for the notion that transformational leadership moderates the association between DWB and individuals.

The practical implications of this systematic review's findings are significant for researchers and professionals interested in conducting additional studies on the DWB. Notwithstanding certain constraints of the current investigation, this study has formulated a number of guidelines, orientations, and recommendations for further research. Practitioners and researchers are encouraged to scrutinize and elucidate these testable associations.

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