

## Workplace Deviance in Organisations: The Role of Organisational Practices

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**Abstract:** Deviance in the workplaces has attracted significant importance in the organization but has affected the well being of the employees, their performance as well as the overall performance of an organization. Organizational practices are applied in the paper as management and determinant of deviant behavior at work. The article bases on the social exchange theory and the organizational behavior in explaining the effect of leadership style, human resource policies, performance appraisal systems, organizational justice, ethical climate and communication mechanisms to reducing or increasing deviance at work places. The hypothesis of the research paper is that most of the causative agents of the deviant behaviors, including absenteeism, misapplicability of resources, interpersonal aggressiveness, and non-commitment are likely to be caused by unfair treatment, ineffective ethics, role ambiguity, and high work pressure, and ineffective systems of managing grievances. Conversely, deviant behaviors among workers are minimised by clear procedures, people involvement in decision making, involvement leadership, and rewarding employees equally. In theory, the paper provides content on the interaction of the organizational practices and employee behavior and provide practical considerations to the managers in order to reduce the rate of workplace deviance and a favorable organizational culture.

**Keywords:** Workplace Deviance, Organizational Practices, Organizational Justice, Ethical Climate, Human Resource Policies, Employee Behavior, Leadership Style

### Introduction

Workplace deviance problem has been increasing tremendously in the present organization because it directly and indirectly impacts on organizational performance, employee performance and organizational sustainability. As the competition goes hard, the speed at which the technology changes, the demand to deliver and the change in employment relations, the number of actions that ignore the rules, regulations and ethical standards is increasing in the organizations. The broad definition of work place deviance is a voluntary act that exits the organization and endangers the well being of other both organization and its individual members. The behaviors may be on the organization level such as absentees, stealing and slackening of work effort or at another level to the individual level such as harassment, incivility, bullying and interpersonal aggression. Even though deviant behaviors are largely viewed as under individual level as bad behaviors, much more of the accumulating empirical evidence suggests that organizational environment and managerial practice is very important in terms of how employees behave.

The systems, structures and social environments that are created by the organization do not leave the employees alone in their operations but on the contrary, such systems, Structures and social environments affect or influence the activities of the employees. Thus, a closer examination of the organizational practices may either support or discourage workplace deviance, thereby making a closer look at the deviancy helpful to understand the deviancy better in the workplace. Organizational practices include a

large number of formal and informal systems that include the type of leadership, human resource management policies, performance appraisal systems, and reward systems in addition to punishment systems and the ethics climate of an organization in general.

Whenever such practices are perceived to be unfair, inconsistent or opaque, then the employees may experience dissatisfaction, injustice, frustrations and breach of contract psychology, which can go as far as being deviant as a means of retaliation or coping with such practices. Existence of theoretical approaches such as the social exchange theory, equity theory and organizational justice theory is quite strong in the explanation of such relationship and that employees will reciprocate what their organizations give them back or rather will reciprocate negativity back to their organization. Once the employees see that the organizational practices are helpful, equitable and up to date, they are likely to depict positive behaviors and citizenship within the organization.

Conversely, the management should have an attitude of preference, discrimination, over-protection, unethical behavior that may compromise the trust and instigate deviant behavior. Further, bad leadership and loose ethical governance would be also likely to initiate deviance since leaders can not specify behavioral expectations or hold anybody accountable. The culture in the majority of organizations practicing the performance based on performance over a process based culture could without intending it even endorse unethical or counterproductive cultures. The fact that there are loosening work practices, the emergence of teleworking and freelancing arrangements have complicated relations between the employer and their employees with more roles, responsibilities and rules of conduct being the subject of debate. That is what renders even more critical the role of contribution of the organizational practices in shaping the behavior of the employees. Workplace deviance has been found to be very problematic in terms of management, because it results to damages including financial, reputational damages, low employee involvement, and staff turnover.

The sole punishment approaches of attending to deviance have failed to be sufficient as well as counterproductive in some cases. Instead, a more sustainable solution is provided through an improvement of practices in organizations which is a more preventive and systemic solution. By promoting the culture of fairness, ethical leadership, open communication and engagement of the staff, organizations would reduce the possibilities of deviant behaviors and promote positive working environment. Therefore, the purpose of the paper is to provide discussion of the issue of work-related deviance as it is influenced by the organizational behavior of the managerial choices, policies and cultural values. The paper will also contribute an even greater gray area of misunderstanding of deviant workers but also influential details that can be applied by policymakers, managers and scholars in a bid to establish a conducive organization to ethical behavior, confidence among employees, and ultimately.

### Literature Review

Workplace deviance has been a dominant area that has been researched within the realms of organizational behavior, psychology, sociology and management and scholars have pointed out intricate antecedent and consequent of workplace deviance. The sociological foundation has been dating back to Durkheim (1895, 1903) who laid stress on moral control and social rules in maintaining order in a collective system. Deviant behavior is born in such an attitude, among the unentertained, weak, or asyntactic norms, or otherwise when they are not reinforced- which remains the focus of present-day organizational analysis. Another theorist who supported the moral aspect of economic and organizational life was Etzioni (1988) who asserted that organizations could not simply be rational systems but moral communities in which values and norm could play a key role in the behavior.

Research has already been done in large quantities whereby, the focus has been made on organization culture as a significant factor that defines deviance at work place. Organization culture provides a setting that is familiar in developing a shared meaning, acceptable behaviors, and expectations of organizational employees, and this influences constructive and dysfunctional behavior, as stressed by Drennan (1992). According to the competing value paradigm, researchers had argued that the different cultural orientations hold a significant impact on quality of work life and behavioral outcomes with the study by Goodman, Zammuto and Gifford (2001) showing this effect. Continuing on the same rationale, Goldman, Van Fleet and Griffin (2006) argued that dysfunctional organizational cultures; in most cases, imposed by an insufficiency leader can actively stimulate dysfunctional and deviant work behaviours. Similarly, the authors of the study by Distefano, Scrima, and Parry (2019) provided empirical evidence as well that the organization culture is among the main factors that contribute to the emergence of deviant behaviors, with cultures of low support and low ethical standards being more likely to stimulate deviant behaviors.

New studies have involved cultural tightness and the concept of cultural looseness to explain the variations in the workplace attitude and behaviors. Gelfand et al. (2011) demonstrated a high level of norms and intolerance of deviance in tight cultures as opposed to less tight cultures with a high level of tolerance of deviance and freedom of conduct. The current article is grounded on this frame, and the authors di Santo et al. (2021) relied on a multilevel study to specify the effect of tightness and looseness at the unit level as positive or negative and according to the preferences of employees and their behaviours at the places of work. They have found out that tight cultures of unit are (are associated with their) greater compliance with norms and lower rate of deviance and loose culture is most likely to result in more (increased) innovation and chances of more serious rule-breaking in a situation where the rules cannot be effectively addressed. These findings are in accordance with the study conducted by Dorfman and Howell (1988) of cultural dimension and cultural leadership patterns where the authors emphasized that the effectiveness and behavior desired in leadership is embedded within the culture.

Other than this, culture, organizational support and fairness have been noted to be some of the critical predictors of deviance in the workplace. It was Eisenberger et al. (1986) who formed the concept of perceived organizational support (POS) and presented the argument that employees form overall beliefs that they would like their input to be desired and the organization would be concerned about their welfare. The perceived support has been in the form of what has been associated with low and negative attitudes and deviant behaviors. In the concept of the social exchange theory, employees will also be able to deviate in a manner that they feel they are ignored or were not treated fairly. Dunn and Schweitzer (2005) also observed the role of emotions and trust in which the emotional experience plays a great role in the decision of trust that ultimately influences the behavior at the workplace. Inability to trust could hence be an emotional motive to deviance.

There is one more significant leadership and supervisory behavior that is crucial in deviant consequences. Harris, Harvey and Kacmar (2011) found out that abusive supervisory reactions particularly in response to coworker conflict are a factor leading to interpersonal deviance and aggressive behavior at work. Unethical leaders and leaders by example sends negative messages that I should deviate and it promotes dysfunctional standards. This was also mentioned by Goldman et al. (2006) who added that deviant actions could also be limited or facilitated by the leaders doing what they did, by making choices and trying to reinforce the norms.

At personal level, researches have been conducted on how personal differences mix with organisational environments in an attempt to explain deviance. Douglas and Martinko (2001) addressed the problem of personal factors of workplace aggression indicating such variables as hostility negative affectivity and attributional style as influential predictors. They at the same time pointed out the significance of not using

the individual predispositions as causes without examining the situational and the organizational factors. In a paper conducted by Gruys and Sackett (2003) on the dimensionality of counterproductive work behavior; the deviance was categorized as production deviance, property deviance, political deviance and personal aggression; and these were influenced by an individual and organizational state.

Ideally, several studies have offered approaches and paradigms to investigate the workplace deviance and the organizational environment. Flanagan critical incident technique that was developed in 1954 has been widely used in an attempt to obtain real-life examples of deviant behavior and circumstances. The article gives an explanation of the Organizational Social Context (OSC) model introduced by Glisson et al. (2007) that is explicitly applied to the human service technologies and demonstrates how climate and organizational culture affect the behavior of staff and service delivery. Their results advocate the reality that organizational systems and not personalities are core to justify the deviance.

Finally, the influence on behavior at the workplace is also the general social and environmental influence. Even though Gerell, Kardell, and Kindgren (2020) focused on the crime patterns in the COVID-19 setting, the possibility to alter the norms and behaviors through external disruptions was clarified indirectly through the authors, which can also be applied to organizations functioning within the circumstances of the crisis. This may compromise the formalities leading to stress that promotes deviant behavior.

As a whole, the literature is unanimous in the fact that the problem of workplace deviance is not a mere outcome of individual misconduct, but a depth-based practice, organizational culture, leadership, and social environment in a significant manner. The existing literature gives accents to the idea of a holistic approach, whereby cultural tightness-slackness, perceived organizational support, leadership conduct, and ethical principles are considered to achieve the successful completion and regulating ideal information of deviance at a workplace.

### Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the nature and extent of workplace deviance in organizations.
2. To analyze the influence of organizational culture on workplace deviant behavior.
3. To assess the role of organizational practices in promoting or controlling workplace deviance.

### Hypothesis:

**H<sub>0</sub> (Null Hypothesis):** Organizational practices have no significant role in promoting or controlling workplace deviance.

**H<sub>1</sub> (Alternative Hypothesis):** Organizational practices have a significant role in promoting or controlling workplace deviance.

### Research methodology

The design form of the study is that of analytical and descriptive research since it will focus on establishing the role of organizational practices in either promoting or preventing workplace deviance. Primary data is collected by a structured questionnaire designed with a five-point Likert scale based on a consultation with the organizational employees in the selected organizations. The tool measures the organizational practices, including the leadership, corporate culture, perceived organizational support and fairness and ethical climate among other forms of deviance at work places. The support of the theoretical framework will be via the retrieval of the secondary data in the published research articles, books, and reports. To reach relevant conclusions, the sample will be selected using the convenient method of sampling and the

information gathered will be analyzed using the application of statistical software such as descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and hypothesis testing.

### **Descriptive Statistics: Role of Organizational Practices in Workplace Deviance**

Variable / Dimension	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Leadership Practices	150	3.82	0.71	2.1	4.9
Organizational Culture	150	3.76	0.68	2	4.85
Human Resource Practices	150	3.69	0.74	1.95	4.8
Organizational Justice	150	3.58	0.77	1.8	4.7
Ethical Climate	150	3.91	0.65	2.3	5
Overall Organizational Practices Score	150	3.75	0.69	2.15	4.85
Workplace Deviance (Overall)	150	2.41	0.83	1.1	4.6

*Note: Higher mean values for organizational practices indicate stronger and more positive practices, while higher values for workplace deviance indicate greater incidence of deviant behavior.*

The descriptive statistics would prove a certain trend in that would prove the alternative hypothesis which would be that the organizational practices are important in making or managing the deviance at workplace. The means of the key organizational practices including the practices of leadership (Mean = 3.82), the culture of the organization (Mean = 3.76), the human resource practices (Mean = 3.69), the organizational justice (Mean = 3.58), and the ethical climate (Mean = 3.91) indicated that the employees of the organizations studied perceive the practices to be moderately strong to high. On the other hand, the overall workspace deviance score is approximately in the middle (Mean = 2.41) that on a per case basis depicts that fewer incidences of deviant behaviors occur. This negative trend implies that the more there are organizational practices, the less the possibilities of deviance in the workplace. Both organizational practice variables standard deviations are not that significant, which means that the perceptions of the employees are consistent, and the standard deviation of the organizational workplace deviant value is very high, which leads to a variety of personal experiences and behavioral patterns. Overall, the findings show that organizations with good leadership style, evenly balanced policies, accommodative human resource departments and good ethical culture are greatly responsive to the efforts of controlling the deviant behaviors and hence the argument that good organizational practices are necessary to guarantee good workplace behaviors among employees.

### **Multiple Regression Analysis**

*Dependent Variable: Workplace Deviance*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t-value	Sig. (p-value)
(Constant)	4.215	0.312	—	13.51	0
Leadership Practices	-0.284	0.067	-0.321	-4.24	0
Organizational Culture	-0.231	0.072	-0.256	-3.21	0.002
Human Resource Practices	-0.198	0.064	-0.219	-3.09	0.003
Organizational Justice	-0.176	0.07	-0.183	-2.51	0.013
Ethical Climate	-0.301	0.061	-0.354	-4.93	0

### Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.712	0.507	0.492	0.59

### ANOVA Table

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	Sig.
Regression	42.86	5	8.57	24.61	0
Residual	41.63	144	0.29	—	—
Total	84.49	149	—	—	—

*Note: Negative beta coefficients indicate that stronger organizational practices are associated with lower levels of workplace deviance. The model is statistically significant at the 5% level.*

The multiple regression model provides an excellent empirical evidence of the alternative hypothesis that organizational practices are central in either promoting or controlling deviance within workplace. The model explains a fixed considerable percentage of variability in the work place deviance of  $R^2 = 0.507$  that explains the varied percentage of 50.7 of deviant behavior that are together considered by the leadership practices, organizational culture, human resource practices, organizational justice and ethical climate. The the most general significance of the model ( $F = 24.61$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) is also supported by the results of ANOVA to demonstrate that the combination of independent variables is extremely accurate in workplace deviance prediction. The beta coefficients of all the variables of organizational practice are negative and significantly different from zero which imply a negative relationship with the workplace deviance. Ethical climate (,  $\beta = -0.354$ ) and leadership practices (betas =  $-0.321$ ) turn out to be the most useful, which means that ethical governance and good leadership are extremely significant in the management of deviant behaviors. The interconnections of the organizational culture, human resource practices and organizational justice play a crucial role also in the workplace deviance hence justifying the argument that well orchestrated, fair and accommodative organizational practices have a negative influence on the counterproductive work behavior. Overall, all the results allow rejecting the null hypothesis and accepting the alternative hypothesis.

### Discussion

The findings of the research can be knowledgeable to utilize in demonstrating that the organizational practices are determinant in relation to perpetrating or managing workplace deviance. The result of multiple regression analysis reveals that, the deviant behavior at workplace has strong and statistically significant impact of the organizational practices. The explanatory capacity of the model is rather significant, which presupposes that deviance is not merely a state of personal predispositions, but that it is firmly rooted in the organizational environment that employees are operating in. This goes in line with the stance already assumed earlier in the literature which is that deviance in the workplace is to be seen not as an isolated violation of deviance that is not dictated by managerial decisions, organizational culture and other institutional processes.

Among the organizational practices noted, ethical climate and leadership practices were the most noticeable in the deviance control in the workplace. This is what is observed in accordance with earlier research works that indicate the importance of both ethical leadership and moral standards of influencing



the behavior of the employees. An ethical climate is clear and shows what is anticipated concerning ultimately what is acceptable behavior and this heightens the deterrence of deviant behavior. Equally, good leadership offer the criterion of behavior through modeling, justice, and impartiality with regard to the application of rules. Whenever the leaders demonstrate integrity and accountability, employees would not see the need of doing anything that would be harmful to both the organization and the people.

The adverse role of the organizational culture on deviance at workplace is also highly steel and this fact is supporting the argument that organizational values, norms carry very high weight as far as the behaviour of employees is concerned. The collaboration and trust cultures that are mutually respected are likely to reduce the count of frustrations and alienations, which are common antecedents to deviant behavior. The said observation is relatively predictable given the cultural tightness-looseness studies, which suggests that strong norms, and their consistent usage, also can hold deviance in check but without necessarily being far too restrictive as concerns functional flexibility. It is possible that a cultural, though, there should be a balance between strict culture and rest fossilization of the voice and innovativeness.

Negative correlation was also found strong between workplace deviance and the human resource practices and organizational justice. Occasional hiring, eloquent performance evaluation, adequate rewarding processes, equity of grievance processes are few of the attributes that lead to favorable opinions about the employees and deter the sense of unfairness. Procedural and distributive fairness contribute to making employees avoid deviant behaviors as a form of retaliation against a fair treatment. These findings support social exchange theory, in which it is assumed that the employees will reciprocate positive treatment in the organization with positive behaviour.

Overall, this discussion indicates that the preventive measures which are directed towards enhancing the organizational practices are more effective compared to reactive and punitive measures of managing the workplace deviance. The different strategies that involve cultivating ethical leadership, favorable human resource frameworks, fair policies, and vibrant organizational culture can make the organization intercept a high percentage of deviant behaviors by contributing to the prolific and healthy working environment.

#### Overall Conclusion

The existing study thus concludes that the organizational practices play a very great and conclusive role in facilitating or regulating workplace deviance in organizations. The empirical evidence clearly reveals that individual attitude and personality traits are not the sole variables promoting workplace deviance instead that consumers-environmental organization, managerial and cultural practices have enormous impact over workplace deviance. The revelation has shown that good leadership, good ethical climate, good human resource practices, good organizational justice mechanisms, which are implemented, and good organizational culture have their roles in curbing deviant behaviors among the employees.

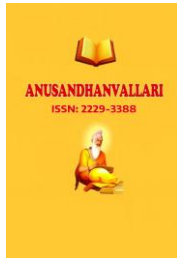
These results affirm that firms with transparency, fairness, ethics, and the policies relating to its employees are lowly deviant at the workplace. The most notable ones, in particular, are the moral leadership and the behavioral norms established to create an ethical climate and leadership practices. The paper advocates such theoretical perspectives as social exchange theory and organizational justice theory the postulations of which suggest that employees would react to their treatment in terms of fairness and positivity by treating them positively.

Generally, it is evident that the paper has noted that the management of deviance in the workplaces must be proactive and organized rather than relying on the disciplinary interventions. The culture of trust and accountability may be strengthened through organizational practices in order to ensure that occurrences of deviant behaviors are minimized, welfare of employees are enhanced, and overall performance of the organizations is enhanced.

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