

## Effect of Organizational and Interpersonal Dimensions on Workplace Deviant Behaviour among Government Officers in Putrajaya

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### Abstract

Workplace deviant behavior is the issue of universal that involves multiple organizations and various group of workers, whether there is support or professional. This problem of deviant behavior brings negative implications to the organization socially and economically. This study aims to determine the level of workplace deviant behavior among government officers in Putrajaya. This study also conducted to compare the significant differences in workplace deviant behaviour among selected social demographic variables (age, gender, marital status, position, level of education and tenure in service). This is a quantitative study which used simple random sampling technique to dictate the number of respondents. There are 380 samples which consists of government officers in grade 41 to grade 54 from 22 ministries in Putrajaya. The result indicated that the level of workplace deviant behaviour among the government officers in Putrajaya was low. For demographic factors, the current study found that, there were no significant differences in WDB among the respondents with different age, gender, marital status, position, level of education and tenure in service.

**Keywords:** Deviant Behavior, Deviant Behavior at Workplace, Government Officers.

### Introduction

Government sector plays a big role in country's development. The important of the sector are played by the human capital of almost 1.7 million government servants. The performance of the government services can be seen by the ranking of The Global Competitiveness Report and in 2017-2018 report, released by the World Economic Forum (WEF) on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2017, ranked Malaysia 23<sup>rd</sup> out of 137 economies with a score of 5.17. The ranking of 23<sup>rd</sup> out of 137 can be considered good and outstanding (Schwab, 2018).

In order to maintain a good organization, the officers must restrain themselves from doing any wrongdoings and the organization must provide a good management and leaders

continuously. Although government agencies seem to be good and competent in their work, there are some reports that showed the weaknesses of government agencies which involves the government servants and officers. There are some weaknesses in government agencies that may cause by workplace deviant behaviour in government agencies. The weaknesses are various such as improper, substandard and no quality work/supply/service, delays in supply and project completion, improper payment, wastage in asset management and inefficiency in government revenue collection. The weaknesses also include negligence in complying with rules / procedures set by the Government, careless when planning projects or activities. Other weaknesses are no clear setting in scope and tender specifications, not regularly monitoring contractors/consultants, lack of skills in project management. Another weakness is less attention to the impact of a program or activity and project.

Deviant behaviour at work can be understood as a deliberate desire to cause damage to an organization - more specifically, the workplace. More precisely, deviant behaviour refers to behaviour that is deliberately done to resist the institutional norms and threaten harmony in an organization. Deviant behaviour phenomenon at workplace increasingly became popular and this issue is widely attracted many researchers to study the phenomenon. This suggested that the culture and working environment become more un-conducive in producing a quality and clean services. The issue has been frequently highlighted in the mass-media and the issues such as job satisfaction, work stress, ethical leadership, ethical climates and ethical judgements are measured to address this negative issue. Workplace deviant behaviour is common in every organizations in Malaysia. It does happen in government organizations as well and becomes a significant issue among the government officers today.

Deviant behaviour at work can be highlighted in some form or type; whether the behaviour is violent or not. All deviant behaviour will affect the organizational productivity. Deviance behaviour; interpersonal or organization (Robinson & Bennet, 1995; Robinson & Curtis, 2012), both have two different goals but still have the same negative effects on the organization. Organizations with deviant behaviour can cause failure and reduce the organizational performance (Dunlop & Lee, 2004; Bolin & Heatherly, 2001). This is because deviant behaviour in the organization will lead to employee's inability to carry out work ethics, and as the consequences, organizations bear the burden of cost existed (Everton, Jolton, & Mastrangelo, 2007; Harvey et al., 2006).

Interpersonal deviance behaviour can weaken the social relationships of fellow workers as a result of the psychological stress experienced by those deviant behaviour victims (Appelbaum et al., 2005; Estes & Wang, 2008). This will give a bad image to the organization and a negative implication of the organization itself as well as its employees. Among examples of deviant behaviour at work are silence, betraying colleagues, cyber-loafing. Greater deviant behaviour impacts are sexual harassment, corruption and breach of trust.

There have been many studies which focused on workers in both the public and private sectors. Some previous research focuses and attempts to understand the source or trigger factors to deviant behaviour at work. For that purpose, literature reviews have been done to assess the extent to which these sources play a role and contribute to the various forms of deviant behaviour that are increasingly widespread in the organization today. Key focus is given to past studies that have identified the relationship between those causes with deviant

behaviour. It may be able to predict the possible forms of deviant behaviour, in providing the interested parties an idea of the most appropriate way to deal with it.

### **Workplace Deviant Behaviour (WDB)**

Workplace deviant behaviour is a misbehaviour in the workplace. It is a range of destruction acts that happens in organization and would cause harmful to that organization. Robinson and Bennet (1995) defined WDB as a voluntary behaviour that violates significant organizational norms and in doing so threatens the well-being of an organization, its members, or both.

A similar definition has been developed by Gruys and Sackett (2003), which considered WDB as “any intentional behaviour on the part of an organizational member viewed by the organization as contrary to its legitimate interest.” Likewise, WDB refers to a range of volitional acts (as opposed to accidental or mandated) at work that harm or intend to harm organizations and their stakeholders, client, co-worker, customer, and supervisors (Kessler & Spector, 2007).

In the past researches, several definitions and labels used to describe deviant behaviours at work. Workplace deviant behaviour, under its many labels and conceptualization (e.g: counterproductive workplace behaviour, retaliatory behaviour, anti-citizenship behaviour, workplace aggression, organizational misbehaviour, aggression, deviance, retaliation, revenge, delinquency, and mobbing/bullying), has become a major topic of research in the management and sociology literature. Robinson and Bennet (2003) believed that numerous terms emerged because each researcher was throwing his or her net over the potential set of deviant behaviours from somewhat different vantage point. Moreover, they explained that researchers and practitioners may focus at different labels of WDB for different applications. Despite the different names and labels, each of these constructs has the same underlying factors of intended harm towards the organization or its members (Fox et al., 2001)

To understand the workplace deviant behavior, Gruys (1999) identified 87 lists of deviance behaviours stated in these literature (Baron et al., 1996; Hollinger, 1986; Hunt, 1996; Jones, 1980; Mangione et al., 1975; Raelin, 1994; Robinson et al., 1995, 1996; Skarlicki et al., 1997; Slora, 1989), and he divided those lists into 11 categories of deviance behaviours which are presented in Table 1.1:

Table 1

*The Range of Behaviours Included in Deviant Behaviour Domain*

<b>Deviant behaviour domain</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Theft and related behaviour	Theft of cash or property, misuse of employee discounts
Destruction of property	Deface damage, or destroy property; sabotage production
Misuse of information	Reveal confidential information falsifying records
Misuse of time and resources	Wasting time, altering of time card, conduct personal business during work time
Unsafe behaviour	Failure to learn or follow safety procedures
Poor attendance	Unexcused absence or tardiness, misuse of sick leave
Poor quality work	Intentionally slow or sloppy work

Deviant behaviour domain	Examples
Alcohol use	Alcohol use on the job, coming to work under the influence of alcohol
Drug use	Possession, use, or selling drugs at work
Inappropriate verbal actions	Arguing with customers, verbally harassing co-worker
Inappropriate physical actions	Physically attacking co-workers, physical sexual advance toward co-worker

Resource: (Gruys, 1999)

Although this categorization is not exhaustive, this list is presented to give a sense of the range of behaviours in this domain. As the operational definition of WDB, this study will referring to Bennet and Robinson (2000) who viewed WDB as a voluntary behaviour that violates significant organizational norms. A 19-item scale developed by Bennet and Robinson (2000) will be used to measure workplace deviance.

### Research Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are:

- i. To determine the level of WDB among government officers in Putrajaya.
- ii. To compare the significant differences in workplace deviant behaviour among selected social demographic variables (age, gender, marital status, position, level of education and tenure in service).

To achieve the above objective and goals, the investigations are guided by the following research questions:

- i. What is the level of workplace deviant behaviour among the government officers in Putrajaya?
- ii. Is there any significant differences in workplace deviant behaviour among selected social demographic variables (age, gender, marital status, position, level of education and tenure in service)?

### Methodology

This study is a quantitative study which used simple random sampling technique to dictate the number of respondents. Population of the research are government officers from various government agencies and departments in Putrajaya. There are 380 samples which consists of government officers in grade 41 to grade 54 from 22 ministries in Putrajaya. In this study, the researcher used two ways in research instrument development: adopting an existing instrument and adapting or changing an existing instrument. The process of adopting and adapting existing research instruments in this study involves evaluation and feedbacks from the pilot test. The items were adapted due to the sample of study and the words chosen are based on a Malaysian context. The pre-test was conducted to 30 respondents before the questionnaire distributed for the data collection.

The data collection period started on September 2019 in Putrajaya. The study uses an online survey and through a manual distribution as well, utilized self-administered questionnaire approach. Descriptive statistic is used to describe in general about profile of the respondents such as gender, age, level of educations and period of service. Min and percentage will be used to describe the data.

### Result and Discussion

The analysis presents the demographic profile of the 380 respondents in terms of gender, age, education level, job position and tenure of job as shown in Table 1. The respondents consisted of 197 males (51.8%) and 183 females (48.2%). The age of the studied public servants is ranged from 25 to 55 and above years of age which shows that 14.5% of them are aged 25-30, 26.6% are officers aged 31-35 years old, and for officers aged 36-40 (17.4%), for 41-45 (13.9%), for 46-50 (12.4%) 50-55 (7.4%) and for officers aged 56 and above, the percentage is 7.9%. For marital status, 73.9% or 281 of them are married and 99 are single. Meanwhile, for position grade, most of the respondents or 184 of them are posted in grade 41/44 (48.4%), 87 (22.9%) are in grade 48, 61 (16.1%) in grade 48 and 48 or 12.6% of them are posted in grade 54. For level of education, 250 respondents (65.8%) are degree holders, 110 respondents (28.9%) are master holders and 20 respondents (5.3%) are PhD holders. For tenure of service, most of the respondents (162) have been worked for 1 to 10 years (42.6%). 152 of them have been worked for 11-20 years, and 66 (17.4%) respondents have been worked for more than 20 years.

Table 2

*The Demographic Profiles of the Respondents (n=380)*

No	Demographic Factor	Frequency Percentage (%)
1	Age Group	
	25-30	14.5
	31-35	26.6
	36-40	17.4
	41-45	13.9
	46-50	12.4
	51-55	7.4
2	56 and above	7.9
	Gender	
	Male	51.8
3	Female	48.2
	Marital Status	
3	Single	26.1
	Married	73.9
4	Position Grade	
	41/44	48.4
	48	22.9
	52	16.1
5	54	12.6
	Level of Education	
	Bachelor Degree	65.8
	Master Degree	28.9
6	Doctor of Philosophy	5.3
	Tenure in Service (years)	
	1-5	16.8
	6-10	25.8
	11-15	22.9

16-20	17.1
21 and above	17.4

### Descriptive Statistics for Workplace Deviant Behavior

In this part, workplace deviant behaviour construct was measured based on the descriptive statistics and the level of workplace deviant behaviour. The respondents were asked to indicate their frequency of their behaviour in the workplace on the likert-scale ranging 1 (never) to 5 (very often). After getting the responses, the report was prepared based on descriptive statistics and the scale was categorized into three levels, which are (1) low, (2) moderate, and (3) high. Finally, discussions for the findings are delineated. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for WDB construct.

Table 3

#### *Descriptive Statistics for WDB.*

Item	Percentage					M	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
1. Make fun of someone at work	51.6	24.7	22.6	0.5	0.5	1.74	.862
2. Said something hurtful to someone at work.	38.9	32.1	18.4	10.5	0	2.01	.999
3. Curse someone at work	59.5	38.9	1.6	0	0	1.42	.525
4. Blame someone for mistakes you made the job.	56.3	14.5	28.7	.5	0	1.73	.896
5. Act rudely toward someone at work	64.5	25.8	9.7	0	0	1.45	.666
6. Publicly embarrass someone at work	86.3	6.8	6.8	0	0	1.21	.548
7. Take office supplies (e.g. paper, pens) or equipment home without permission.	38.7	35.3	25.0	1.1	0	1.88	.817
8. Spend too much time fantasizing or daydreaming at work.	13.9	59.7	20	6.3	0	2.19	.747
9. Take an additional or longer break than is acceptable at my workplace.	30.5	45.0	23.7	8	0	1.95	.757
10. Come in late without permission.	67.9	20.5	11.6	0	0	1.44	.692
11. Use office computer for personal reasons during working hours.	26.8	31.6	36.3	1.6	3.7	2.24	.986
12. Litter your work environment	42.6	35.5	15.8	3.9	2.1	1.87	.958
13. Neglect boss's instructions.	55.3	28.4	16.3	0	0	1.61	.752
14. Intentionally work slowly than I could do.	58.2	27.9	10	3.7	3	1.60	.833
15. Use the company phone to make personal calls without permission.	51.8	30.8	17.4	0	0	1.66	.758



16	Put little effort in your work.	50.8	42.6	6.3	.3	0	1.56	.624
17	Dragged out work in order to get overtime.	80.3	17.6	2.1	0	0	1.22	.462
18	Left work earlier than you were allowed to.	79.5	12.9	7.4	3	0	1.28	.606
19	Make photocopies/fax machine at work for personal use without permission.	38.4	38.2	19.5	.3	3.7	1.93	.958
20	Use sick leave when you not sick.	94.2	5.0	.8	0	0	1.07	.278
<i>Overall Mean</i>							1.65	0.74

Note:  $n=380$  Five point Likert-scale (1: Never, 2: Rarely, 3: Sometime, 4: Often, 5: Very Often)  
M : mean SD : standard deviation

### Level of WDB Among Government Officers in Putrajaya

Table 3 shows the level of WDB among the respondents. Based on the table, the overall sample mean for WDB was 1.12 (SD = .32). Most of the respondents (88.2%) are found to engage low for overall WDB and 45 of them (11.8%) indicated moderate level. From the results, it could be concluded that the level of workplace deviant behaviour among the government officer in Putrajaya is low.

Table 4

*The level of WDB (n=380)*

Level	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	M	SD
Low (1.00 -2.33)	335	88.2	1.12	.323
Moderate (2.34 3.66)	45	11.8		
High (3.67 – 5.00)	0	0		
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>		

Note:  $n = 380$ . M: mean, S.D.: standard deviation

### Discussion on WDB level

Research objective 1 is determined through means and standard deviation analysis. This study revealed that the majority of government officers in Putrajaya ( $n=380$ ) reported a low level of workplace deviant behaviour ( $M=1.12$ ,  $SD = .323$ ). The result indicated that the level of workplace deviant behaviour among the government officers in Putrajaya was low. Other local researchers such as Yogeswary (2009); Alias (2013); Radzali (2015) also reported similar low mean in their studies which indicated 1.54, 1.57 and 2.82 respectively.

In this study, the most common workplace deviant behaviours engaged by the government officers were “use office computer for personal reasons during working hours”, “spend too much time fantasizing or daydreaming at work”, “said something hurtful to someone at work” and “take an additional or longer break than is acceptable at workplace”. The less common workplace deviant behaviours conducted by government officers are “use sick leave when

not sick”, “dragged out work in order to get overtime”, and “publicly embarrass someone at work”.

The Significant Differences in Workplace Deviant Behaviour Among Selected Social Demographic Variables (Age, Gender, Marital Status, Position, Level of Education and Tenure in Service).

This study analysed the comparison by using SPSS and utilized various techniques as ANOVA and independent sample t-test to investigate the differences between the respondents to engage in deviant behaviour.

#### WDB Level on Age Group

One-way ANOVA was used to test whether there was a difference between respondents with different age categories in WDB. Based on analysis Table 2, shown the follows:

Table 5

*One way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Comparing Workplace Deviant Behaviour with Different Age Group*

Variable	Sum of Square	d.f	Mean Square	F	sig.F
Workplace Deviant Behaviour					
Between group	.315	6	.052	.283	.945
Within group	69.133	373	.185		
Total	69.447	379			

In Table 5, the ANOVA test was conducted to compare the significant difference between age level on workplace deviant behaviour level among government officers in Putrajaya. Therefore, the ANOVA result showed that there was no significant difference between age levels in workplace deviant behaviour  $F(6, 373) = .283, p = .945$ .

#### WDB Level on Gender Group

An independent sample t-test was used to compare the WDB for male and female in this study. The study found that there was no significant difference between the WDB level between male and female ( $t=.817, p=.414$ ).

Table 6

*Result of independent t-test on WDB level by Gender*

Variable	n	Mean	SD	t	p
Gender				.817	.414
Male	197	1.6731	.424		
Female	183	1.6372	.432		

Table 6 was based on independent-samples t-test which was conducted to test the difference in WDB level between male and female among government officers in Putrajaya. As illustrated from in Table 6, there was no significant difference in Workplace Deviant behavior



level between male ( $M = 1.6731$ ,  $SD = .424$ ) and female ( $M = 1.6372$ ,  $SD = .432$ )  $t(380) = .817$ ,  $p = .414$ . Mean of WDB level for males ( $M=1.673$ ) was higher than mean for female ( $M=1.6372$ ).

#### WDB Level on Marital Status

An independent sample t-test was used to test whether there was a difference between respondents with different marital status in WDB. Based on analysis Table 7, shown the follows:

Table 7

*Result of independent t-test on WDB level by Marital Status*

Variable	n	Mean	SD	t	p
Marital Status				.416	.677
Single	99	1.6712	.439		
Married	281	1.6504	.424		

Mean of WDB level for single ( $M=1.6712$ ) was higher than mean for married ( $M=1.6504$ ). Table 7 explained that an independent-samples t-test was conducted to test the difference in WDB level between single and married among government officers in Putrajaya. As illustrated from in Table 4.1.3.3, there was no significant difference in Workplace Deviant behavior level between single ( $M = 1.6712$ ,  $SD = .439$ ) and married ( $M = 1.6504$ ,  $SD = .424$ )  $t(380) = .416$ ,  $p = .414$ . Therefore, the results showed that the different of workplace deviant behavior between the marital status groups was not significant.

#### WDB Level on Grade Position

One-way ANOVA was used to test whether there was a difference between respondents with different grade position in WDB. Based on analysis, Table 8 showed the follows:

Table 8

One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for comparing workplace deviant behaviour with different grade position

Variable	Sum of Square	d.f	Mean Square	F	sig.F
Workplace Deviant Behaviour					
Between group	.296	3	.099	.537	.657
Within group	69.151	376	.184		
Total	69.447	379			

Table 8 explained that the ANOVA test was conducted to compare the significant difference between grade position group on workplace deviant behaviour among government officers in Putrajaya. Therefore, the ANOVA result showed that there was no significant difference between age levels in workplace deviant behaviour  $F(3, 376) = .283$ ,  $p = .657$ . In short, this study has shown that there is no significant difference in WDB between groups with different grade position among government officers in Putrajaya.

## WDB Level on Education Level

One-way ANOVA was used to test whether there was a difference between respondents with different education level in WDB. Based on analysis, Table 9 shown the follows:

Table 9

*One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for comparing workplace deviant behaviour with different education level*

Variable	Sum of Square	d.f	Mean Square	F	sig.F
Workplace Deviant Behaviour					
Between group	.214	2	.107	.584	.558
Within group	69.233	377	.184		
Total	69.447	379			

The ANOVA test in Table 9 was conducted to compare the significant difference between different education level on workplace deviant behaviour among government officers in Putrajaya. Therefore, the ANOVA result showed that there was no significant difference between age levels in workplace deviant behaviour  $F(2, 377) = .584, p = .558$ .

In other words, this study showed that there is no significant difference in WDB between groups with different education level among government officers in Putrajaya.

## WDB Level on Tenure in Service

One-way ANOVA was used to test whether there was a difference between respondents with different tenure in services and WDB. Based on analysis, Table 10 shown the follows:

Table 10

*One way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Comparing Workplace Deviant Behaviour with Different Tenure in Service*

Variable	Sum of Square	d.f	Mean Square	F	sig.F
Workplace Deviant Behaviour					
Between group	1.620	4	.405	2.238	.064
Within group	67.828	375	.181		
Total	69.447	379			

The ANOVA test in Table 10 was conducted to compare the significant difference between tenure of services and workplace deviant behaviour among government officers in Putrajaya. Therefore, the ANOVA result showed that there was no significant difference between age levels in workplace deviant behaviour  $F(4, 375) = 2.238, p = .064$ .

The analysis showed that there is no significant difference in WDB between groups with different tenure of service among government officers in Putrajaya.

## Conclusion

As a conclusion, the finding of this study is obtained from the research among the government officers in Putrajaya. The first objective of this study is to determine the level of WDB among government officers in Putrajaya. It was found that the level of workplace deviant behaviour among the government officers in Putrajaya was low.

The second objective is to compare the significant differences in workplace deviant behaviour among selected social demographic variables (gender, age, position, marital status and tenure in service). For demographic factors, the current study found that, there were no significant differences in workplace deviant behaviour among the respondents with different age, gender, marital status, position, level of education and tenure in service.

Although the level of workplace deviant behaviour is low, the organization must take an effort in focusing the good working environment in the workplace. The deviant behaviour must be monitored, and the swift action must be taken to the officers who have a sign of misbehaviour in the workplace.

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