



**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANISATIONAL
JUSTICE, COUNTERPRODUCTIVE WORK
BEHAVIOUR AND ISLAMIC WORK ETHICS IN
SELECTED MINISTRIES IN PUBLIC SECTOR IN
OMAN**

BY

SHARIFA KHAMIS SALIM AL-BALUSHI

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ABSTRACT

Due to their roles in daily life, the phenomena of organisational justice, counterproductive work behaviour, and the relationship between these two phenomena have received extensive attention in numerous past researches. However, most of these studies are from the Western point-of-view. There are very few studies from the Islamic point-of-view. This study reviewed this relationship from the Islamic perspective. In addition, it examined the relationship of the Islamic work ethics with the two phenomena. The data was collected from 609 Muslim employees from three ministries in the public sector in the Sultanate of Oman (399 employees from the Ministry of Education, 113 employees from the Ministry of Civil Service, and 97 from the Ministry of Finance). Three different scales were used to measure the three variables: organisational justice, counterproductive work behaviour, and Islamic work ethics. The results showed that negative employee's perception is related to organisational justice, and positive perception is related to Islamic work ethics and counterproductive work behaviour. Results also indicated that there is no relationship between organisational justice and Islamic work ethics; while there were evidence that suggests employees' higher perception of Islamic work ethics decreases counterproductive work behaviour practices. The result showed there is no significant mediating influence of Islamic work ethics in the relationship between organisational justice and counterproductive work behaviour. Furthermore, the study investigated the negative impact of organisational justice on counterproductive work behaviour. Future studies are suggested to provide deeper insight and understanding on organisational justice, counterproductive work behaviour and Islamic work ethics; which in turn, will enhance better working environment. Finally, the implication of the study was discussed.

خلاصة البحث

أولت الأدبيات النظرية إهتماما بالغاً بدراسة ظاهرتي العدالة التنظيمية والسلوك المضاد للإنتاج والعلاقة بينهما، نظراً لدورهما الكبير في الحياة اليومية. وللأسف فإن معظم هذه الدراسات كانت من منظور غربي وقلة منها فقط من منظور إسلامي. هذه الدراسة التجريبية تسعى لإستقصاء الموضوع من وجهة نظر إسلامية، وتختبر علاقة مبادئ العمل الإسلامي مع كلا المفهومين. تم جمع البيانات من 3 وزارات حكومية بسلطنة عمان ممثلة ب (609) موظف مسلم (منهم 399 موظف من وزارة التربية والتعليم، 113 موظف من وزارة الخدمة المدنية، 97 موظف من وزارة المالية). شملت الدراسة إستخدام ثلاث مقاييس مختلفة لقياس كل من العدالة التنظيمية، والسلوك المضاد للإنتاج، ومبادئ العمل الإسلامي. نتائج الدراسة أثبتت أن الفئة المستهدفة من الموظفين لديهم وجهات نظر سلبية عن مدى توفر العدالة التنظيمية، ووجهات نظر إيجابية عن مدى وجود مبادئ العمل الإسلامي والسلوك المضاد للإنتاج بوزارات القطاع الحكومي. كما أثبتت نتائج الدراسة من وجهة نظر العينة أنه لا توجد علاقة بين العدالة التنظيمية ومبادئ العمل الإسلامي، بينما أثبتت الدراسة أن وجهات نظر الموظفين الإيجابية بخصوص مبادئ العمل الإسلامي تقلل من ممارسة السلوك المضاد للإنتاج. وخلصت الدراسة إلى عدم وجود أثر وساطة لمبادئ العمل الإسلامي في العلاقة بين كل من مفهومي العدالة التنظيمية والسلوك المضاد للإنتاج. إضافة لذلك فقد توصلت الدراسة إلى أن العلاقة بين العدالة التنظيمية والسلوك المضاد للإنتاج هي علاقة عكسية من وجهة نظر الفئة المستهدفة. وعرضت الدراسة عدد من إقتراحات الدراسات المستقبلية بخصوص كلا من: العدالة التنظيمية، والسلوك المضاد للإنتاج، ومبادئ العمل الإسلامي والتي بدورها قد تساهم في تحسين بيئة العمل.

APPROVAL PAGE

The dissertation of Sharifa Khamis Salim Al-Balushi has been approved by the following:

Junaidah Hashim
Supervisor

AAhad M. Osman-Gani
Co-supervisor

Suhaimi Mohammed Sarif
Internal examiner

Zakaria Ismail
External examiner

Maimunah Ismail
External examiner

Muhammad Abu Eusuf
Chairman

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also, declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Sharifa Khamis Salim Al-Balushi

Signature.....

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INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

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COUNTERPRODUCTIVE WORK BEHAVIOUR AND ISLAMIC
WORK ETHICS AMONG SELECTED MINISTRIES IN PUBLIC
SECTOR IN OMAN**

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of sub-titles and overview of the entire dissertation. It begins with an introduction outlining the background of the study, the concept of justice in daily life, types of justice in work organisations, counterproductive work behaviour and Islamic work ethics. The chapter further presents the concept of organisational justice and counterproductive work behaviour recognised by Islamic work ethics in light of the *Qur'an*, evidencing and affirming that the *Qur'an* is the base and origin for all facts and knowledge. In addition, fundamentally the chapter indicates that Muslims must not rely on mere standards while isolating the current concepts and knowledge from the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*. The first chapter then proceeds to focus on the Sultanate of Oman; its location, geography, population, Islamic history, religious stance and laws, as well as the transformation brought by the discovery of oil and a healthy economy. Finally, the chapter covers the statement of the problem, research questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, definition of terms, and the structure of the study.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The absence of organisational justice and the remarkable occurrence of counterproductive work behaviour had become major concerns for scholars in different fields (Aquino et al., 1999; Jones, 2004; Hashim, 2008; Skaricki and Folger, 1997). Both phenomena are correlated with each other and this correlation is known to be a chronic problem in organisations across the world (Colquitt et al., 2008; Colquitt et al., 2005; De Lara and Verano-Tacoronote, 2007; Lim, 2002; Murphy, 1998). This

problem is faced by both Muslim and non-Muslim countries (Abu Sinn, 1984; Al-Umar, 1999; Beekun, 1996; Chapra, 2007). The mainstream of current research is narrowed as it is concentrated on the role of organisational justice in lowering counterproductive work behaviour (Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2008; Ferres and Trvaglione, 2003; Martinko and Douglas, 2002). Thus far, in the effort to resolve the problem, organisational managers and academicians seek for solutions that rely primarily on ethics and religions rather than depending on secular systems (Aquino, Galperin & Bennett, 2004; Ghazi, 2010; Shahata, 2009). As a rule, religious teachings guide employees to be committed to organisational justice while they prohibit counterproductive work behaviour (Chapra, 2007; Hausman & McPherson, 1993; Sen, 1987; Shahata, 2009). The Islamic religion for instance advocates that its followers are to uphold justice and ethics while obviating misconduct behaviours so to gain the blessing of Allah in their lifetime and in the Hereafter. Allah commanded the believers with regard to this in many verses of the *Qur'an*. Allah says

"Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded". (Qur'an, An-nahal: 90).

It is stated in another *Qur'anic* verse,

"O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even though it be against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, be he rich or poor, Allah is a Better Protector to both (than you). So follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest you avoid justice; and if you distort your witness or refuse to give it, verily, Allah is Ever Well-Acquainted with what you do". (Qur'an, An-nisa: 135).

Indeed nowadays, organisations in the Arab and Islamic countries are echoing the same call for the proper implementation of Islamic work ethics. Muslim organisations are more in need now of its practice than ever in the past. A large portion of the government sectors in the Arab countries are faced with the same

problems related to not only the absence of organisational justice, but also the dramatic growth of counterproductive work behaviour. This undoubtedly is one among the many reasons that caused the rise of the Arab Spring. In spite of this, there are insufficient studies that shed light on Islamic work ethics as the foundation for organisational justice and remedy to counterproductive work behaviour, as well as its role in improving organisational performance in the private and public sector.

However, this study aims to fulfil the urgent need of integrating both the Western and Islamic concept of organisational justice and counterproductive work behaviour and their relationship with one another. In addition, it ascertains the role of Islamic work ethics in this relationship such that the governments can reform their organisations and play a better role to meet the demand of the societies. The present study provides a new theoretical framework of organisational justice and counterproductive work behaviour from the Islamic perspective, while highlighting the role of Islamic work ethics in augmenting organisational justice (O.J) and reducing counterproductive work behaviour (CWB).

1.2 JUSTICE IN DAILY LIFE

Justice has always been an overwhelmingly essential and important element for human beings. It is a commonly required factor of moral rightness among the employer and his employees as between the king and his people. It symbolises one of the most important virtues that people try to apply in their homes, organisations and countries all over the world. In general, justice holds the same meaning as equality and fairness treatment as it applies to the politicians, economists, socialists, scientists, etc.

Consequently, justice is one of the important systematic elements required to sustain the productivity of human beings, while establishing equity of rights and duties among people and preserving their dignity. It is considered as an essential requirement for different levels of employees both of traditional and modern work settings, private and public organisations; in a variety of organisational settings (Jones, 2009; Yuosef and Shamsuri, 2010). Recently, there is a progressive focus on the concept of justice due to developing employees' conscience about their duties and rights in order to uphold successful decentralisation. This may lead to the achievement of maximum alignment between organisational goals and the employees' interpersonal goals (Colquitt and Judge, 2004). In addition, it may result in employees' increased commitment towards the current and future changeable working environments and their empowerment in decision making. Nowadays, global and modern organisations depend on organisational justice to attain their missions (Henle, 2005; Kwak, 2006). Moreover, the practice of justice will lead to more accurate decisions. Considering the benefits rewarded by the organisations, employees under these circumstances will endeavour to invest maximum usefulness of their skills, abilities and resources to ensure the decision making is a success (Aquino, Lewis and Bradfield, 1999; Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter and Ng, 2008; Hassan and Mohd Noor, 2008).

Issues related to organisational justice have been researched theoretically and practically. Organisational justice has become one of the most researched topics for organisational scholars (Hashim, 2008; Nabatchi, 2007). The majority of these researches were conducted by organisational behaviour researchers (Al-Mahdy, 2006; Fujishiro, 2005; Mccardle, 2007). In addition, most of these researches are mainly concerned with examining how organisational justice affects the organisation (Cole

and Flint, 2003; Hassan and Chandaran, 2005; Williams, 2000; Luescher, 2004), while few of these researches agreed on the best practice descriptions that can formalise it (Casas, 2007). During the second half of the last century, related literature began to conceptualise the types of organisational justice and their impact on work place and employees.

1.3 JUSTICE IN WORK ORGANISATIONS

1.3.1 What is Distributive Justice?

The concept of distributive justice was initiated when Adams (1963) first mentioned it in his literature on wage inequalities (Adams, 1963), and in his seminal work in 1965 when he introduced the equity theory which is embedded in reference to the first type of justice called distributive justice. The term distributive justice is concerned with allotted payment, allocation of the profits and division of the rewards among employees (Hassan and Mohd Noor, 2008; Sweeny and Mcfarlin, 1997). It describes the perceived equity dealing with the outcome of decisions taken by managers concerning the remuneration for employees, their promotion, schedules and rewards. In other word, distributive justice compares between the employees' performance (input) on one hand and the reward and appraisal they earn (output) on the other. Thereafter, the derived ratio is compared with other referents (Fujishiro, 2005). Employees perceive distributive justice as two equal ratios; but if there is a difference then they are perceived as inequity (Jawahar, 2002). Thus mainly distributive justice is concerned more with the ends rather than the means of whether or not the organisations practice equity and fairness for the outcomes among their employees (Lambert, 2005).

1.3.2 What is Procedural Justice?

Procedural justice refers to justice that is concerned with the evaluation of organisational act according to perceived fairness of decision making pathways (Lambert, 2005). It is known that procedural justice is first mentioned by the scholar Greenberg in 1987, who then concentrated on the assessment that an organisation act is an outcome of unfair procedures which resulted in unfair treatments (Lee, 2007). In comparison with distributive justice, procedural justice is focused more on the means. It is equally important to the majority of individuals that the decision is the process of the decision itself. Although the decision is made on fair basis, employees may be dissatisfied if the process involved to reach the decision is unfair (Lambart, 2005). Research studies indicate that the individual's perception of equal treatment mainly depends on two factors: the level of individual outcomes and the justification aligned with the outcomes. The decision outcomes and procedures will gain more appreciation if it is combined with more explanation on the: authority's sensitivity to employees' opinions, biasness of the decisions, and adequate reliable information to decide on honest ideas based on the communication of the authority (Greenberg, 1990a).

1.3.3 What is Interactional Justice?

The third dimension of justice is the concept of interactional justice that rose in the 1980s era. It is linked to the respected and sincere relationship between the employees, their supervisors and decision makers while passing work assignments (Aquino et al., 1999). It postulates the equity of non-procedural aspects of interactions. It consists of two kinds of justice: interpersonal justice and informational justice. The interpersonal justice is more likely to deal with respect, seriousness, stateliness, politeness and sensitivity of decision makers and those who allocate

outcomes indicated to individuals in the workplace (Henle, 2005). Informational justice reflects the way that authorities pass the laws and explanations aligned with the enactment of their decision making procedures (Nabatchi, 2007). In other words, it shows the points of view of employees on their employer's level of reasoning and reliability (Fujishiro, 2005; Jacobson, 2009).

In general and based on past studies (Fujishiro, 2005; Hassan and Chandaran, 2005; Hassan and Mohd Noor, 2008; Jones, 2009; Kwak, 2006) the researcher concludes that the term organisational justice and its three components have gained increased focus in all organisations since clear evidence revealed that their practice leads to both organisational and individual benefits, especially in the aspect of productivity. On the other hand, the absence of organisational justice results in counterproductive work behaviour (CWB) (Fox and Spector, 1999; Henle, 2005; Jacobson, 2009; Tripp, Bies and Aquino, 2007).

1.4 COUNTERPRODUCTIVE WORK BEHAVIOUR (CWB)

The findings of several researchers have shown that organisational justice has potential effects that enhance work behaviour (Nabatchi, 2007). In this aspect, there are evidences which support the idea that increased understanding towards employees' behaviour may allow managers to foster favourable employees' behaviours (Lee, 2007). In addition, such understanding helps to explore, describe, explain and predict unfavourable behaviours among employees. The latter may cause the disruption of workplace relationship between employees and managers that may result to failure of the organisations in the labour market. Examples of such unfavourable behaviours are revenge, frustration, retaliation, sabotage, turnover, theft, anger and anxiety (Fox and Spector, 1999; Tripp, Bies and Aquino, 2007).

Some or all of these behaviours are known as counterproductive work behaviour. There are disagreements in naming this set of behaviour. In diverse studies, they are entitled under different names such as "anti-social organisational behaviour, organisational misbehaviour, organisational deviance, employee withdrawal, dishonesty, dysfunctional behaviour and counterproductive work behaviour". (Everton, Jolton and Mastrangele, 2005: 118). Apparently there exists divergence among prior studies on these behaviours. The counterproductive work behaviour (CWB) is defined as the intentional behaviours and treatments of individuals that have negative effect against the organisation, colleagues in the workplace and the organisations' stakeholders. CWB can be taken into account as a fully optional behaviour. Some scholars describe CWB as a reaction which is based on a feeling against organisational pressures (Bukhari and Ali, 2009). While, others perceive CWB as a reaction or response that is based on one's perception towards organisational injustice practices (Fox and Spector, 2001). These two different points of view reflect the concept of CWB in relation to other theories. The first assumption links it with frustration theory and the second proposes a link with job stress theory. These two dimensions to which CWB are linked are believed to be key elements in some studies (Greenberg, 1990).

Research by Henle (2005) regarding CWB as a chosen behaviour with full intent to break up the organisations' rules and customs, damage its standards and harm the employees indicated that CWB consists of physical and verbal act e.g. misuse of the organisational resources, absenteeism, and failure to abide by managers' instructions (Fox and Spector, 2010). CWB is considered to be a part of employees' performance which represents violence to organisational standards (Henle, 2005).

This class of behaviour hinders the achievement of organisational goals. This set of behaviour ranges between behaviours that cause major destruction to the organisation like harassment, sabotage of the substances and theft or that of the minor behaviours; e.g. spreading of rumours, misuse of the internet and some emotional reactions (Mount, Ilies and Johnson, 2006). Most of the researches in this field have dealt with each form of these behaviours separately and have considered each of them different. This resulted to a narrow scope of studies using limited sets of both dependent and independent variables (Jacobson, 2009; Marcus and Schuler, 2004).

It is noticeable that there are some studies which discuss counterproductive work behaviour. Nevertheless only a limited number of the studies show the actual statistical result of these set of behaviours among employees of different organisations. This is due to the high difficulty of tracking these kinds of behaviours individually among the employees and organisational members. Such limited representation of employees' behaviour could also be due to poor organisational reputation which may be caused by unfavourable statistics.

1.5 ISLAMIC ETHICS

1.5.1 Importance of Justice in Islamic Work Ethics

"لقد أرسلنا رسلنا بالبينات وأنزلنا معهم الكتاب والميزان ليقوم الناس بالقسط، وأنزلنا الحديد فيه بأس شديد ومنافع للناس وليعلم الله من ينصره ورسله بالغيب ان الله قوي عزيز" (قرآن, سورة الحديد: 25)

"Certainly We sent Our apostles with clear arguments, and sent down with them the book and the balance that men may conduct themselves with equity; and we have made the iron, wherein is great violence and advantages to men, and that Allah may know who helps Him and His apostles in the secret; surely Allah is Strong, Mighty" (Qur'an, al-Hadid: 25).

There are more than one thousand verses in the *Qur'an* that mention justice and equity. The verses, each of which is longer than two lines, warn people against dealing with injustice while ordering them to oppose the prejudice. Briefly, the signs that represent the justice concept nearly constitute a book of fifty pages (Al-Banna, 1995). It is the aim of all of God's messengers and scriptures to distribute justice among people (Hashim, 2008; Sallam and Hanafy, 1988). It is determined in the aforementioned *Qur'anic* verse (*Ayah*); that to establish justice, the guidelines should be as revealed in the Holy book and the equipment to accomplish it is balance. The Islamic method to justice is unlimited and must encompass all life matters (Bazargan, 1979). The ways to apply the method is characterised by pleasant combination with the *Shari'ah*. Even though God commanded humans to comply with justice, He neither set fixed regulations, nor has He recommended the necessary tools insisted upon to be compulsorily used (Khadduri, 1988). Consequently, all regulations, tools and methods that may result in more simplicity and effectiveness, do not conflict with the *Shari'ah*, and is based on the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* are considered highly acceptable and reasonable (Al-Qaradawi, 1993; Qutob, 1993). According to the outstanding value of justice in Islam, Muslims are mandated to formulate it in their actions and verbal behaviours. This helps to raise a Muslim community that is incomparable with other societies in terms of justice implementation in economic, social and political relationships (Ahmed, 1988; Al-Masri, 1982; Al-Olaymi, 2000). Furthermore, one of the best standpoints of justice spotted in the *Qur'an* is revealed in *Surat al-Imran*:

"شهد الله أنه لا إله إلا هو والملائكة وأولو العلم قائما بالقسط لا إله إلا هو العزيز الحكيم" (قرآن, آل عمران: 18)

"Allah bears witness that there is no god but He, and (so do) the angels and those possessed of knowledge, maintaining His creation with justice; there is no god but He, the Mighty, the Wise" (Qur'an, al-Imran: 18).