


Chapter 19

Understanding Cognitive Pathways of Unethical Pro-Organizational Behaviour: Insights From Socio-Cognitive Theories and Counteractive Interventions

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ABSTRACT

In this chapter, the author intends to draw your attention on to the current workplace scenario, focusing of the population growth and increasing unemployability. As a result, a phenomenon known as unethical pro-organizational behaviour (UPB) is born, which has the ability to hamper any organization's sustainability. The author tries to explain the underlying causes of the same in terms of organizational factors as well as psycho-social factors and then moves on to explain UPB in terms of various socio-cognitive theories in order to gain a holistic understanding of human cognition behind this phenomenon with the help of various empirically proven studies and experiments in the past. Based on the findings and interpretations, a representational model of the antecedents and socio-cognitive theories causing UPB has been formulated. The chapter ends with discussing the importance of incorporating various interventions, which will help organizations to mitigate the profound effect of UPB on employee well-being and organizational sustainability.

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A QUICK GLANCE INTO THE ORGANIZATIONAL WORLD

In the current rapidly evolving global landscape, the confluence of marketplace dynamics and organizational imperatives has created a unique set of circumstances with significant implications for the world of work. Amidst the backdrop of increasing job demand, driven by population growth and economic aspirations, we encounter an intriguing paradox—job scarcity (Hutabarat et al., 2023). This paradox, coupled with the prevailing culture of job hopping, casts a noticeable shadow, characterized by ethical misconduct and a complex phenomenon known as Unethical Pro-Organizational Behaviour (UPB). In this intricate interplay of forces, where professional ambitions intersect with personal ethics, UPB emerges as a central player, illuminating the intricate dance between organizational expectations and the ethical choices made by employees.

Escalating Job Demand and Population Growth

As the global population continues its expansion, an ever-expanding labour force takes shape, bringing with it heightened demand for employment opportunities. This demand arises from the dual desires of individuals seeking economic sustenance and organizations searching for skilled talent. This intensifying competition within the marketplace fuels the perpetual churn of job openings and candidates, particularly in industries on the cutting edge of technological innovation.

Job Scarcity Amidst Job Demand

Interestingly, within this clamour for jobs, a contrasting narrative unfolds—a narrative of job scarcity. Traditional industries and regions, once economic pillars of communities, now confront the harsh realities of automation, globalization, and economic transformation. Consequently, job scarcity emerges, often coupled with diminished job security, ushering in uncertainty and ethical quandaries for individuals. During August, the unemployment rate in the United States went up by 0.3 percentage points to reach 3.8 percent, and the count of jobless individuals reached 6.4 million, indicating limited differences from the previous year. Different demographic categories encountered variations in their unemployment figures, while there was a minor uptick in the labour force participation rate, and a significant portion of the population continued to have some connection to the labour force without full engagement (Job Openings and Labor Turnover Summary - 2023 M07 Results, n.d.).

Job Hopping as a Response

Faced with the paradox of job demand and scarcity, many individuals have responded by embracing the ethos of job hopping. The phenomenon of frequently changing jobs has gained prominence, particularly among younger generations (Rivers, 2018). Driven by aspirations of career advancement, diversified skillsets, and improved financial prospects, these individuals hop from one opportunity to another (Pandey, 2019). While this practice offers personal growth avenues, it also introduces an element of instability within organizations, posing challenges to employers striving to attract and retain talent.

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