

Chapter 4

Unethical Pro– Organizational Behavior in Iranian Organizations: A Qualitative Exploration of Consequences

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ABSTRACT

Unethical pro-organizational behaviour has been studied in organizational study significantly. Despite the fact that the existing literature provides ample insights into UPB, there is a limited number of researches that focus on Islamic countries, especially in Iran. To address this gap, this study delves into the consequences of UPB in Iranian organization. Therefore, the qualitative approach was design and 16 employees from Tehran municipality were interviewed to gain in-depth insight. Using thematic analysis, three well-supported themes with sub-themes were obtained. Consequences of UPB have been classified into three main group: individual, organizational and social outcomes. Each group has their own sub-themes too.

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This research sheds light on the multifaceted repercussions of UPB, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions and ethical awareness in Iranian workplaces.

INTRODUCTION

Recent years, media and the internet are filled with news regarding unethical behaviour in the workplaces. For instance, companies are constantly losing money because of dishonesty and deceit of their employees (X. Zhang et al., 2020). Due to the maturity in the digital century, customers look for more ethical behaviours from companies. Companies with high profit which engage in immoral behaviours are more visible to the public (Gigauri et al., 2021). These notoriety prove the existence of unethical behaviours in the society and tell that organizations like it too. As a result, researchers examined another type of unethical behaviour, namely unethical pro-organizational behaviour which is an act that aims to asset the organization (Umphress & Bingham, 2010). Since the presentation of UPB to the business scholars, this topic became a hot subject to several business research. Previous scholars have searched through the individual, supervisor, and organizational level factors, and their ensuing psychological processes that cause unethical pro-organizational behaviour in the company. Potential parameters which may exacerbate or weaken UPB were explored to illuminate UPB's nature (Mishra et al., 2022).

Unethical pro-organizational behaviour (UPB) has been defined as an action intended to promote the effective functioning of the organization or its members (e.g., leaders) and violates core social values, moors, laws, or standards of proper conduct (Umphress & Bingham, 2011). UPB has two interpretational parts. First, unethical conduct which is unacceptable or illegal to society is considered UPB. Second, UPB is pro-organizational behaviour which means it is done voluntary by employees to help their organization (Umphress & Bingham, 2010). UPB was categorized as a pro-organizational workplace crime, which aims to benefit the organization (Vadera and Pratt, 2013). According to Vardi and Weitz (2003), UPB is an organizational misbehaviours type O (OMB type O), that primarily intends to benefit the member's employing organization as a whole (Vardi and Weitz, 2004). For example, in order to keep the competitive advantages, employees lie or exaggerate about their organizations (Chen et al., 2016). Another example which had happened in the organization under the study, is that, employees tried to convince land owner to change the land-use plan from residential to commercial and therefore pay extra money to the municipality, while they do not need this change for their business. Researchers separated UPB from other errors, mistakes, or unconscious negligence that employees may perform without particular goal to benefit or harm the organi-

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