

Conceptualising Hypotheses for the Effects of Organisational Structure on Faculty Job Performance, Job Satisfaction and Counterproductive Work Behavior through a Comprehensive Literature Review

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Abstract: Organisational behaviour theorists have always tried to understand the best way to build work places to positively influence employee behaviour. Though both personal and environmental factors influence human behaviour, the environmental factors are seen as more amenable to influence.¹ Apart from studying tangible stressors such as a lack of proper tools or equipment, meso level analyses on group level variables has also been done.² Hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) allows researchers to study the impact of group variables on individuals.³ The current study endeavors to understand the effect of the structure of an academic department on the faculty's job satisfaction, job performance and the prevalence of Counter productive work behavior (CWB).

Key words: Organisational structure, Faculty job performance, Job satisfaction, Counterproductive work behavior

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Introduction: Organisational behaviour theorists have always tried to understand the best way to build work places to positively influence employee behaviour. Though both

personal and environmental factors influence human behaviour, the environmental factors are seen as more amenable to influence.¹ Apart from studying tangible stressors such as a lack of

proper tools or equipment, meso level analyses on group level variables has also been done.² Hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) allows researchers to study the impact of group variables on individuals.³ The current study endeavors to understand the effect of the structure of an academic department on the faculty's job satisfaction, job performance and the prevalence of Counter productive work behavior (CWB).

Organizational Structure :

Burns and Stalker described organic and mechanistic organizational structures.⁴ In a mechanistic structure, work is divided into clear cut units, which are assigned to specific employees. There are strict rules and a strong hierarchy. Decisions flow top down and are non negotiable. The only formal networks are between successive levels.⁴ This is as opposed to organic systems where workers are aware of the responsibilities of other workers. Workers have to collaborate and lateral communication is generally an omnipresent feature. Job descriptions are not rigid. There is collaboration among workers. Rules and regulations are lesser in number, giving scope for innovation. Rather than follow orders, workers collaborate to come up with new ideas.⁴

Measuring organic and mechanistic structures

The kind of structure an organization adopts must depend on the operational conditions.⁴ Dynamic conditions call for an organic structure while stable conditions call for a mechanistic structure. Researchers have attempted to measure these two types of structures in many ways. Employees from top management were interviewed. Conversations that took place within organisations were taped

and coded.⁵ These methods have been noted to have methodological issues like bias.¹

Another method involved specifying distinct units of organic structures, followed by surveys to measure these units. Centralization and Formalization were the most commonly used indices in these studies.^{1,6,7,8,9} Centralization is a feature of mechanistic organisations where decision making is the prerogative of a relatively small number of individuals. The opposite situation holds good in organic organisations. Formalization is the importance of strictures and guidelines in an organization. High degrees of formalization are seen in mechanistic ecosystems; low levels of formalization are seen in organic ecosystems. The choice of specific constructs and scales studied varies across the studies, because of which realistic comparisons are not possible.¹

A third way that organizational structure was measured was with a nine-item, 5-point Likert scale.¹⁰ 26 items from the Organisational Assessment Instrument were used to evaluate organicity.^{11,12} Khandwalla's scale is a 7 item 7 point Likert scale.¹³ The higher the score the more organic the organization while the lower the score the more mechanistic the organization. Communication patterns vary between the two types of organizational structures.¹⁴ Within mechanistic structures they tend to be authoritative while within organic structures they tend to be consultative.

Organisational structure has relationships with three types of justice: Distributive justice (perception of fairness of outcomes), procedural justice (perceived fairness of the processes used to distribute rewards and

punishment) and interactional justice (the degree to which people affected by decisions perceive that they are treated with dignity and respect). A survey of 506 individuals in 98 departments within 64 organisations found that organizational structure moderated the relationship between procedural justice and perceived organizational support: the relationship was stronger in mechanistic than in organic organizational structures.¹⁵ Organisational structure moderated the relationship between interactional justice and supervisory trust: the relationship was stronger in organic than in mechanistic structures.¹⁵

In medium to large sized organisations, increased centralization had an inverse relationship with the levels of creativity and learning in a team. Increased formalization had an inverse relationship with team learning.¹⁶ No significant association was observed between formalization and creativity.¹⁶ Organic structures increased job satisfaction in employees working in small groups.¹⁰ Individuals who scored high on the needs for dominance, achievement and autonomy showed a stronger correlation between organic structures and job satisfaction as compared to individuals who scored low on these needs.¹⁰ Organic structures facilitate the development of charismatic leadership.¹¹

Scientists working in laboratories that were structured more organically perceived receiving more respect from their peers, contributed to their field more in objective terms, were more in line with the objectives of the management and felt a greater sense of personal achievement than their colleagues working in organisations that were more mechanistically structured.¹⁷

Counterproductive Work Behaviour (CWB)

Counterproductive work behaviour has often been examined within organizational research, but not in relation to organizational structure research.¹ Different terms used in literature to describe CWB are incivility^{18,19}, mobbing²⁰, organizational retaliatory behavior^{21,22}, aggression²³ and deviance.²⁴ CWB can be defined as “behaviors by employees intended to harm their organization or organization members, such as theft, sabotage, interpersonal aggression, work slowdowns, wasting time and/or materials, and spreading rumors”.²⁵ CWB can be either towards the organization (CWB-O. Damaging equipment, wasting resources) or towards other employees (CWB-I. Verbal and physical abuse, stealing)

CWB has important consequences for organisations. Billions of dollars are lost each year in theft, fraud and lost business.²⁶ Most existing data on CWB are from only a few countries like the United States, the U.K. and Australia. India has very little data on workplace violence.²⁷ The majority of CWB is passive, indirect and verbal; with the rest being active, direct and physical.²³ CWB is counterproductive for both the supervisor and the subordinate. Superiors who did not use verbally aggressive messages and used nonverbal immediacy were perceived by their subordinates to be more competent, sensitive and trustworthy than superiors who used verbally aggressive messages and who were nonverbally immediate.²⁸ Therefore it is important to examine the possible antecedents of CWB.

Measuring CWB

The Workplace Incivility

Scale(WIS)(Cortina et al)has 7 items on a 4 point Likert scale ranging from 1(never) to 4(most of the time).²⁹The scale has 2 columns to rate the immediate supervisor and co workers on behaviours that may have been exhibited in the previous 2 years.Internal consistency is acceptable.^{29,30}

Robinson and Bennett outlined a classification with four quadrants.³¹According to them,CWB could be serious/minor(consequences of CWB) and interpersonal/organizational(target of CWB).The four quadrants would then be:minor acts aimed at the organization,serious acts aimed at the organization,minor acts aimed at individuals and serious acts aimed at individuals.

Fox et al(2001) found that an increase in autonomy,positive emotion and distributive justice contributed to a decrease in CWB directed towards the organization,but not towards other employees.³²More specifically,Fox and Spector(1999) discovered that employees reacted to frustration and work environment constraints with minor acts of CWB aimed at the organization and both minor and serious acts of CWB aimed at co-workers,but not serious acts of CWB aimed at the organization.Fox and Spector(1999) discovered that employees experiencing anxiety were more likely to commit serious acts of CWB aimed at the organization and fellow employees;and minor acts aimed at the organization but not at the employees.This is an indication that different types of CWB have different antecedents.

Spectoret al(2006) have identified five types of CWB:abuse,production deviance,sabotage,theft and withdrawal.³³Abuse

is any behaviour that causes harm either physically or psychologically.Production deviance is the intentional non completion of allotted tasks.Sabotage is the destruction of organizational property.Theft is stealing organizational property.Withdrawal is leaving work early or working fewer hours than what is stipulated by the organization.Different types of CWB seem to have different types of antecedents.³³Sudha and Khan(2013) observed that mean scores for Organisational deviance and interpersonal deviance were significantly greater in private sector employees than in public sector ones.³⁴Neuroticism was significantly related with organizational deviance in both private and public sector organisations.In the private sector,Extraversion was the only personality trait that was significantly correlated with interpersonal deviance.³⁴

*Individual level predecessors of CWB:*The frustration-aggression model of CWB³⁵,based upon the frustration aggression theory³⁶states that emotions mediate the relationship between frustration and CWB:when employees experience frustration in the work environment,they experience emotions which influence their behaviour.This model has found support.^{37,38}Individuals with dispositional characteristics like an external work locus of control and high trait anger experience higher levels of frustration.Employees who perceive an improbability of getting apprehended and reprimanded are more likely to indulge in CWB.³⁹

The job stressor model of CWB posits that individuals experience job stressors in the work place.⁴⁰A job stressor is any situation that elicits

an emotional response that is negative. An example would be a lack of appropriate tools or information. An emotional reaction to a job stressor results in a job strain. Job strains can manifest as coping behaviours or CWB, physical reactions like an elevation in blood pressure or psychological reactions like dissatisfaction. Emotional reactions are the mediators of the job stressors-job strains relationship. Apart from CWB, the employee can also engage in positive behaviours to ameliorate the stressor. Several factors affect the job stressor-job strain relationship: The individual's perception of control over the specific stressor (more the perceived control, lesser the negative emotional reaction), nervousness, anger, fear, trait anger and trait anxiety.⁴⁰

The justice/equity model of CWB seeks to describe how employee behaviour is influenced by employee perceptions of organizational fairness.⁴¹ Employees are constantly assessing the ratio of inputs (amount of work done) to outputs (remuneration, career growth). Employee perceptions of injustice can lead to Organisational Retaliatory Behaviours (ORB) which are negative behaviours targeted at the organisation and its employees.⁴² All 3 types of justice (distributive, interactional and procedural) interacted to predict ORB.⁴³ Conflict and workplace constraints have a positive correlation with negative emotion and both types of CWB. Distributive justice has an inverse correlation with negative emotions and CWB-O, but not with CWB-I.³² Negative emotions positively correlated with both types of CWB.³² Negative emotions could mediate the relationship between job constraints and both

types of CWB. Negative emotion mediated the relationship between procedural justice and both types of CWB. Negative emotion mediated the relationship between distributive justice and both types of CWB-O.³²

Group level predecessors of CWB: A positive relationship has been noted between the amount of CWB committed by an individual and his peers, after controlling for a number of other variables.⁴⁴ Employee tenure moderated the relationship between group CWB and individual CWB, such that with increasing tenure, individual CWB became more similar to group CWB.⁴⁴ Task interdependence (the extent to which workers in a group need to coordinate their individual efforts) moderates the relationship between group CWB and individual CWB such that the higher the interdependence, the higher the similarity between group and individual CWBs.⁴⁴ Changes in the environment could have an impact on employee CWB. Retrenchment, reduction in salary and benefits and increased diversity can contribute to CWB.²³

CWB in university settings :

Most research on CWB has traditionally focussed on settings like factories and corporate offices.¹ Few studies have focussed on CWB in university settings. The little research done in this area points to the existence of CWB and its negative impact on university employees.¹ Spratlen (1995) found 23% of faculty reporting having experienced mistreatment at work.⁴⁵ The main sources of the mistreatment were a coworker (36% of cases) or a superior (52% of cases). The most common form of mistreatment was verbal. The most common adverse impact of this mistreatment

was a fall in the job satisfaction levels of the faculty experiencing the mistreatment.⁴⁵

Interpersonal conflict among teachers in academic departments is a common phenomenon.⁴⁶ The teachers viewed this as an important source of stress. Frustration, depression, job dissatisfaction and constraints predicted interpersonal conflict.⁴⁷ A strong association has been proven between interpersonal conflict and CWB directed towards fellow employees.⁴⁸

Job satisfaction :

Job satisfaction is a widely studied construct in Organisational research. Job satisfaction is defined as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one job or job experience.⁴⁹ Job satisfaction can be studied as a global construct or as a multifaceted construct. A faceted scale examines a specific facet of a job such as satisfaction with the pay or satisfaction with coworkers.⁵⁰ A global scale gives a general indication of satisfaction with a job.⁵⁰ Global scales give an overall indicator of job satisfaction and are useful when assessing changes in job satisfaction over time.⁵¹

The current theories of job satisfaction focus on personality disposition or environmental factors and not factors related to organizational structure. The Job Characteristics Model (JCM) says that intrinsic motivating factors in jobs lead to job satisfaction.⁵² Five core job characteristics: autonomy, feedback, skill variety, task significance and task identity lead to the three psychological states: knowledge of results, responsibility for outcomes and experienced meaningfulness of work; which

produce job satisfaction.⁵² A .50 correlation was found between job characteristics and job satisfaction.⁵³ Growth need strength (the desire experienced by the employee for personal growth) moderates the relationship between core job characteristics and job satisfaction such that the higher the growth need strength, the stronger the relationship between core job characteristics and job satisfaction.⁵³

Job performance:

Researchers have struggled to come up with reliable tools of measuring job performance in a specific job or across different jobs. This is referred to as the criterion problem.⁵⁴ The criterion problem can be described as the difficulties involved in conceptualizing and measuring multi dimensional and multipurpose performance constructs. Job performance can be defined by specifying the “ultimate criterion”, which is conceptual in nature and cannot be measured. The ultimate criterion includes everything that signifies job success across all domain responsibilities of a particular job profile.⁵⁵

When attempting to devise criteria to assess job performance, the question of choosing between subjective and objective methods of appraisal arises.⁵⁶ Subjective methods encompass supervisory, peer and self ratings. Objective methods include indices of productivity. Subjective criteria, though easier to get, have the major shortcoming of being easily subject to bias. Hence researchers use objective performance measures whenever they can.

A strong, positive relationship between job satisfaction and job performance has been

proposed. It has been hypothesized that employees who enjoy their jobs are more likely to perform better than employees who do not enjoy their jobs. It has also been hypothesized that the more productive an individual is, the more they enjoy their success and therefore enjoy their work. The evidence does not bear out these hypotheses.^{57,58,59,60} Some studies have said that job satisfaction and job performance may not necessarily always be directly related to one another. There is a possibility of third variables interacting with job satisfaction to predict job performance. Researchers have demonstrated the relationship between job satisfaction and job performance being moderated by motivation type and organizational tenure.^{61,62} Based on these research findings, the moderating effect of organizational structure on the job satisfaction-job performance relationship may be investigated.

Present study

The present study aims to assess the impact of organizational structure (mechanistic versus organically structured departments) on job satisfaction, job performance and abuse (one type of CWB) among faculty members. Organisational structure was assessed by asking faculty members to provide ratings of departmental organicity. Organisational structure is a shared phenomenon. Therefore, in order to produce a single value of organicity for each department, all faculty responses would be aggregated by department. HLM will be used to test the effects of organicity on each of the individual level dependent variables.

Hypotheses

The first three hypotheses will deal with assessing the impact of organizational structure on each of the three dependent variables: job satisfaction, job performance and CWB. A global scale will be used to measure job satisfaction. An assessment will be made of the overall level of satisfaction of the faculty members with their jobs and not just with certain facets of the job such as pay or promotion.

Faculty members in general have a reasonable degree of freedom and flexibility in their work. The more organically a department is structured, the fewer rules and regulations that it will have for faculty. Communication lines between faculty members and external stakeholders are more open. Therefore, the probability of faculty members working in more organically structured departments reporting higher levels of job satisfaction is more. Therefore the first hypothesis is:

H1: Faculty members working in organically structured departments will have higher levels of job satisfaction.

The departmental structure-job performance relationship is studied in the next hypothesis. Peer reviewed publications are the most commonly used objective indicator to assess faculty performance. It is assumed that faculty members working in departments that are more organically structured will have more academic freedom because of fewer restrictive guidelines within the department. If this holds true, then the probability of faculty members engaging in innovative ideas will be higher since they will not need to go through formal channels to obtain approvals. This will result in increased productivity. Therefore the second hypothesis is:

H2: Faculty members working in organically structured departments will have higher levels of job performance.

It is hypothesized that faculty members working in departments that are more organically structured have fewer rules and regulations and more freedom and autonomy, because of which they will indulge in lesser abuse. Therefore the third hypothesis is:

H3: Faculty members working in organically structured departments will have lower levels of CWB.

It is hypothesized that organizational structure can moderate the job satisfaction-job performance relationship in such a way that faculty members working in departments that are more organically structured will experience job satisfaction leading to job performance while faculty members working in departments that are more mechanistically structured will experience no such connection. This hypothesis is borne out of the rationale that faculty members working in departments that are more organically structured experience fewer barriers and more freedom in communication. It is possible that with increased autonomy, faculty members are able to modulate their productivity such that they are able to produce more when satisfied and less when dissatisfied. The probability of such modulation in mechanistic structures is much lesser. Therefore the fourth hypothesis is:

H4: Organizational structure moderates the relationship between job satisfaction

and job performance such that for faculty members working within more organically structured departments, job satisfaction will lead to job performance while for faculty members working in more mechanistically structured departments, there will be no connection.

Since it is believed that faculty members who are working in departments that are more organically structured will have higher levels of productivity because of fewer restrictions, it can also be reasonably hypothesized that the very same faculty members in the same organically structured departments are too busy to engage in abusive behaviours. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that faculty members who are more productive and working in organically structured departments will exhibit abusive behaviours less often:

H5: Organizational structure moderates the relationship between abuse and job performance such that in more organically structured organizations, abuse and job performance are inversely related.

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