DOES RELIGIOSITY INFLUENCE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTIONAL FACTORS AND WORKPLACE DEVIANT BEHAVIOUR?

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ABSTRACT

Drawing from social control theory, this study tested a moderating influence of religiosity in which emotional exhaustion and emotional stability as predictors and workplace deviance behavior is the outcome. Using data from 350 employees from the multimedia organization in Malaysia, we conducted Structural Equation Modelling analysis. Results found a positive and significant relationship between emotional exhaustion and workplace deviance behavior and negative impact of emotional stability towards workplace deviance behavior. Finally, religiosity moderates the relationship between emotional exhaustion and workplace deviance behavior, and religiosity moderates the relationship between emotional stability and workplace deviance behavior. The study makes a significant and unique contribution to the literature by showing the moderating influence of religiosity in the relationship between emotional exhaustion, emotional stability, and workplace deviance behavior. This study suggested that the employee with strong religious, may reduce emotional exhaustion and enhance employee emotional stability, and thus, mitigate employee to engage in workplace deviance behavior.

Keywords: religiosity, emotional exhaustion, emotional stability, workplace deviant behavior

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Workplace deviance behavior can be defined as "voluntary behavior of organizational members that violates significant organizational norms, and in doing so, threatens the well-being of an organization and/or its members" (Bennett & Robinson, 2000, p. 556). In other words, deviant behavior is a voluntary behavior that leads to negative behavior at the workplace. Workplace deviance behavior in Malaysia has been explained by department in the Ministry of Human Resources: Malaysia Social Security Organization (SOCSO) and the Labor Department. Malaysia Labor Department reported that the deviant behavior causes at

work such as the use of abusive language, sabotage, and threatening other employees. Media has also reported on deviant behavior at work in the Malaysian civil service such as bribery, false medical claims, and drug abuse.

Workplace deviant behavior should be resolved as it will negatively impact the organization. When this behavior occurs in the organization, the consequences are wider and affect all levels of the organization, including decision-making, productivity and financial (Coccia, 1998; Appelbaum et al., 2007; Amyx & Jarrell, 2016). A study in Malaysia it is estimated that 23.3 percent (US $ 63.14 million) losses are attributable to theft by employees (Moorthy, Seetharaman, Jaffar & Foong, 2015). Appelbaum, Semerjian and Mohan (2012) reported, about 1.7 million Americans and 11 percent of British employees are suffering from bullying problems in workplaces that affect the organization. Howladar, Rahman and Uddin, (2018) found that 40 percent of employees in educational institutions, commercial banks, telecommunications firms, and health organizations from the largest commercial city, Chittagong in Bangladesh are involved with workplace deviant behavior.

Previous studies found that the emotional exhaustion enhance workplace deviant behavior (Mulki, Jaramillo & Locander, 2006), while emotional stability mitigate workplace deviant behavior (Nair & Bhatnagar, 2011). Other studies also show personality, self-esteem, self-efficacy also affects workplace deviant behavior (Kumar & Lee, 2014; Ferris, Brown, Lian & Keeping, 2009; Nelson, Poms, & Wolf, 2012). Meanwhile, spiritual or religious factors can develop positive behavior and thus, reduce deviant behavior (Swimberghe, Flurry & Parker, 2011). Religiosity plays an important role in shaping attitudes and the creation of value systems that control behavior (Arnould, Price & Zikhan 2004; Pope & Mohdali, 2010).

Based on Social Control Theory by Hirschi (1969), explaining the role of the social bond, such as beliefs, culture, ethics, society and religion can control human behavior. This theory emphasizes that individual with social bond in social institutions can reduce the tendency of an individual to commit a negative behavior. According to Social Control Theory, individuals are prevented from engaging in negative behavior through their compliance with social institutions such as family and religion. In other words, every action needs to be in harmonies with the norms, cultures, and religions that the individual has. This theory is used to explain how a person's religious belief can mitigate workplace deviant behavior.

There are still limited studies that examine religiosity as moderators in explaining workplace deviant behavior. Past studies have focused more on religiosity roles as moderators in the context of physical health and depression (Pirutinsky et al., 2011; McDougle, Handy, Konrath & Walk, 2014), work-family demands and employee well-being (Achour et al., 2011). Although there has been a research initiative that uses religiosity as a moderator, but the role of religion as a moderator in the explaining the emotional exhaustion and emotional stability towards workplace deviant behavior has been sparse. Based on this research gap, this study intended to determine the role of religiosity as a moderator in the relationship between emotional exhaustion, emotional stability and workplace deviant behavior.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Emotional Exhaustion and Workplace Deviant Behavior

Emotional exhaustion refers to "feelings of being emotionally overextended and depleted of one's emotional resources" (Maslach, 1993, p. 2). Emotional exhaustion is a topic that interest practitioners and academics because of the negative influence on employees and organizations (Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004). Emotional exhaustion can occur when employees are faced with a high workload (Maslach, 1993). This means that employees who have a high workload due to time constraints to carry out that task, will make employee experience emotions exhaustion. When employees are experiencing emotional exhaustion, this can result in employee work more slowly or taking longer breaks than they should. This action is seen to violate organizational norms and this action can be seen as workplace deviant behavior. Technically, emotions exhaustion gives direct influence on workplace deviant behavior, however, still limited studies examine the direct influence of emotional exhaustion and deviance behavior.

Mulki, Jaramillo and Locander (2006) in their study found that the emotional exhaustion has an impact on organizational deviance behaviors through the mediating influence of employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Meanwhile, Krischer, Penney and Hunter (2010) examined production deviance as moderation in the relationship between perceptions of justice and emotional exhaustion. They suggested that increasing levels of justice at workplace will reduce emotional exhaustion. They also concluded that the counter production behavior may serve as a form of coping that can reduce emotional exhaustion. For example, if employees feel anger because of the unfair treatment such as injustice in the organization, then employees take a long break from what they should, in order to reduce emotional exhaustion. Here's seen employees have violated organizational rules to reduce emotional exhaustion, which they make deviant behavior as coping to reduce their emotional exhaustion. Golparvar, Kamkar and Javadian (2012) examine indirect relationships between emotional exhaustion and deviant behavior. They found that the job stress moderate relationship between emotional exhaustion and deviant behavior. They conclude that, low working pressure, emotional exhaustion will also be low which in turn reduces deviant behavior. Based on the argument above, this study develops a hypothesis as below:

Ha$_1$: Emotional exhaustion is positively influencing workplace deviant behavior

2.2 Emotional stability and Workplace Deviance Behavior

Emotional stability has been defined as "the extent to which individuals can be calm and stable under pressure and are less likely to encounter negative emotional states, such as anxiety, depression and anger" (Costa & MacCrae, 1992). Emotional stability is one of the factors of personality and it relates to workplace deviant behavior. Empirical findings from organizational psychology studies find that personalities can be an important factor that influence workplace deviant behavior (Bechtoldt, Welk, Hartig, & Zapf, 2007; Ng & Feldman, 2008; Spector & Fox, 2005; Grijalva & Newman, 2015). Employees who lack

emotional stability tend to be more anxious and they are easier to engage in deviant behavior at work (Gonzalez-Mulé et al., 2013; Hudson et al., 2012) such as weak working attitudes, fatigue, absence and delaying work.

Mount, Ilies and Johnson (2006) found that there was a significant relationship between the lack of emotional stability and behavior of workplace deviance such as theft, discipline problems, property damage, and other irresponsible behaviors (Salgado, 2002). Nair and Bhatnagar (2011) show that there is a negative relationship between emotional stability and workplace deviance behavior. Where, in addition to organizational factors, individual factors, including confidence factors are associated with workplace deviant behavior. Penney, Hunter and Perry (2011) also found a significant negative relationship between emotional stability and workplace deviant behavior. Based on the findings of previous research, this study develops the following hypothesis:

Ha$_2$: Emotional stability is negatively influencing workplace deviant behavior

2.3   Religiosity as Moderator

Religiosity refers to the extent to which a religious practice or the strength of its relationship with God, compliance with religious teachings, or benefits derived from its practice, or religious teachings (James, 1961, Miller & Thoreson, 2003). Religious definitions may refer to various factors, including religious beliefs and religious practices. Miller and Thoresen (2003) have identified the religion from two perspectives - belief and religious practice. Many researchers have identified religion in terms of religious commitment or religious identity. The components of religious commitment are defined as the extent to which a person holds to the values of their respective religions, beliefs, and use of religion in daily life.

This study examines the religiosity as moderators in the relationship between emotional exhaustion, emotional stability and workplace deviance behavior. This research framework expects religiosity to play an important role in changing the relationship between emotional exhaustion, emotional stability and workplace deviant behavior. It may also change the direction or strength of the relationship between the variables in this study. Based on the literature, the relationship between emotional exhaustion and deviant is positive, where the higher emotional exhaustion, the higher the deviant behavior. However, when the religiosity variables are inserted into the model, the relationship may change. Meanwhile, the negative direction of emotional stability towards workplace deviant behavior, where the higher the emotional stability, the lower workplace deviant behavior. When the religiosity variables are added into the emotional stability-workplace deviant behavior linkage, the relationship may become stronger.

This is because religious values play an important role in forming individual behavior and can serve as a means of enabling employees to express values such as honesty and integrity. Lawton and Morgan (1996), the individuals who are regarded as religious not only hold religious beliefs but also practice them in daily life. Religion is said to control human

behavior through the norms and principles that are adopted with values, norms, principles and beliefs in their working lives (Mitroff & Denton, 1999).

Based on the Social Control Theory, suggesting the religious bonds of someone encourages them not to violate the norms of working lives. Therefore, if the moral and religious codes embodied and the individual bound in it, they will voluntarily limit their tendency to deviance. Hence, the religious use that becomes a binder or control over one's actions is one of the important factors influencing one's ethical considerations. Based on Social Control Theory and the outcomes of the previous study reviews, the framework of the study as in Figure 1 is formed and the hypothesis are developed as follows:

Ha$_3$: The linkage between emotional exhaustion and workplace deviant behavior will be more prominent when the religiosity of employees is low instead of high.

Ha$_4$: The linkage between emotional stability and workplace deviant behavior will be more prominent when the religiosity of employees is high instead of low
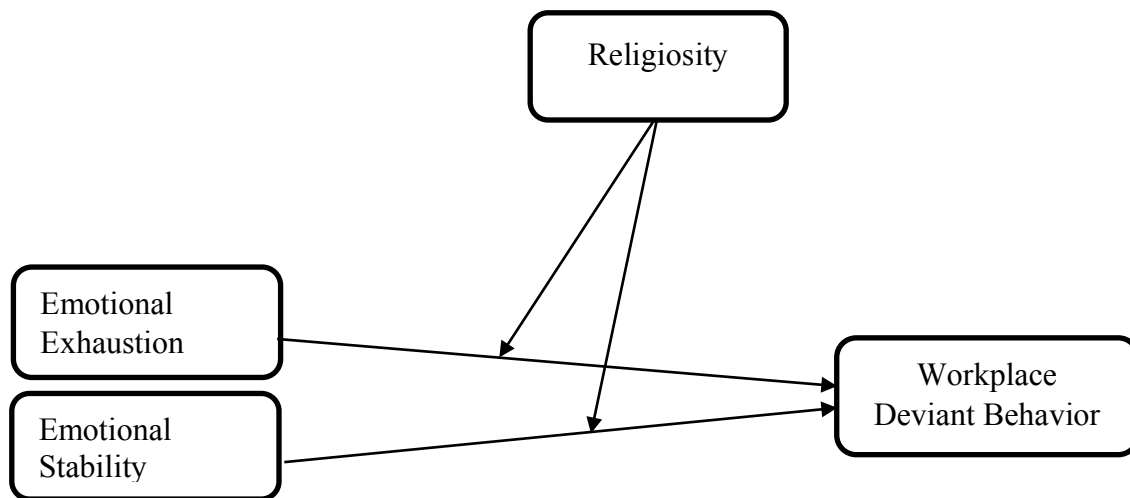
Figure 1: Research Framework

3.0   METHOD

Respondents of this study were 350 executives and professionals comprising six multimedia organizations in the Klang Valley, Malaysia. Respondent selection based on cluster sampling. This study employed, self-administered questionnaires as a means of collecting data. Based on the number of respondents (n = 350) with complete data in this study, this sample size is large enough to employ Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) (Hair, Black,

Babin & Anderson, 2018). Before proceeding to the final data collection, a pilot study to test the reliability of the instrument was conducted to ensure consistency of the questionnaire. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for all four variables (emotional exhaustion, emotional stability, religious and workplace deviant behavior) exceeding .70, indicating good internal consistency (Hair et al., 2018).

Emotional stability was measured using the five items that have been adapted from *Mini-Marker* (Saucier, 1994). Respondents are asked to assess the extent to which the statements in this questionnaire describe their emotional stability. Answer options use five (5) Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The items, "I am always careful", "I am calm", "I am cheerful", "I am insensitive" and "I am relaxed".

Emotional exhaustion measurement was taken from Maslach Burnout Inventory (Mulki et al, 2006) to assess the emotional exhaustion level of the employee. The questionnaire consisted of 8 items, and was evaluated using the Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), Example item "My personal demands are so great that it takes away from my work", "My personal life takes up time that I'd like to spend at work" and "On the job I have so much work to do that it takes away time for my family interest".

Religiosity was measured using ten (10) items developed by Plante and Boccaccini (1997). Respondents were asked to rate at 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), which express their agreement with the statement given. Example item "I enjoy being around others who share my faith", "I look to my faith as a source of inspiration", and "My faith is an important part of who I am as a person".

Workplace deviant behavior was measured using a scale of seven items developed by Bennett and Robinson (2003). Respondents were asked to rate at level 1 (never) until 5 (always), elucidated their agreement with the statement. Example item "Made fun of someone at work", "Said something hurtful to someone at work", and "Acted rudely toward someone at work".

4.0   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study has dropped three items from the whole 30 items which is used to measure the variables in this study. Omitted of these items are due to the factor loadings less than 0.5 as suggested by Hair et al. (2018). Two items have been dropped for variables that measure workplace deviant behavior, and one item dropped from emotional exhaustion. To test the Convergent validity, this study uses Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). According to Hair et al. (2018), CR should be above 0.70 to obtain acceptable reliability. For, AVE should to be above .50 and less than CR. For discrimination validity, Maximum Shared Squared Variance – (MSV) should less than the AVE value. Table 1 shows the index value of the validity test showing that all values fulfil the validity requirements. This study concludes that all measurements have met valid assumptions.

Table 1: Mean, reliability, Construct Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE),
Maximum Shared Squared Variance (MSV)

Variables	Mean	α	Item	CR	AVE	MSV
Emotional Stability	3.9563	.82	5	0.923	0.707	0.436
Emotional Exhaustion	3.9688	.93	8 -1	0.943	0.704	0.129
Religiosity	5.7054	.95	10	0.975	0.796	0.411
Workplace Deviance Behavior	2.8355	.89	7 -2	0.968	0.833	0.436

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) has been conducted to determine the level of the model fit. Based on the outputs, this CFA model, provides six indicators (RMSEA, X^2/df, IFI, TLI, CFI and PGFI) as shown in the Table 2. The results indicate that the value of RMSEA 0.048 is less than .08, suggesting the model a fit (Kline, 2010). Index coefficient (IFI, TLI and CFI) shows that the value is bigger than .90 which indicates that the model is fit (Byrne, 2010). Even the value of PGFI bigger than 0.5 (0.656) suggests that the model fit to the data (Hair, et al., 2018). Finally, the value of X^2/df is near to 2, indicate that the model a fit (Marsh & Hau, 1996).

Table 2: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Description	X^2	df	RMSEA	X^2/df	IFI	TLI	CFI	PGFI
CFA model	1099.720	688	.048	1.598	.930	.923	.929	.656

The moderation can be established by comparing the unconstrained (variant-group) against measurement residuals (invariant-group) model (Hair et al., 2018). If the unconstrained model is better than the measurement residuals model, then we can conclude that there is a moderation influence of religiosity on the overall model. Refer to Table 3 shows that chi-square for the unconstrained model (X^2=439.348) is smaller than chi-square for measurement residual (X^2=533.672) with difference $\chi2$ = 114.324, p = 0.00. Due to this significant difference, this study concludes that the religiosity moderate the overall model for the unconstrained model has been a better fit compared to measurement residuals

Table 3: Summary Index Model Fit

Model	X^2	df	AIC	RMSEA	GFI	IFI	TLI	CFI	PGFI
Unconstrained	439.348	264	595.348	.051	.837	.955	.948	.955	.646
Measurement Residual	533.672	303	634.672	.057	.811	.936	.935	.936	.718

A moderation model was tested with emotional exhaustion and emotional stability as the independent variables, workplace deviance behavior as the dependent variable and religiosity as the moderator. The study reveals that emotional exhaustion was positively related to workplace deviance behavior, thus, supporting Hypothesis 1. This study in line with the studies conducted by Krischer et al. (2010), Mulki et al. (2006) and Golparvar et al. (2012), which is also found that the emotional exhaustion lead to uncivil behavior or workplace deviance behavior. This means that the employees who are emotionally exhausted by work and responsibility at the workplace would resulting the employees engage in the workplace deviance behavior, such as take longer breaks than allowed or spend less effort at work.

Secondly, this study found that emotional stability was significantly influenced workplace deviance behavior, thus supporting Hypothesis 2. Similar results were reported by Gonzalez-Mulé et al. (2013) and Hudson et al. (2012), which is also found that the emotional stability mitigate counterproductive behavior or workplace deviance behavior. The results of this study proposed that individual with stable emotion will less likely to engage in negative behavior such as absenteeism or withholding and this will lead individuals to display less workplace deviant behavior.

As expected, this study found support for religiosity as the moderator in the relationship between emotional exhaustion and workplace deviance behavior, and emotional stability-workplace deviance behavior linkage. The results indicate that emotional exhaustion highly influence workplace deviance behavior for employees with low religiosity, but not employees with high religiosity. In other words, employees with high religious attachments, will be less involved in workplace deviance behavior, even if they experience higher emotional exhaustion. The results support Hypothesis 3 which postulates that religiosity moderates the influence of emotional exhaustion on workplace deviance behavior. This means that the religiosity may reduce an employee from emotional exhaustion experience that may them to involve in an uncivil manner. The results are in line with the Social Control Theory proposed by Hirschi (1969), suggesting that the individuals are prevented from engaging in negative behavior through their compliance with social institutions such as family and religion. Low religiosity is related to workplace deviant behaviors in various situations (Wang & Jang, 2018), the experience of increased emotional exhaustion would increase workplace deviance behavior only among employees who are less religiosity. In accordance with the Social Control Theory, religiosity is a social bond that prevents a person from committing a violation.

Next, this study revealed that the religiosity moderate the relationship between emotional stability and workplace deviance behavior, thus, the results support the Social Control Theory. The results indicate that emotional stability negatively influence workplace deviance behavior for employees with high religiosity, but not employees with low religiosity. This indicates that the employees with high religiosity, will be experiencing more emotional stability and less likely to involve in workplace deviance behavior. This result supports Hypothesis 4 which suggests that religiosity moderates the influence of emotional stability on workplace deviance behavior. In other words, the employee with strong religious belief and practice, may enhance an employee emotional stability and thus, mitigate employee to engage in workplace deviance behavior. As a formula, the role of religion in making a person

happy and has positive behavior has been proven in the previous study (e.g. Achour et al., 2017). This means that individuals who have religious committed will be happier in life and thus make the individual more stable in his emotions (Wani et al., 2016). When the individual experience emotional stability, it will prevent or mitigate negative behavior such as workplace deviant behavior. In conclusion, individuals with strong religious beliefs will make them more stable in their emotions and thus, influence positive behavior or less likely to engage in the workplace deviant behavior.

5.0   CONCLUSION

This study examines the role of religiosity as moderators in the relationship between emotional exhaustion, emotional stability and workplace deviant behavior. The model of this study confirms that religiosity play an important role in the relationship between emotional exhaustion, emotional stability and workplace deviant behavior. It can be concluded that the religiosity can shape the moral values in one's own indirectly to control emotions and thus, prevent to engage in the workplace deviant behavior. Based on the Social Control Theory, where one is bound or controlled by a religious stand, voluntarily restricts their tendency to commit acts that violate the norms of life including the norms in the organization. Therefore, religiosity will become binders or controls to misconduct behaviour or workplace deviant behavior. This study suggests that religiosity values should be applied in everyday life so it can be a guide to control our behavior.

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