

Research on stress and counterproductive work behavior



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Stress is a term in psychology and biology. The definition of stress was first employed in a biological context by the endocrinologist Hans Selye in the 1930s. Recent decades, stress is more commonly used in popular parlance.

It refers to the consequence of the failure of an organism - human or animal - to respond appropriately to emotional or physical threats, whether actual or imagined.

Stress is a universal element and persons from nearly every walk of life have to face stress. Most common stress symptoms are a state of alarm and adrenaline production, short-term resistance as a coping mechanism, exhaustion, irritability, muscular tension, inability to concentrate and a variety of psychological reactions such as headache and elevated heart rate.

Selye published in 1975 a model dividing stress into eustress and distress. Where stress enhances function (physical or mental, such as through strength training or challenging work) it may be considered eustress. Persistent stress that is not resolved through coping or adaptation, deemed distress, may lead to anxiety or withdrawal (depression) behavior.

Workplace stress is the harmful physical and emotional response that occurs when there is a poor match between job demands and the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker. Stress is a prevalent and costly problem in today's workplace.

Workers are reporting an increasing level of mental health problems. In the 2000 European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS), work-related stress was found to be the second most common work-related health problem across <https://assignbuster.com/research-on-stress-and-counterproductive-work-behavior/>

the EU15 (at 28%; only back pain was more common). Moreover, work-related stress has also been associated with a number of other ill-health outcomes, such as cardiovascular diseases (e. g. Kivimäki et al, 2002), musculoskeletal disorders, particularly back problems (e. g. Hoogendoorn et al, 2000) and neck-shoulder-arm-wrist-hand problems (the so-called RSI-repetitive strain injuries; e. g. Ariëns et al, 2001), as well as absence from work (e. g. Houtman et al, 1999). The potential outcomes of stress at work are thus rather diverse, and do not only pertain to health but also to actual participation in the workforce. As suggested by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) “ A pattern of negative (physiological and psychological) responses occurring in situations where people perceive threats to their well being which they may be unable to meet”.

CWB is behaviour that is intended to have a detrimental effect on organizations and their members. It can include overt acts such as aggression and theft or more passive acts, such as purposely failing to follow instructions or doing work incorrectly. CWB has been conceptualized in a number of ways, including organizational aggression (Neuman & Baron, 1998; Fox & Spector, 1999), antisocial behaviour (Giacalone & Greenberg, 1997), delinquency (Hogan & Hogan, 1989), deviance (Hollinger, 1986; Robinson & Bennett, 1995), retaliation (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997), revenge (Bies, Tripp, & Kramer, 1997), and mobbing/bullying (Knorz & Zapf, 1996). The common theme is that these behaviours are harmful to the organization by directly affecting its functioning or property, or by hurting employees in away that will reduce their effectiveness. A number of researchers (Fox&Spector, 1999; Robinson & Bennett, 1995) have found evidence that

perceptions of CWBs and/or relations of CWBs to individual and organizational variables allow us to distinguish two categories of behaviours: those targeting the organization and those targeting other persons in the organization.

The aim of the study is to investigate the relationship between stress at workplace and counterproductive work behavior. This research is to study the effects of stress at workplace which leads to counterproductive work behavior. The stress level at workplace may cause employees resort to counterproductive work behaviors. Common examples of job stressors are role conflict and ambiguity, interpersonal conflict, situational constraints. Strain is an outcome of the job stress process that can be psychological, physical, or behavioural as CWB is a manifestation of behavioural strain. Employee's monitor and appraise events in the workplace, and certain events that are seen as threats to well-being are job stressors that induce negative emotional reactions, such as anger or anxiety.

The independent variable is the counterproductive work behavior of employee's during stress. Counterproductive work behavior is bullying, emotional abuse, revenge, mobbing, aggression and retaliation. The behavior can range from severe, systematic, abusive bullying to milder ambiguous episodes of workplace incivility. The independent variable on the counterproductive work behavior of employee's during stress will be evaluated based on questionnaires. Questionnaires will be given to employers to evaluate their employee's day to day behavior.

The dependent variable is the level of stress in the workplace. The stress level during working hours will be evaluated via observation of behavior based on psychophysical scales and checklist.

I relate this research proposal to the increasing number of workplace stress and its effects towards the employers and its organization. Employee's under stress although a very gentle and hardworking person by nature may resort to counterproductive work behavior unintentionally. Given the serious nature of these behaviors, it should be no surprise that CWBs has important implications for the well-being of organizations and their members.

LITERATURE REVIEW 1

Recent years have seen an explosion of interest among organizational researchers in counterproductive work behaviours (CWB), such as aggression, interpersonal conflict, sabotage, and theft. Although most of this work has been directed toward validating integrity tests with the objective of devising ways to identify counterproductive employees so that companies can avoid hiring them, two streams of research have focused on ascertaining the causes of these behaviours. Spector and colleagues (Chen & Spector, 1992; Fox & Spector, 1999; Spector 1975, 1978; Storms & Spector, 1987) have portrayed CWB as an emotion-based response to stressful organizational conditions. Greenberg and colleagues (e. g., Greenberg, 1990) and Skarlicki, Folger and colleagues (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997; Skarlicki, Folger, & Tesluk, 1999) have taken an organizational justice perspective, viewing CWB as a cognition-based response to experienced injustice. These two perspectives are not incompatible, and in fact Spector (1978) noted links with the equity (justice) concept, and Greenberg (1990) noted links with <https://assignbuster.com/research-on-stress-and-counterproductive-work-behavior/>

frustration theory. The current study integrates both perspectives, assessing relations among job stressors, perceptions of injustice, and CWB within the framework of job stress theory. It is further proposed that, consistent with this theoretical framework, emotional reactions to job stressors and injustice perceptions, affective disposition, and perceived control over work are key links in these relations.

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Participants were 292 employees at a variety of organizations in southern and central Florida. Of these, 214 (73%) were University of South Florida psychology and management students who also were employed, and 78 (27%) were nonstudent employees from manufacturing, financial, utility, entertainment, and academic organizations in Tampa. The nonstudent employees were given the questionnaire booklets on a strictly voluntary basis by their supervisors. The supervisors who distributed the surveys were part-time graduate students in a Human Resource Management class designed for practicing managers. Participants returned the surveys directly to the researchers by U. S. mail or in sealed envelopes in sealed containers at work. Of the 292 participants, 109 (37%) were men and 183 (63%) were women.

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Hypothesis 1: High levels of conflict and organizational constraints and low levels of perceived justice are associated with high levels of negative emotions and CWB. To test hypothesis 1, we looked at the relations between the four job stressor variables (conflict, constraints, distributive justice, and procedural justice) and negative emotion and between the four stressor variables and the two categories of CWB.

Hypothesis 2: High levels of negative emotions are associated with high levels of CWB. To test Hypothesis 2, we looked at correlations between negative emotion and the two categories of CWB (organizational and personal).

Hypothesis 3: Negative emotions mediate the relation between stressors/injustice and CWB. Hypothesis 3 predicted that negative emotion mediates the relations between job stressors and CWB. In each case mediation was tested following the procedure recommended by Baron and Kenny (1986) in which three regression models are investigated: the CWB on the stressor, the proposed mediator (negative emotion) on the stressor, and the CWB on the stressor and negative emotion together.

Hypothesis 4: Perceived task autonomy, trait anxiety, and trait anger moderate the relations between job stressors/injustice and CWB. Those individuals perceiving low autonomy and those individuals who are high in these affective traits are more likely to respond to job stressors/injustice with CWB. Hypothesis 4 predicted that perceived control over work tasks (autonomy), trait anxiety, and trait anger moderate the relations between

stressors (constraints, conflict, and justice) and CWB (personal and organizational).

METHODOLOGY