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**COUNTERPRODUCTIVE BEHAVIOR AND ITS MANIFESTATION
IN MANAGEMENT**

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Abstract:

Counterproductive behaviors (CB) have two organizational and interpersonal dimensions that can generate problems with negative effects for both the company and the employees. Consequently, they are a combination of personal and organizational factors. This article presents an analysis of the literature on organizational behavior regarding CB and its role in achieving performance and certain conclusions and perspectives for organizational managers.

Key words: organizational behavior; human resources; performance.

1. Introduction

From the first years of the new millennium, interest in CB research has increased, due to the harmful consequences and especially the costs associated with them [1]. The aforementioned consequences include the economic ones (loss of productivity due to getting late for work, theft, sabotage) and the psychological ones [2].

According to some researchers [3] CB is a set of distinct acts with common features that are intentional (not accidental) with the intention of harming customers, colleagues and supervisors.

2. Counterproductive behavior. Framework

In the literature, this concept is found under a series of names such as: antisocial behavior [4], workplace deviance [5], dysfunctional behavior [6], CB [7].

These theories include behaviors that are performed by members of the organization and that are intended for the organization or its members. They have a potentially harmful potential, and these intentions are not intended to take into account behaviors similar to those of an accidental nature. CB within organizations involve an ignorance of organizational rules and values, as well as those of society [8, 9]. The same authors state that they vary in severity from a low level (for example, insignificant thefts) to a much more serious level, such as violence. It is pointed out that the definition of deviation is made in accordance with the standards of a particular social group - rules,



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policies, procedures, organizational - and not directly to a system of absolute moral standards [10, 5].

Although the types of counterproductive behaviors intertwine according to Pearson, Andersson, and Porath, [11] they still have some differences, such as: the desire to do intentional harm; the purpose of the act; violated rules; duration of the act; the severity of the behaviors manifested.

3. Types of counterproductive behaviors

The typology of these behaviors includes behaviors: directly directed to the organization or individuals; leading to the personal benefits of employees; which bring benefits to the organizations, ranging from minor to severe [12].

There are studies that analyze different types of deviations as follows [13, 14]:

Analysis of different types of deviations		
Behavior	Deviation description	Examples
Organization-oriented behaviors	deviation on property - improper use of the employer's property.	theft, sabotage, material damage.
	deviation in production - violation of the rules on the professional activity to be performed.	non-involvement, absences, being late, taking many breaks, drinking problem, drugs consumption, intentional mistakes or/and intentional assignments performed in too long a time.
Interpersonal behaviors	those aimed at other employees	aggressive intimidation, negative rumors, verbal defamation.
Behaviors that vary depending on severity	severe forms.	aggression, harassment, violence.
	minor forms.	spreading rumors, behaviors through which there is a lack of respect for others.

Table 1. Analysis of different types of deviations

Researchers Gruys&Sackett [15] present a number of types of CB, as follows: theft (of money, or property of the organization); destruction of property (damage to logistics, sabotage of production); improper use of information (disclosure of confidential information, falsification of documents); personal use of time and resources; behavior performed in unsafe conditions (non-compliance or failure to learn safety procedures); poor quality of tasks performed (work intentionally performed incorrectly or at a slower pace); unjustified absences, delays, alcohol or drug use; inappropriate verbal actions (arguing with clients, verbal harassment of colleagues); inappropriate physical actions (physical attacks on colleagues, sexual advances).

A special category of organizations that deserve to be studied from a managerial point of view, against the background of investigating the manifestation of the fundamental concept of this study, is represented by organizations in the field of security and defense, in which the consequences of this behavior can be disastrous relative to the specifics of their missions. Recent research with military applicability by Macovei shows that the CWB scale of the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire has a good internal consistency [16]. At the international level, interesting perspectives on the subject are also highlighted by Saul Fine and collaborators, who, in their research [17], connect this topic with the one related to integrity testing, which further demonstrates the value of proper CWB management.



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4. Consequences of counterproductive behavior

As shown above, CBs generate negative results in most cases, but according to some authors, there are cases in which these results can be positive. In this context, the two cases are presented below, as follows:

- Negative deviance - refers to the main purposes of CB types. For example, approaching human resources in a way that disadvantages them generates a negative impact on them; breaking the law causes damage to a society; sabotage, as a deviance related to productivity and property, harms the organization [18]. Similarly, intentionally giving incorrect information, lying, stealing and dishonesty are a potential detriment to the organization and, why not, to its employees.[1].
- Positive deviance. According to some authors, Hanke and Saxberg (1985) CB can sometimes have positive consequences [19]. They introduced the phrase constructive deviance, which is applied when the discrepant behavior of employees is to the advantage of the interests of the organization. Similarly, employees who exhibit inconsistent behavior, such as “whistle blowing” that is, disclosing in relation to dysfunctional issues in organizations - the situation in which some of the current or former employees gave information to other persons inside or outside the company or other institutions in order for them to intervene to identify, evaluate and / or eliminate illegal or immoral activities / decisions carried out / taken by employees or managers them [20]. Thus, they are perceived as the saviors of the company.

5. Consideration of counterproductive behavior

CBs are not invisible, colleagues who observe them can encourage or discourage them. On the other hand, they can also reveal this type of behavior. In this sense, “whistle – blowing” was defined as bringing to light by the employees of the organization the illegalities and transmitting them to the persons and institutions authorized to take measures in this sense [21]. From this point of view, employees who do this can be considered true tacticians. In this sense we are dealing with two categories of factors: one intrapersonal and one interpersonal. Employees in the first category are responsible for generating CB for intrinsic reasons when the situation allows them to choose their behavior.

6. Theory of planned behavior as a model of counterproductive behavior

Planned behavior theory [22] assumes that the desire to generate a behavior is a proximal antecedent of the behavior that is caused by three factors:

- the attitude towards behavior - favorable or unfavorable evaluation of the action he/she performs;



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- subjective norms - the perception of the individual in relation to the evaluation of behavior by other people;
- perceived behavioral control - the perception of the individual regarding his/her ability to perform the behavior, risk analysis.

Martinko, Gundlach & Douglas (2002) [9] analyze the CB from the perspective of the paradigm based on the following elements presented in Figure 2, as follows:

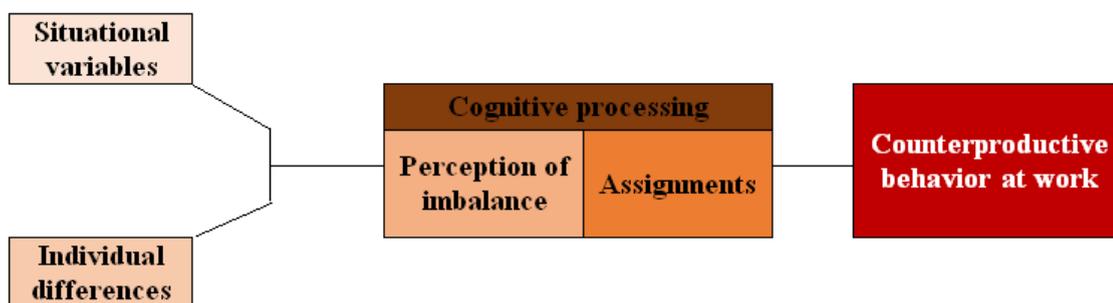


Fig. 2 The paradigm of CB
(Source: Martinko, Gundlach and Douglas, 2002)

The paradigm explains how CB derives from the connection between person and environment, an interaction in which cognitive processing determines the behavior of the individual. The central element is represented by the way the individual processes the information regarding the causes, the way they give a meaning and starting from these key elements the influences of environmental factors and individual differences in understanding CB will be explained [12].

It starts from the idea that individuals initially perceive imbalances such as injustice or inequity in the workplace and then perform a kind of attribution process for this state. The attributions made for the causes of the results are considered to be highly predictive in terms of the type and cause of CB. For example, if an employee believes that a result of his actions is unsatisfactory (for example, lack of effort at work), then it is possible for him to take the blame and not generate CBs. On the other hand, if an employee perceives a problem as being generated by extrinsic causes, it increases the likelihood that that individual will have CBs. Developing this perspective, some authors [23, 24, 25] argue that the attributions made by a person with reference to the causes of the results (fair or unfair) represent a primary force in motivating CBs.

7. Conclusions

CBs manifests itself both at organizational and interpersonal level and can cause damage and negative effects to both the company and its employees. So these types of behaviors are the result of the connection between some personal and organizational factors. For example, if an employee's personality traits, conscientiousness, and kindness are low, it is very likely that he or she will present CBs; but also a high level of negative affectivity can generate CB. Relevant are also the judgments that the employee makes - more precisely, the attributions that he makes in connection with what happens at work. We also mention a number of organizational predictors that can generate CBs such



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as the importance of perception: organizational injustice, increased job dissatisfaction, as well as various organizational constraints and stressors. It is worth mentioning that the uncomfortable emotions felt by the employee at work also play an important role. Working groups can also be a factor in maintaining and encouraging CBs, due to their subculture.

From a research point of view, there are several tools for CBs analysis, such as those developed by Bennett and Robinson (2000) [13], respectively Spector et al. (2006) [27]. The most used are the self-reporting tools, a basic condition being to ensure the confidentiality of the answers.

In the selection activity, the attention can be oriented towards the potential predictors related to the individual's personality: the level of integrity, the levels of agreeableness and conscientiousness, maturity, responsibility, self-discipline and acceptance of the norms. Very important is also the way in which the individual evaluates the quality of the obtained results and his own beliefs about the causes of the behavior. Thus, if an individual considers that his unfair or undesirable results are caused by external factors that have a degree of stability, we can anticipate to some extent the involvement in CBs aimed at colleagues or organization.

A potential alarm signal is the climate in the working groups, the results of various researches highlighting the influence of an antisocial climate on increasing the possibility of employee involvement in CBs, which is even greater as there are role models in this regard [26]. Similarly, the more the individual perceives that such counterproductive behavior would be accepted by those in the working group, the greater the probability of achieving it, in combination they have their own favorable attitude to such behavior and the perception of a low risk of getting caught.

What are the reasons why an employee would consider a CB desirable? An important element is the value congruence person-organization. When the personal values of the employee are in conflict or are not similar to those of the organization, the probability of achieving a behavior in favor of the individual increases [6].

Very important is how employees perceive the correctness of rewards or decisions from superiors. If employees feel treated inappropriately by the organization, the likelihood of engaging in CBs for personal gain may increase.

Other important factors in creating a favorable context of workplace deviance are the opportunities created by the nature of the job and the low probability that certain behaviors will be observed or sanctioned. A system for monitoring professional activity and a system of sanctions constantly applied in deviant situations can be an organizational way to prevent and stop deviance, of course avoiding the application of rigid and extreme methods that can have negative effects and even contrary to the purpose for which they were designed and applied.

As a challenging line of research of the CWB in the context of the concerns of streamlining the organizational management, as a science and practice, the influence of the digitalization of services on the CWB and, subsequently, on the management could be signaled.

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