

GENDER SENSITIZATION AT WORKPLACE: IMPACT ON DEVIANT WORKPLACE BEHAVIORS IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SECTOR IN INDIA

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Abstract

With the exponential growth of IT Sector in India, a unique platform was created for employment of women suitably fitting their work circumstances and ensuring an gender inclusive environment. Organizations are now prudent enough to take steps to reduce deviant workplace behaviors of employees, especially women, to maximize retention and organizational effectiveness. Even though studies show reasonable gender sensitization pursuits by industry, ground reality indicates that an adequate level of gender sensitivity is yet to be accomplished. Key players claim to have achieved a gender sensitive atmosphere through reduction of work place deviance behaviors. The researcher explored whether gender has any influence on counter productive work behaviors by employees. Responses were gathered from 312 employees working in five large IT firms using questionnaires. One way ANOVA test was employed with the help of SPSS software for data analysis. It was found that female employees perceived lower levels of deviant workplace behaviors compared to that of male employees working in Information Technology industry.

Keywords: Deviant Workplace Behaviors Gender Sensitivity Information Technology

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1. Introduction

Revolutions in technological arena have brought about an unexpected opportunity for India in the form of information technology which has made it a favored location for customized software development. Currently, India's IT industry is one of the most successful information technology industries in the world. With a contribution of 7.7 % to the nation's GDP in the year 2012, the aggregated revenues from the sector have touched the magical figure of US\$ 150 in the financial year of 2015. Begun in 1974, industry is currently providing direct employment to 2.9 million, and indirectly providing jobs to 8.6 million people making it the largest employer in the private sector. With human capital being the driving force of this industry, companies have taken proactive steps to attract, develop and retain quality workforce to survive in the competitive environment.

From the employee's perspective, the industry is unique in its evidently employee friendly policies and practices mainly because of the labor shortage faced by most of the firms. The software industry has the reputation of being women – friendly and women consider computer programming as an attractive option in comparison to conventional jobs. Major players take pride in their gender sensitive HR policies and argue about equal opportunity for women. But in reality, the objective work conditions such as night shifts, stressed work environment and need for mobility have made the work lives of women miserable. IT industry is still a male dominated sector characterized by a masculine culture that tends to sideline and marginalize women. Even amidst the special interest taken by companies to ensure gender sensitivity, the attitude of employee's towards these initiatives and their intention to bring down negative work place behaviors is not yet investigated. This study tries to find out gender differences in the perception of the four dimensions of deviant workplace behaviors in information technology industry.

Literature Review

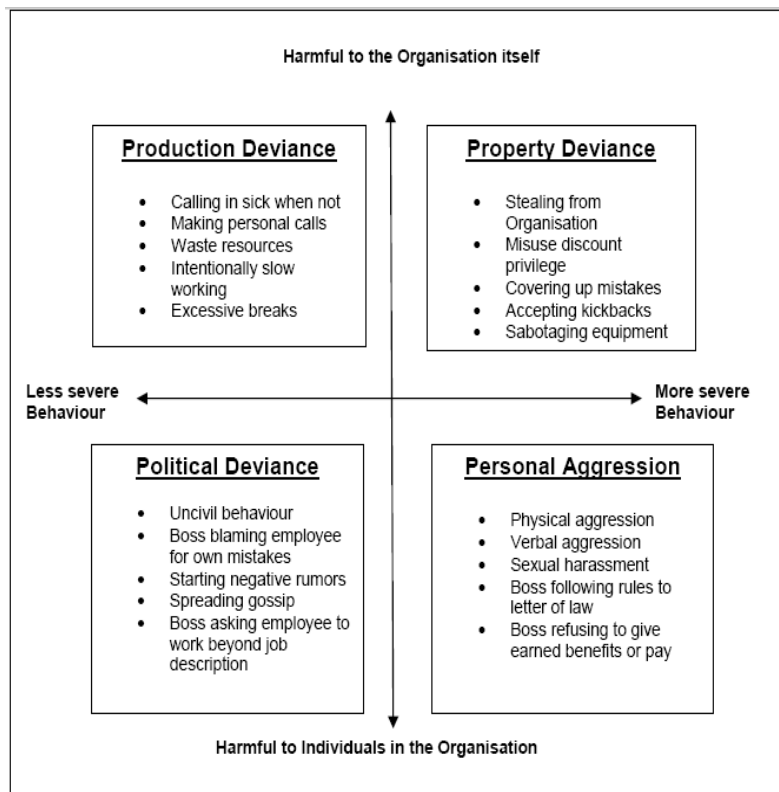
Deviant workplace behaviors

With the advent of a more competitive and aggressive business environment, employee behavior has received much attention from organizations because of its implications to effectiveness and productivity [3]. Employee behaviors refer to what employees say and do in an organizational context. Researchers have classified these behaviors into those that contribute positively towards

organizational performance and those that harm it. These detrimental behaviors have been labelled differently such as anger, retaliation, bullying or sabotage. An evaluation of these labels shows that all are counterproductive in nature. Workplace deviance behaviors can be defined as the behavior that works against the goals and objectives of the institution [9]. It is a bundle of a variety of behaviors that are against the expected behaviors and can be harmful for all the stakeholders of the organization such as employees, clients, coworkers, customers and supervisors [8][7] and can even put the existence of the organization at risk [5].

Typology of work place deviance behaviors

According to the typology of workplace deviance behavior proposed by Robinson and Bennett [6], the two dimensions are the severity of the deviance and whether the deviance is directed to harm an individual or the organization. Based on these dimensions, four clusters of deviant behaviors emerged, namely production deviance, property deviance, political deviance, and personal aggression as shown in figure given below.



- **Production deviance** – These can be defined as behaviors that disrupt the officially insisted norms, seriously affecting the optimal quality and quantity of work to be achieved. The different activities that come under this term are employee tardiness, early leaving, taking unnecessary breaks, withholding input, squandering of resources, substance abuse at workplace and absenteeism [6]. They directly interfere with work being performance in the organization and hinder effectiveness at workplace. For example, an employee who is withholding input may give less than full effort at work and it may be because of the negative attitude he has toward the firm [4].

- **Property deviance** – These can be defined as those instances where employees obtain or destroy physical property or assets of the work organization without permission [6]. Activities such as tampering equipment, lying about work hours, sharing confidential information, intentional mistakes and theft from the company comes under property deviance. Many of these have direct cost implications for the organization such as replacing the equipment which in turn affect productivity since work cannot be done till the equipment is replaced [2]. There is enough empirical evidence stating that employees working in small firms exhibited more honesty compared to those working in large firms.

- **Political deviance** – These can be defined as involvement in social interaction that puts coworkers in a personal or political disadvantage. Activities that come under political deviance include incivility at workplace, exhibiting favoritism, gossiping about colleagues and displaying unhealthy competition. Workplace incivility can have a spillover effect leading to other types of deviances such as absenteeism, pilfering, making intentional mistakes and showing aggression. In a survey conducted, majority of employees confessed of having said something upsetting to co-workers. These behaviors can be serious repercussions leading to employee dissatisfaction and turnover proving detrimental for organizational wellbeing [1].

- **Personal aggression** – These can be defined as behaviors that exhibit aggression and hostile mannerisms directed towards other individuals. Sexually harassing coworkers, verbal abusing them, destroying work or property of colleagues and endangering other individuals are activities that come under personal aggression. There is ample evidence showing that individuals

who were victims of personal aggression tend to have emotional problems and remain less committed to work. Even though individual are directly affected by the trauma of the evident, the organization face long term costs such as decreased productivity, work time loss, substandard quality, medical and legal expenses and tainted public image as a result of these behaviors. Even though researchers are trying to investigate the different implications of deviant workplace behaviors and consider it as one of the variables of organizational misbehavior in industrial psychology literature, there is a lack of agreement about the dimensionality of the construct. For the present study, the researcher considered model suggested by Robinson and Bennett [6].

2. Research Method

The current study has adopted descriptive methodologies in the research. The study tries to describe the influence of gender on Deviant Workplace Behaviors displayed by employees. The tool developed by Robinson and Bennett to assess the Deviant Workplace Behaviors exhibited by by employees was used for data collection. Questionnaire was employed to collect primary data from IT professionals and NASSCOM directory was sued to collect secondary data. Researcher has defined the population of the study as professionals working in IT firms with more than one year of work experience in the organization. Among the total number of respondents, 176 were men and the remaining 136 were women. The study was conducted at Info park, Kochi and Techno park, Thiruvananthapuram, both cities belonging to state of Kerala in South India. Study tried to capture the current scenario regarding the objectives and the period of data collection was from May 2015 to September 2015.

3. Results and Analysis

Influence of Gender on Production Deviance dimension of Deviant Workplace Behaviors (DWB)

One way ANOVA was employed for testing hypothesis H1 which were about the significant difference in production deviance dimension of DWB across gender. H1 was stated as:

H1 - There is a significant difference in the production deviance dimension of DWB across gender.

Table 1 ANOVA-test results for gender and production deviance dimension of DWB

		Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
DWB – Production Deviance	Between groups	1.309	1	1.309	2.221	.000*
	Within groups	144.375	310	.461		
	Total	145.636	311			

(* indicates items significant at 5% significance level)

The above table shows one way ANOVA results done on production deviance dimension of DWB with gender. The results showed that the values are significant at 5% level. Hence, men and women employees in IT companies perceive production deviance dimension of DWB differently. H1 is therefore accepted. The mean value of men was found to be 2.22 and that of women was found to be 1.49. So it can be inferred that male employees perceived higher levels of production deviance dimension of DWB compared to that of female employees.

Influence of gender on Property Deviance dimension of Deviant Workplace Behaviors (DWB)

One way ANOVA was employed for testing hypothesis H2 which were about the significant difference in property deviance dimension of DWB across gender. H2 was stated as:

H2 - There is a significant difference in the property deviance dimension of DWB across gender.

Table 2 ANOVA-test results for gender and property deviance dimension of DWB

		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig
DWB – Property Deviance	Between groups	3.337	1	3.337	7.754	.000*
	Within groups	154.237	310	.436		
	Total	156.921	311			

(* indicates items significant at 5% significance level)

The above table shows one way ANOVA results done on property deviance dimension of DWB with gender. The results showed that the values are significant at 5% level. Hence, male and female employees in IT companies perceive property deviance dimension of DWB differently. H2 is therefore accepted. The mean value of male employees was found to be 2.31 and that of female employees was found to be 1.36. So it can be inferred that male employees perceived higher levels of property deviance dimension of DWB compared to that of female employees.

Influence of gender on Political Deviance dimension of Deviant Workplace Behaviors (DWB)

One way ANOVA was employed for testing hypothesis H3 which were about the significant difference in political deviance dimension of DWB across gender. H3 was stated as:

H3 - There is a significant difference in the political deviance dimension of DWB across gender.

Table 3 ANOVA-test results for gender and political deviance dimension of DWB

		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig
DWB – Political Deviance	Between groups	.271	1	.271	2.21	.261
	Within groups	255.174	310	.852		
	Total	256.926	311			

(* indicates items significant at 5% significance level)

The one way ANOVA results done on political deviance dimension of DWB with gender showed that the values are not significant at 5% level. Hence, male and female employees in IT companies do not perceive political deviance dimension of DWB differently. H3 is therefore rejected.

Influence of gender on Personal Aggression dimension of Deviant Workplace Behaviors (DWB)

One way ANOVA was used for testing hypothesis H4 which were about the significant difference in personal aggression dimension of DWB across gender. H4 was stated as:

H4 - There is a significant difference in the personal aggression dimension of DWB across gender.

Table 4 ANOVA-test results for gender and personal aggression dimension of DWB

		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig
DWB – Personal Aggression	Between groups	1.535	1	1.535	1.899	.235
	Within groups	134.672	310	.491		
	Total	137.926	311			

(* indicates items significant at 5% significance level)

The above table shows one way ANOVA results done on personal aggression dimension of DWB with gender. The results affirm that the values are not significant at 5% level. Hence, there is no difference in the personal aggression dimension of DWB with regards to gender of the employees. H4 is therefore rejected.

Findings and Discussion

The results showed that women employees exhibit lower levels of production and property dimensions of Deviant Workplace Behaviors compared to that of male employees working in IT industry. Using the four dimensional framework of Deviant Workplace Behaviors proposed by Robinson and Bennett [6], it is evident that women display higher levels of political and personal aggression dimensions of Deviant Workplace Behaviors directed towards individuals and lower levels of production and property dimensions of Deviant Workplace Behaviors directed towards organization. This positivity towards organization is because of the gender sensitive practices implemented by major firms in IT Industry. Gender sensitivity survey done by Mercer NASSCOM showed that efforts were taken by organizations to include more women in middle level and senior level positions. The report also reveals many crucial benefits of gender sensitization which include good employer brand, better productivity and revenue and increased retention rates within the workforce. It was found that many leading IT firms take special efforts

in the sensitization movement like raising awareness of the capabilities, skills and strengths personified by female employees and revealing the key issues that hold women back. With policies around grievance management, the implementation of gender-neutral practices, career opportunities and advancement and the creation of an inclusive work environment in place, most female employees working in these organizations are experiencing loyalty towards the firms. This organizational loyalty is reflected in the results showing lower levels of deviant work place behaviors directed towards organizations. While exploring some of the best gender sensitivity practices implemented by IT companies, it was found that the most popular ones were the policies related to sexual harassment and flexibility at work. Apart from these, one gender sensitive practice was team outings which enhanced employee morale and transcend the difference of gender, language or qualification. Further investigation found out that stereotyping of women professionals, a personal sense of mid career guilt and a proverbial glass ceiling were the three main hindrances that work against women in workplace. In a nutshell, organizations should promote more gender sensitive practices to bring down the negative impact of deviant workplace behaviors and ensure organizational success in long run.

4. Conclusion (10pt)

Indian IT sector has emerged at the largest private sector employer in the country by creating a unique platform for educated women to pursue lucrative and comfortable careers. The fundamental reason for women graduates moving into IT firms are the presence of gender sensitivity HR practices which focuses on fair opportunity to all. With employee retention and wellbeing being the greatest challenged faced by IT firms, special efforts directed towards ensuring proper sensitivity strategies can give a competitive advantage over the competitors. With the present workforce participation ratio of male and female employees in IT sector in india being a positive figure of 76:24, it is evident that these initiatives have worked for the benefit of the firms and the industry as a whole.

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