RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORKPLACE INCIVILITY AND TURNOVER INTENTION AMONG NON-EXECUTIVE BANKING EMPLOYEES IN SABAH

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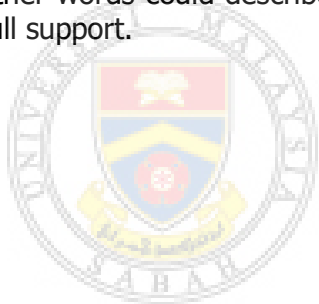
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ABSTRACT

This thesis discusses on the relationship between workplace incivility and turnover intention among the non-executive level employees working in the banking sector. The study of workplace incivility has increases over the past decade and is a global issue. There are various types of deviant behavior in the workplace and one of the emerging factors is workplace incivility. It is known as a subtle deviant behavior as compared to others. Nevertheless, it should not be taken lightly as it has proven to show an impact to the workers and is linked to turnover intention according to the social exchange theory. The social exchange theory describes as when the perpetrator initiates an uncivil behavior towards the employee, the target will respond in the similar manner which reciprocate and escalate therefore causes a negative effect. The turnover rate has been significant and ongoing rate in many parts of the world including Malaysia. There are four objectives in this study which is first and second to examine the level of workplace incivility and turnover intention, third to examine the relationship of workplace incivility typology namely hostility, privacy invasion, exclusionary behavior and gossiping with turnover intention and finally to examine the workplace incivility correlation with turnover intention. This study is quantitative that employs a stratified sampling method that targeted the non-executive employees working in the banking sector in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. After preliminary analysis, the total used and valid returned questionnaire is 338. The incivilities are measured by using the Workplace Incivility Scale (WIS) and Uncivil Workplace Behavior Questionnaire (UWBQ) while the turnover intention is measured using the Turnover Intention Scale. This study uses the SPSS version 20 to analyse the data. The result of this study shows that based on regression, correlation and descriptive analysis, gossiping is found to be the highest type of workplace incivility that the respondent experience followed by exclusionary behavior and the least is privacy invasion. It shows that all the factors have a relationship with turnover intention with a different degree. While based on the correlation analysis, the finding shows that, there is a significant relationship between workplace incivility and turnover intention among the banking employees with the value r = .565, suggesting a positive and strong correlation. Therefore, this thesis has established that there is a relationship between workplace incivility and turnover intention. Based on the findings in this study, further research is recommended to determine the possible causes of high turnover intention in the banking sector and workplace incivility therefore, generating plan to retain the non-executive employees and addressing a course of action when handling an uncivil behavior in the workplace.

Keywords: Workplace incivility, Turnover intention, Banking employees

ABSTRAK

HUBUNGAN ANTARA KETIDAKSOAPANAN DI TEMPAT KERJA DAN NIAT BERHENTI KERJA DALAM KALANGAN PEKERJA BANK BUKAN EKSEKUTIF DI SABAH

Kajian ini membincangkan mengenai hubungan diantara ketidaksopanan di tempat kerja dan niat berhenti kerja dalam kalangan pekerja bukan eksekutif di sektor perbankan. Kajian mengenai ketidaksopanan ini telah meningkat sedekad lalu dan merupakan masalah global. Terdapat pelbagai faktor yang mendorong kepada kadar peningkatan berhenti kerja dan salah satu daripadanya ialah ketidaksopanan di tempat kerja. Walaupun ketidaksopanan di tempat kerja adalah tindakan yang sangat halus, tingkah laku ini seharusnya tidak dianggap remeh kerana kajian lepas telah membuktikan bahawa impaknya juga seiring dengan jenis tingkahlaku yang negatif di tempat kerja seperti yang terdapat di dalam teori 'social exchange'. Teori 'social exchange' ini merujuk di mana pelaku melakukan tindakan tidak sopan terhadap pekerja, mereka akan membalas tindakan tersebut seperti yang mereka alami dan perkara ini akan berlanjutan dan meningkat sehingga berlakunya kesan negatif. Kadar berhenti kerja adalah signifikan dan semakin meningkat di kebanyakan tempat termasuklah di Malaysia. Terdapat empat objektif kajian ini iaitu yang pertama dan kedua ialah untuk mengkaji tahap ketidaksopanan di tempat kerja dan niat berhenti kerja, ketiga ialah untuk mengkaji hubungan di antara faktor ketidaksopanan di tempat kerja seperti 'hostility', 'privacy invasion, 'exclusionary behavior' dan 'gossiping' dengan niat untuk berhenti kerja dan yang terakhir ialah hubungan korelasi di antara ketidaksopanan di tempat kerja dan niat berhenti kerja. Kajian ini adalah dalam bentuk kuantitatif yang menggunakan kaedah persampelan berstrata yang disasarkan kepada pekerja bukan eksekutif di sektor perbankan di Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. Setelah analisis awal, jumlah borang soal selidik yang boleh digunakan ialah sebanyak 338. Ketidaksopanan diukur menggunakan skala 'Workplace Incivility (WIS)' dan 'Uncivil Workplace Behavior Questionnaire (UWBQ)' manakala niat untuk berhenti kerja adalah diukur dengan menggunakan skala "Niat untuk Berhenti Kerja". Kajian ini menggunakan SPSS versi 20 untuk menganalisis data. Dapatan kajian melalui regresi, korelasi dan diskriptif menunjukan bahawa 'gossiping' didapati merupakan jenis tingkah laku yang tertinggi memberi pengaruh kepada niat berhenti kerja diikuti dengan 'exclusionary behavior' dan 'privacy invasion' dan yang terendah ialah 'privacy invasion' yang menunjukan bahawa faktor ini mempunyai darjah hubungan yang berbeza. Manakala bagi analisis korelasi antara ketidaksopanan di tempat kerja dan niat berhenti kerja, nilai r = .565, menunjukan korelasi yang positif dan kuat. Oleh itu, kajian ini telah membuktikan bahawa ada hubungan di_antara ketidaksopanan dan niat berhenti kerja. Berdasarkan dapatan kajian, adalah dicadangkan untuk menjalankan kajian tambahan untuk menentukan faktor lain yang boleh menyebabkan niat berhenti kerja yang semakin meningkat dalam sektor bank serta ketidaksopanan di tempat kerja seterusnya menghasilkan pelan tindakan untuk mengekalkan pekerja dan tindakan apabila berhadapan dengan isu ketidaksopanan di tempat kerja.

Kata Kunci: *Ketidaksopanan di tempat kerja, Niat berhenti kerja, Pekerja Bank*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

MEF	-	Malaysian Employers Federation
MTUC	-	Malaysian Trade Union Congress
SBEU	-	Sabah Banking Employees' Union
SCEU	-	Sabah Commercial Employees' Union
WLO	**-**	World Labor Organization
PMR	-	Penilaian Menengah Rendah
SPM	-	Sijil Peperiksaan Malaysia
STPM	-	Sijil Tinggi Peperiksaan Malaysia

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Introduction

This chapter shows the overview of the study on understanding the relationship between workplace incivility and turnover intention. The study on understanding the relationship between both variables are important as the background of this study has shown the alarming issues of workplace incivility over the past decade. Previous research has also shown an increasing rate of turnover intention that is happening in various sectors especially among the non-executive employees working in the banking sector which is found in the problem statement. It shows the case of turnover intention and actual turnover rate in Malaysia as well linking the problem with the workplace incivility issue among the non-executive employees in the banking sector. There are four questions and objectives highlighted in this chapter. The operational definitions of the terms used are presented in alphabetical order. This chapter also presents the significance on conducting this study in terms of its contribution in addressing the gap from previous research. The scope that explains SBEU as the population can be found in the latter section of this study followed by the summary in this chapter.

1.2 Background of the Study

The study of industrial relations is dynamic and limitless concepts that does not only confined to certain issues and certain relationships but of a complex and vast variety of definitions (Trebilcock, 2011; Nikoloski, Dimitrova, Koleva and Kacarski, 2014, p. 118). There had been many varying definitions on the concept of industrial relations. However, the general concept of industrial relations is on the relationship between employees and employers in a wide range of perspectives (Richardson, 1954; Lester, 1962, p. 40; Ghosh & Ray, 2012, p. 18). Industrial relations study also involves in the attempt to reach a solution or a point that matches and intersect the objectives of all parties involved mainly employees and employers (Lester, 1962, p. 40). Thus, reflecting that the study of industrial relation is getting more complex than the definition of relationship alone.

The objective of the industrial relations is met based on the rules that apply to work which include the employment condition of the employees and the defining rules that list out the responsibilities of all parties be it employees or employers (Macdonald &MacIntyre, 1997, p. 4). The function of industrial relations process is about balancing the role of market force and to regulate the employment relations (Macdonald &Macintyre, 1997, p. 4). Industrial relations also widely understood as the "process and outcomes involving the employment relationship" which focuses mainly on the "interaction of employees and employers around bargaining exchange theory" (Somers, 1969; Ackers, 2002; Ghosh & Ray, 2012, p. 18). Bargaining Exchange Theory are the process whereby both parties will negotiate among each other on their work and business in order to achieve mutual agreement (Bottom, Holloway, Miller &Whitford, 2006). Thus, industrial relations are about harmonizing the bargaining process of employees and employers. Hence, a good industrial relation is reflected resulting a harmonize relationship between parties involved.

Apart from that, the bargaining process involved mainly in the discussion, negotiation and review where eventually parties, employers and employees will agree to follow a decision that they both come up with (Vibhav, n.d). It is an activity where both the wishes and wants of both parties are satisfied. This is

where union between employees are present where they represent the employees to achieve consensus in many functions it can (Ewing, 2005). The union in particular is a strong representative for the employees in fighting for their right. However, the core function of the trade union has been complicated over the years as they are in the process of constant change and evolution that is determined by the political, economy, environment and other factors (Ewing, 2005).

Globalization is one of the factors that affects the relationship between employees and employers in achieving a harmonious industrial relation (Macdonald & MacIntyre, 1997, p. 5). This study views globalization as one of the factors that foster the conflict of the relationship which impacted the way people in the workplace interact. Globalization are brought about by many things such as greater mobility, growing income, people gets a better education and also because of the world without boundaries and the expansion of market boundaries (Reich, 1998). As found in the past study, there are four tendencies that suggest the definition of globalization which include the paradigmatic shift in history, economy, sociological and technological (Reich, 1998) which signaling that the environment in the workplace nowadays has also change. This is referring to the emerging of international network based on the word globalization which impacted highly on the way people in the workplace interact (Cuterela, 2012, p. 137).

Globalization is usually used to describe the spreads of communication productions and connection through technologies throughout the world (Cuterela, 2012, p. 139). In this new era, where nations are developing every day, there are many things, processes and value that people appreciate and do differently today as compared to the era before. We are living in a globalize world where it encourages competition and production oriented which is highly encourage by the decreasing boundaries in terms of communication (Sherman & Morley, 2015, p. 7).

Therefore, through globalization, it had caused the relationship between employees and employers becoming even more dispersing (Edwards, 2011, p. 6). This is caused by the conflicting personal objectives and goals in the workplace therefore making it difficult to reach agreement compared to the times before. Employer's objectives are heavily directed into increasing their revenue and at the

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same time decrease the cost incurred in the process of producing product and services (Edwards, 2011, p. 6). This is all contributed by the similar agenda which is towards becoming a profit-making company and driven by the competitive pressure. Profit-oriented companies are the important players in encouraging the government's economic growth and also the overall economic growth in that particular country. These globalize and competitive world requires the company to always set a high and competitive standard for their respective company.

While on the other hand, the hope and aim of the employees is to be in a workplace that reward their labour and have a workplace environment that provide them with better opportunities, a comfortable workplace, supporting employers and other extrinsic value (Edwards, 2011, p. 9). The employees in the company are one of the major factors that contribute to the achievements of the goals and economic growth of a company. Good industrial relations are reflected by their improved working condition, peaceful relationship between employees and employers, fair wages, fair negotiation platform and social justice (Nikoloski *et al.*, 2000, p. 118). Employees are vital to the company and considered as the pulse of the daily operation in the company. However, because of the complex relationship of needs and wants between employers and employees, conflict arises and it is inevitable and therefore without further intervention, industrial relations "would simply break down" (Edwards, 2011, p. 12).

In present day, workplace is getting complicated and conflict that arises is inevitable. Although conflict cannot be avoided, it can be managed. Many companies are trying their best to ensure that the workplace environment is decent enough for the employees and also trying their best to retain their manpower physically and their performance (Ongori, 2007, p. 49). There are companies in certain industries that struggle in organizing program to ensure that their employees will not just stay but are also committed and always performing their very best to the company. It is a waste of talent, money and time when the company has invested so many towards the development of their employees in terms of their knowledge, skill and their experience in the workplace but only to see their performance drop and seeing them eventually leave their workplace (Ongori, 2007, p. 49).

Therefore, the issue of conflict that happens in the workplace is not ~~a~~ new in the study of industrial relations. Conflict as stated before, arises, in the workplace because of the friction and disagreement between employer and employees (Olakitan, 2011, p. 1). The study of industrial relations today still deals with the issues that occurred in the past such as collective bargaining, morale issues and losing employees as explained by previous research but the only things different is that, it happens in a relatively new pattern (Kerr, 1983). New pattern simply means that conflict is still happening in the workplace but it is happening in a different manner. For example, previously the conflict happens in the form of lockout, sabotage while the conflict today can be in the form of manipulation or lack of recognition in the workplace.

Relationship and interaction among employees and employers are an important issue that should be evaluated to ensure the growth of a company. Having an employee alone is not enough. The ability to maintain a harmonious workplace environment is also an important factor to ensure that the company keeps on growing. The impact of the training program that had been conducted to the employees will not last when they no longer committed to the company they work with (Edwards, 2011, p. 12). They can be time whereby the employees no longer felt secure working in the current workplace counting in all perspectives therefore, jeopardizing the relationship between employers and employees eventually. Unresolved workplace conflicts are actually the largest cost that can be reduced in an organization (Bartlett, Bartlett &Reio, 2008).

Conflict can come in many forms and in this globalize era where money, security and position are one of the goals, there are times that employees face a difficult situation where they have to compete with each other. The workplace environment became a race (Sherman & Morley, 2015, p. 9). Therefore, it does not matter whether the employees are being paid very well and had an interesting job, when they feel that there are not being treated fairly or with respect, they will beaffected (Olakitan, 2011, p. 6). Therefore, disagreement between employees and employer will arise. Disagreement is an issue highlighted nowadays because of the impact it brings to the wellbeing of the employees. There are many different ways employees are being mistreated by their employers and the general terms

commonly known is workplace deviant behavior (Nur Ain, Khulida& Tan, 2016). This has become one of the important factors of determining a harmonious relationship between employees and employers.

Workplace deviant behaviors are recognized and labeled with many different terms and typologies (NabilahNorsilan, Zoharah Omar & Aminah, 2014). Mistreatment in the workplace and workplace deviant behaviors are often associated but not limited to behavior such as bullying, violence, abusive acts, sexual harassment and discrimination. All these behaviors are potential of degrading the employees and impacting their work life. These behaviors are defined differently in terms of the degree of involvement and also the severity of each behavior (NabilahNorsilan*et al.,* 2014). Negative deviant behavior in the workplace is an ongoing issue and the result can impact the wellbeing of the employees.

These entire concepts are quite common and are already known to many organization and industry (Mohd Nazri, Mohd Dino & Javed, 2017). Behavior such workplace violence, bullying, harassment and abusive act are the many factors leading from the environment in the workplace. These behaviors are defined differently in terms of the degree of involvement and severity. Even though each represents their own meaning, it all leads to highly negative effect and costly consequences to the organization and the industry among others.

Previous study has shown an increase in successful implementation of best practices in the workplace, guidance and also enforcement of law that regulate the conduct of the employees therefore, eradicate the behavior that jeopardize or ruin the relationship between employees and employers because of negative treatment in the workplace. As stated in previous studies, there had been further intervention to increase the prevention strategies in handling these negative behaviors in the workplace. In Malaysia, the government is protecting the employee's wellbeing through various implementation and regulation of laws such as the Employment Act 1955, Sabah Ordinance, Sarawak Ordinance and Industrial Relations Act 1967. The success in preventing negative behavior in the workplace can be seen in year 2012, where New Part XVA under the topic of Sexual Harassment was inserted in the

Employment Act 1955. Trade union also take part in maintaining a situation that help eradicate negative behavior such as violence and aggression in the workplace that can be investigated through Domestic Inquiry therefore, requiring a high social support that could come from union (Holm *et al.,* 2015).

One of the examples form several local and multinational companies in Malaysia which is in the same line towards ensuring a harmonious and safe workplace especially are shown when they come up with a prevention strategy and procedures to tackle any sensitive case in the workplace. One of the policies is the whistleblower protection. Whereby its existence is to encourage and protect employees whom reported any wrong doings and it becomes an avenue for them to disclose any improper conduct in the workplace (MACC, 2016). Following the Act by MACC, several organizations also adopted the whistleblower policy in their own company. Among others are Petronas Whistleblowing Policy, Bank Negara Malaysia Whistleblowing Policy and many other types of industry are ensuring that the employees whom report any wrongdoings will not be taken action against them. Whistleblower policy will help to protect the employees whom help to report on any wrongdoing cases happening in the workplace (MACC, 2016).

This shows that regulation to combat workplace deviant behavior has been conducted many years back in Malaysia. Based on the progress report in dealing with workplace deviant behavior, the less apparent issue namely workplace incivility also emerges that demand for future research. One of the important subject matter in negative workplace behavior that has been neglected is on the issue of workplace incivility (Andersson & Pearson, 1999, p. 455). Previous research has shown that workplace incivility is an issue worthy to be examined as it can cause similar and apparent deviant behavior. Previous research has shown that an estimated about 98% of employees has experience workplace incivility with 50% of them experiencing incivility at least weekly (Porath & Pearson, 2013; Schilpzand*et al.,* 2014). Aside from the high number of workplace incivility evidence reported throughout the United States and Canada, it is also reported that incivility in the workplace is expensive (Pearson & Porath, 2009) due to project delay and distraction in the workplace.

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Previous research has shown that workplace incivility is not just a case in the U.S and Canada but in many parts of the world as suggested by the meta-analysis study (Schilpzand et al., 2014). The studies of incivility also consist samples from across the globe that include Australia (Martin & Hine, 2005), Canada (Leiter et al., 2011), China (Chen et al., 2013), Korea (Kim & Shapiro, 2008), New Zealand (Griffin, 2010), the Philippines (Scoot, Restubog & Zagenczyk, 2013), Singapore (Lim & Lee, 2011), the United Kingdom (Herschcovis, Totterdell & Niven, 2012), Pakistan (Zia-ud-Din, Arif & Aqib, 2017), Indonesia (Handoyo, Samian, Suhariadi & Syarifah, 2018; Reni, Nurul Ain & Hazalizah, 2019), Africa (Smidt, De Beer, Brink, & Leiter, 2016), Japan (Tsuno, Kawakami, Shimazu, Shimada, Inoue, & Leiter, 2017) and also Malaysia (Ida & Zeti, 2012, Azizan & Razlina, 2015; Ida, Poon & Rahidah, 2018). This shows that workplace incivility issue is not only restrain to certain geographical location or culture but rather it is an issue that is happening around the world. Therefore, the study of workplace incivility is an emerging issue that needs to be highlighted as stated by evidence from previous research.

Apart from that, meta-analysis from previous research has shown that workplace incivility has been prevalent among many different types of profession and occupation. These include manufacturing employees (Wu, Chang, Chiu & He, 2013), healthcare employees (Leiter et al., 2011; Trude I& Reio, 2011), federal court employees (Cortina *et al.,* 2002), university employees (Cortina & Magley, 2009), property management employee (Miner, Settles & Pratt-Hyatt, 2012), call center employees (Scott *et al.,* 2013), grocery store employees (Walsh, Magley, Reeves, Davies-Schrils, Marmet& Gallus, 2012), law enforcement employees (Cortina *et al.,* 2001), retail employees (Kern & Grandey, 2009), customer service employees (Diefendorff & Croyle, 2008), financial service employees (Lim & Teo, 2009) and bank tellers (Sliter, Jex, Wolford, McInnerney, 2010). This shows that workplace incivility does not only affect certain groups but also across various different types of occupation and work.

In Malaysia, the issue of workplace incivility is not uncommon as previous research has shown that workplace incivility generally does happen among employees from different industry (Ida &Zeti, 2012). The issue is found to be

relevant here also together with the process of globalization. Similar changes here mean that Malaysia too experiences changes in terms of economic change, merger, downsizing, restructuring and the increasing use of modern technology. This shows that workplace incivility happens despite of the changes in the workplace environment. Another study among 240 public and private employees in Sabah, Malaysia has shown that the level of incivility treatment experienced from their superior was higher acompared to incivility among their peers (Syed Azizi, Enja & Ramraini, 2016). Therefore, this suggests that workplace incivility is felt mostly by the employees in the lower ranking where the instigators are their superior.

It has shown that the worker's position in the company has significant determinant of whether they be the one experiencing or instigating the uncivil behavior. Previous research has shown that the differing position and power in the company are the primary cause of workplace incivility (Doshy & Wang, 2014). The victim is usually those who has less power or is usually submissive in nature as compared to the instigators (Doshy & Wang, 2014). The perpetrators have advantage while the victim has disadvantage because of the position they are in and usually those in the higher-ranking position would undermine those in the lower ranking. Apart from that, previous research states that the employees who are being targeted for incivility by their superior have lower social support and control over the issue of workplace incivility therefore received more negative outcomes from the uncivil behavior of their supervisor (Holm *et al.,* 2015).

One of the earliest studies on workplace incivility shows that workplace incivility is a term which is defined as "low intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intention to harm the target and in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect" (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). Study by Andersson and Pearson (1999) establish that workplace incivility characteristics are acting rudely or discourteous and also displaying the lack of regards for others. As shown in previous research, incivility in the workplace should not be taken lightly because of its milder form of workplace deviant behavior among other because of the consequences it can bring is similar to the one with a more aggressive behavior.