

Predicting positive and negative behaviors at the workplace: Insights from multi-faceted perceptions and attitudes

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Abstract

Behavior at the workplace is one of the most important factors that distinguishes one organization from another. The current study attempts to test two pathways through which positive and negative behavior at the workplace can be predicted. The positive path leading to positive behavior (i.e., task performance, organizational citizenship behavior [OCB]) is shaped by positive perceptions (i.e., perceived organizational justice, perceived organizational support, perceived organizational identity) and positive attitudes (i.e., organizational commitment, work engagement), while the negative path leading to negative behavior (i.e., counterproductive work behavior [CWB], turnover intentions) is shaped by negative perceptions (i.e., perceived organizational politics, perceived abusive supervision, perceived overqualification) and negative attitudes (i.e., job stress, job burnout). Data were collected from 1344 individuals working in various companies in the public sector (e.g., industrial, service, health, education) in Iraq. To achieve the purpose of the study, 16 hypotheses were tested. The results of the study supported positive and negative pathways of perceptions, attitudes, and behavior. The results also indicated that positive perceptions and attitudes are good predictors of negative behavior, while negative perceptions and attitudes also predict positive behavior. This indicates that obtaining the best results of behavior in the workplace should be through strengthening the package of positive variables and reducing the package of negative variables. Based on the results, the study discussed a number of theoretical and practical implications and offered a set of recommendations.

KEYWORDS

negative perceptions and attitudes, positive perception and attitudes, social exchange theory, theory of resource conservation

1 | INTRODUCTION

Human behavior in the workplace has become one of the most important determinants of the superiority of one organization over another (Rubel et al., 2021; Sahoo et al., 2022). Due to the unpredictability of human nature, dealing with people in the workplace has been an anathema

for both academia and practitioners (Allen et al., 2017). Managers work continuously with the goal of reinforcing positive behaviors and discouraging negative ones (Jung et al., 2021). They try to understand the behavior and the factors that cause the occurrence of the oddities of behavior due physical and social work environment (Ahmad & Begum, 2020; Cesário & Chambel, 2017). On this basis,