

# Factors Contributing to Employee Workplace Deviant Behaviors in Public Sector Organizations

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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJAREMS/v11-i1/12181>

DOI:10.6007/IJAREMS/v11-i1/12181

*Published Online:* 11 March 2022

## Abstract

Workplace deviant behavior is a long-standing issue particularly in public sector organizations. This critical issue has become burdensome, as it has enormous costs and implications for the organizations. The objective of this study is to examine the organizational factors that influence the deviant behavior of employees working in public sector organizations in Malaysia. Online questionnaire was used to collect the required data from the respondents who were selected using convenience sampling technique. The data were analyzed using descriptive analysis, factor analysis, reliability, Pearson Correlation Coefficient and Multiple Regression Analysis. The findings of this study revealed that ethical work climate has a negative influence on workplace deviant behavior whereas organizational justice, trust and organizational support show no significant relationship with the dependent variable. Thus, by ensuring high ethical work climate in the organization through practicing leadership by example and implementing Islamic work practices, among others, workplace deviant behaviors can be controlled. If these behaviors persist, corrective actions must be taken thoroughly and promptly, or it can affect the organization as a whole and there will be serious consequences of these behaviors. The practical and research implications of the study are further discussed in the paper.

**Keywords:** Workplace Deviant Behavior, Public Sector Organizations, Ethical Work Climate

## Introduction

Deviant behavior is a recurring problem that occurs at the workplace. Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission revealed that there were 863 cases that had been opened for investigation in 2017 which include misuse of position, false claims, accepting or giving bribery and other work-related offenses. In addition, statistics from Women's Aid Organization source reported that there were more than 300 cases on sexual harassment with the highest number of cases were reported in 2016. Moreover, Griffin and Lopez (2004) stated that all

employees working in organizations have high possibility to engage in deviant behavior. Besides, a study by Gilligan (1996) showed that employees with lower ranks in the organizations are likely to behave defiantly.

It is also important to point out that employees who are involved in the deviant behavior at the workplace will bring detrimental effects to the organizations. Lazaroo (2016) revealed that Malaysian companies lose more than RM6 billion annually due to employees' absence. One of Malaysia's visions is to push the country's aspirations towards global competitiveness through effective and efficient implementation of government policies in the public sector (Rahman, 2006). However, according to Abdul Rahman (2008), the media have reported various issues pertaining to deviant behavior among support employees working in public organizations. This phenomenon has become one of the factors that hinder the achievement of this vision.

Despite all the deviant issues in public sector organizations that have been reported in media, there are limited research data or statistics that can be referred. Furthermore, Einarsen et al (2003) highlighted that deviant behavior is prone to happen in public organizations as compared to private organizations. Vogel, Homberg and Gericke (2016) asserted that employees in public organizations are not sharing the goals and values of profit-oriented organizations, which leads them to exhibit lower organizational identification and commitment which further increases deviant behavior at the workplace. When this happens, it could affect the quality of service and customer satisfaction. This is evident in the increase of complaints received by the Public Complaints Bureau in Malaysia from 6,387 in 2018 to 8,992 complaints in 2019.

Although numerous studies have been conducted to address the issue, these studies are unable to generate a generic model that can accurately explain this phenomenon and subsequently solve the problem. Although various measures had been used to address the problem, it still persists because these measures were not effective or not relevant to address the root cause of the problem, which is related to employee attitude. Therefore, the present study was undertaken to investigate the factors or the measures that are related to this problem and it is expected that the outcome of this study will subsequently lead to the resolution of this problem at the workplace.

### **Literature Review**

Robinson and Bennett (1995) were among the earliest who developed and studied about deviant behavior in the workplace. Initially, they developed four types of workplace deviant behavior which are production deviance, property deviance, political deviance and personal aggression. Production deviance refers to behaviors such as leaving early or coming late to the office without permission from the supervisors, getting involved in gambling activities in the workplace, distributing pornographic materials and browsing the internet for non-work related topics during working hours. Property deviance focuses on behaviors such as abusing office materials by acquiring them without consent, forging the ID card which is supposed to be used for attendance record and using organization's equipment without any authorization.

The third type of deviant behavior involves political deviance which applies to behaviors such as gossiping and spreading rumors at the workplace. Last but not least, personal aggression

comprises behaviors such as making rude statements, harassing other employees and being disrespectful to supervisors. Appelbaum and Shapiro (2006) mentioned that several studies reported that production and property deviance have high likelihood to occur among young and new employees, those who work on part-time basis and earn low salary. Robinson and Bennett (1995) also summarized the examples of deviant behavior ranging from minor to major which was further categorized into organizational and interpersonal deviance respectively.

In most cases, deviant behavior occurs due to the perception of employees who feel that their needs and wants are ignored by the top management. They feel that it is useless to work hard for the organization when the organization itself does not take care of their well-being, hence, they feel the need to retaliate and behave in defiance as they feel that they have been mistreated by the organization.

### *Social Exchange Theory*

Social Exchange Theory (SET) explains that any exchange relationship (Chernyak-Hai & Tziner, 2014) between humans is built according to cost-benefit analysis. The cost-benefit analysis intends to maximize benefits and minimize costs (Ahmad & Omar, 2014). They also mentioned that when risks overpowered rewards, the relationship will be terminated. People are likely to repeat attitudes or behaviors that have been rewarded in the past. On the other hand, if they perceived that support and justice are absent, they will feel dissatisfied and refrain from displaying positive behavior, which could lead to deviant behavior. It is because they believe that there is no use in being good if the organization does not value them. In contrast, if the employees feel that they receive adequate support and trust from the organization, they will be more likely to return the goodwill and perform well.

A number of studies have been conducted to determine the relationship between organizational factors that influence workplace deviant behavior and most studies have used the SET as the underlying theory. The theory suggests that the organizational factors such as organizational support, justice, ethical work climate and trust are significant and can lead to deviant behavior in the workplace. This theory explains on how the exchange of direct or indirect rewards can be used to build and maintain relationships among employees or between employees and the organizations.

### *Relationship between Organizational Support and Workplace Deviant Behavior*

Organizational support is described as the perception of employees on how the organization values their contributions and concerns about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 2001). An example of the perceived support is the way organization reacts on certain situations such as employees' mistakes, future illnesses, outstanding performance and the willingness of the organization to pay fair and attractive compensations as well as making the job more meaningful and interesting (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

Organizational support is related to workplace deviant behavior (Abdul Rahman, 2008). When perceived organizational support exists, it strengthens the employees' obligation to help the organization achieve its goals. When the employees perceive that the organization is willing to spend for their development, they will avoid behaving defiantly and perform their job well (Malik & Lenka, 2018). In contrast, if they feel that the organization does not provide

adequate support, it will lead to despair and frustration. Malik and Lenka (2018); Mishra and Pandey (2014); Ojo and Tamunoipiriala (2019) highlighted that lack of organizational support will lead employees to exhibit deviant behavior.

#### *Relationship between Ethical Work Climate and Workplace Deviant Behavior*

Ethical work climate is defined as an atmosphere in which employees are aware of their moral obligations (Wang & Hsieh, 2012) and their beliefs and principles on the concept of ethical behavior as well as the manner in which ethical issues shall be addressed by the organization. Yasir and Rasli (2018) also defined ethical work climate as a norm that determines the types of behaviors that are deemed acceptable and will assist employees in identifying the right way to behave appropriately.

Ethical work climate may also depend on the leaders. Ethical leaders are perceived as fair, trustworthy and honest by the society (Mostafa & Shen, 2019). This kind of leaders practice ethical conduct in their workplace and ensure that their employees also are doing the same (Hartog & Belschak, 2012). Furthermore, when the leaders behave in line with business ethics, the employees are likely to be happier and less possibly to behave inappropriately (Aryati, Sudiro, Hadiwidjaja & Noermijati, 2018). It was also revealed that the more ethical the leader, the more ethical the climate becomes (Lu & Lin, 2014), which leads to negative relationship between ethical climate and deviant behavior at the workplace (Aryati et al., 2018; Haldorai, Kim, Chang & Li, 2020; Kantén & Ulker, 2013).

#### *Relationship between Trust and Workplace Deviant Behavior*

Trust is defined as a perception where employees believe that another party will not act harmfully but beneficially and reliably (Paliszkiwicz, 2010). According to Paliszkiwicz and Koochang (2013), trust is essential for people relationships because it makes the cooperation between them possible. "Organizational trust refers to employees' faith in corporate goal attainment and organizational leaders, and to the belief that ultimately an organization action will prove beneficial for employees" (Gilbert & Tang, 1998). Trust can also be defined as previous interactions that exist between employee and organization or subordinate/supervisor and a perception that future interactions would be the same as in the past (Marasi et al., 2016).

Trust is expected to reduce deviant behavior at the workplace. Aquino and Bayron (2002) emphasized that deviant behavior exists when the employees feel that trust is lacking. Berry, Onez, and Sackett (2007) also agreed that a low level of trust is the reason for a rise in deviant behavior. This variable is also linked to Social Exchange Theory (SET) which describes that the employees' level of trust depends on past interactions with employers (Marasi et al., 2016). Abdul Rahman (2008) and Akighbe and Sunday (2018) also emphasized that trust has a negative influence on deviant behavior. When employees trust the organization, positive behavior will be displayed therefore this will lead to a decrease in workplace deviant behavior (Azim, Hassan, Zaid & Daud, 2020).

#### *Relationship between Organizational Justice and Workplace Deviant Behavior*

Organizational justice is described as employees' perception of the fairness of their organization's behavior, decisions and actions (Greenberg, 1990). The employees' perceptions are based on whether they receive fair treatment or vice versa from the

organization. Ambrose and Schminke (2009) agreed that employees perceived organizational justice based on whether it provides them with proper, equitable and respectful treatment, ample and precise information, as well as resources and rewards. It is crucial to identify the way employees view injustice and the way they respond to it (Wenzel, Schindler, & Reinhard, 2017) due to the perception that could bring up bad attitudes and behaviors among the employees (Gill et al., 2013).

It is strongly believed that justice is an important determinant to predict deviant behavior in the workplace. Insufficient organizational justice creates a toxic working environment and reduces the individual's ability to work. The employees will be demotivated to work and produce a mediocre result. Wu et al (2016); Haldorai et al (2020) agreed that there is indeed a negative relationship between perceived organizational justice and counterproductive work behavior or, in this research, known as deviant work behavior. Poor and unfair compensation could lead to deviant behavior (Lugosi, 2019). Michelle and Ambrose (2007) used SET to connect organizational justice with workplace deviant behavior. If employees perceive that the organization is fair and just, they will behave and perform well. Otherwise, they are most likely to retaliate and behave defiantly.

### **Research Methods**

Currently, there are 1.7 million employees in Malaysian public organizations. For this study, non-probability sampling was used as the sampling design because the sampling frame is not available. Specifically, convenience sampling was chosen as the sampling technique. As its name implies, convenience sampling refers to the collection of information from members of the population who are conveniently available to provide it. In ensuring that the samples represent the population, Krejcie and Morgan's table (1970) was referred to when determining the sample size. The sample size for this research was 384 employees. Therefore, a total of 384 sets of questionnaire were distributed to employees working in two public organizations and 303 were returned, making the response rate to be 78.9%.

A 5-point Likert scale was used in the questionnaire to gauge the respondent's degree of agreement to certain statements using five options; (1) Strongly agree, (2) Agree, (3) Neither agree or disagree, (4) Disagree and (5) Strongly disagree. Workplace Deviant Behavior was measured using 11 statements developed by Tuna et al (2014), organizational support was assessed by using five items proposed by Lee and Chui (2019), organizational justice was measured using six statements developed by Ambrose and Schminke (2009), ethical work climate was assessed using seven items suggested by Buchan (2009), and organizational trust was evaluated using five items proposed by (Demir, 2011). Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.

## Results and Discussion

Table 1

### *Demographic Profile of Respondents*

Variables	Description	Frequencies	Percentages
Gender	Male	98	32.3
	Female	205	67.7
Age	20 - 29 years old	152	50.2
	30 - 39 years old	112	37.0
	40 - 49 years old	32	10.6
	50 years old and above	7	2.3
Academic Qualifications	SPM	20	6.6
	Matriculation/STPM/Diploma	54	17.8
	Bachelor's Degree	211	69.6
	Master's Degree	17	5.6
	PhD	1	.3
Marital Status	Single	137	45.2
	Married	161	53.1
	Divorced	2	.7
	Widowed	3	1.0
Race	Malay	289	95.4
	Chinese	5	1.7
	Indian	9	3.0
Job Tenure	Less than a year	36	11.9
	1 to 3 years	109	36.0
	4 to 6 years	67	22.1
	7 - 10 years	51	16.8
	More than 10 years	40	13.2

As presented in Table 1, there are 303 respondents who participated in the survey, which comprise 98 males or equivalent to 32.3% and 205 females or equivalent to 67.7%. Majority of respondents (152 respondents or equivalent to 50.2%) were aged between 20-29 years old. 112 respondents or 37% were between 30-39 years old. 32 respondents were in the range of 40-49 years old (10.6%). The least number of respondents were aged 50 years old and above, with only seven respondents or equivalent to 2.3%.

For the level of education, most respondents had Bachelor's Degree (211 respondents or 69.6% of the total sample). 54 respondents or 17.8% of respondents were Matriculation or STPM or Diploma holders, while 17 respondents (5.6%) possessed Master's Degree. Meanwhile, only one respondent had PhD and the percentage is 0.3%. As for respondents' marital status, majority of respondents (161) were married, equivalent to 53.1%. There are 173 single respondents and three widowed at 45.2% and 1%, respectively. Two respondents were divorced that represents 0.7%.

Malays are the majority group involved in the study represented by 289 respondents or 95.4%, followed by Chinese and Indian with five (1.7%) and nine respondents (3.0%), respectively. Regarding job tenure, 36 respondents had been working less than a year. Majority of respondents (109) or 36% had been working between 1 and 3 years in the current

organization. In addition, 67 respondents had been working between 4 and 6 years and 51 respondents had been working between 7 and 10 years. Lastly, 40 respondents or 13.2% of the respondents had been working for more than 10 years.

Table 2  
*Factor Analysis of the Dependent Variable*

		Component
		1
I made someone feel physically intimidated either through threats or carelessness at work.		.854
I blamed someone else or let someone else take the blame for my mistake.		.814
I took property from work without permission.		.811
I made an ethnic or sexually harassing remark or joke at work.		.799
I padded an expense account to get reimbursed for more money than I spent on business expenses.		.797
I accepted a gift/favor in exchange for preferential treatment.		.791
I spread gossip about a co-worker.		.764
I cursed someone at work.		.753
I always took an additional or longer break than is acceptable at my place of work.		.718
I showed favouritism for a fellow employee or subordinate employee.		.712
I intentionally worked slower than I could have worked		.705
% variance explained		60.15%
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.926
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2193.611
	df	55
	Sig.	.000
MSA		.904-.948

Principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation was performed to examine the dimensionality of items measuring the dependent variable. As shown in Table 2, one factor was extracted and produced 60.15% of variance. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) was used to measure the adequacy of samples used in the study (Hadi, Ilham & Abdullah, 2016). The sampling is considered sufficient when the KMO value is higher than 0.5 (Field, 2000) and the value should be 0.6 and above (Pallant, 2013). The table above shows that KMO value of 0.926 denotes that it is sufficient to perform the factor analysis. The Bartlett's test also shows adequate correlation matrix in the data set. The MSA values ranging between 0.904 and 0.948 support the results. No item was deleted after factor analysis and the variable is ready for further analysis.

Table 3  
Factor Analysis of the Independent Variable

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Overall, I'm treated fairly by my organization.	.851			
In general, I can count on this organization to be fair.	.823			
In general, the treatment I receive around here is fair.	.807			
For the most part, this organization treats its employees fairly.	.781			
My manager keeps his/her promises.		.787		
My manager generally tells the truth.		.777		
My manager does things to further my interests.		.712		
My manager tries to help when he/she can.		.667		
My manager acts as I expect him/her to.		.605		
In this company, people are mostly out for themselves.			.755	
Work is considered substandard only when it hurts the company's interests.			.751	
There is no room for one's personal morals or ethics in this company.			.693	
In this company, people protect their own interests above others.			.677	
People are expected to do anything to further the company's interest rather than individuals' interest, regardless of the consequences.			.659	
The mission/purpose of my organization makes me feel my job is important.				.826
I feel encouraged to introduce new ideas and better ways of doing things.				.707
All in all, I am satisfied with my job.				.646
My work gives the feeling of personal accomplishment.				.581
% variance explained (60.39%)	17.38	16.02	14.33	12.65
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.				.840
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx.			2085.478
	Chi-Square			
	df			153
	Sig.			.000
MSA				.727-
				.905

Principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation was also performed to examine the dimensionality of items measuring the independent variables. Table 3 shows that 60.39% of variance is explained through the emergence of the four-factor structure. The KMO value of 0.840 denotes that the samples are sufficient for the analysis. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is significant indicating that the data gained from this study are correlated sufficiently. MSA



values ranging from 0.762 to 0.905 show that the data are adequate to form the factor structure in this study.

From Table 3, the first component represents organizational justice that originally contained six items. However, two items were deleted due to high cross loadings. The remaining four items have loadings ranging from 0.781 to 0.851. The second component which is trust originally contained six items. However, due to high cross loadings, one item had been deleted. The remaining five items have loadings ranging from 0.605 to 0.787. Ethical work climate is the third component extracted from this analysis. Two out of seven items were deleted due to high cross loadings which leave only five items to represent this variable with loadings ranging from 0.659 to 0.755. The last extracted component is organizational support which originally had five items. One item was deleted because of high cross loadings and the remaining four items have loadings ranging from 0.581 to 0.826. After confirming the dimensionality of the variables, they are ready for further analysis.

Table 4

*Results of Correlation and Reliability Analyses*

No	Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1	Trust	3.81	.64	(.804)				
2	Organizational Justice	3.86	.71	.456**	(.882)			
3	Ethical Work Climate	2.60	.69	.027	.171**	(.756)		
4	Organizational Support	4.09	.58	.458**	.399**	-.120*	(.736)	
5	Workplace Deviant Behavior	2.11	.86	.065	.055	-.402**	.060	(.932)

Notes: \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed); \*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed); N=303

Descriptive analysis was done to examine the distribution of data based on the mean and standard deviation values of all dependent and independent variables. Referring to Table 4, organizational support has the highest mean value compared to other variables with the value of 4.09. Organizational justice is ranked the second with the value of 3.85 followed by trust with the mean of 3.81. Furthermore, ethical work climate has the mean value of 2.60. Workplace deviant behavior scored the lowest mean value of 2.11.

Reliability is an indicator of the stability and consistency with which the concept is measured by the items and it is meant to assess the goodness of a measure (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). Cronbach's Alpha that has values ranging from 0 to 1 was used to verify the reliability of the instrument. As shown in Table 4, the reliability coefficient for workplace deviant behavior is 0.932, which is considered excellent. The scores for organizational justice (0.882) and trust (0.804) are considered very good. Organizational support and ethical work climate recorded the values of 0.736 and 0.756, respectively, implying good reliability coefficients.

Table 4 also shows that only one out of four independent variables is significant at  $p < 0.01$  which is ethical work climate. The variable has correlation value of -0.402, which indicates that ethical work climate has a negative moderate relationship with workplace deviant behavior. However, the remaining variables; organizational support, organizational justice and trust, show no significant correlation with workplace deviant behavior.

Table 5 shows the results of multiple linear regression analysis. The  $R^2$  value of this model is 0.181 indicating that 18.1% of variance in workplace deviant behavior is explained by the independent variables. F-value of this model is 16.478 and significant ( $p < 0.01$ ). In addition, there are two independent variables that have significant relationship with workplace deviant behavior which are organizational justice ( $\beta = .135$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and ethical work climate ( $\beta = -.435$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Specifically, organizational justice has a positive influence on workplace deviant behavior. Whereas, ethical work climate has a negative relationship with the dependent variable.

Table 5  
*Results of Multiple Regression Analysis*

Variables	Standardized Beta Coefficients
Trust	.047
Organizational Justice	.135*
Ethical Work Climate	-.435**
Organizational Support	-.068
R	.426
$R^2$	.181
Adjusted $R^2$	.170
F value	16.478
Sig. F value	.000
Durbin Watson	1.964

Consistent with the past studies conducted by Haldorai et al (2020); Aryati et al (2018), the result shows that ethical work climate has a significant negative influence on workplace deviant behavior. When the organization establishes an environment that emphasizes on ethics, employees become aware of good and desirable behaviors required and the boundaries they should not cross. Besides, leaders must set examples to their subordinates by acting ethically. If they are unethical, ethical climate will be difficult to be nurtured in the organization. Aryati et al (2012) also highlighted that when leaders are ethical, the employees are likely to also behave ethically. It is aligned with SET that asserts that when the employees perceive that their leaders are trustworthy and capable in making ethical decisions, they will reciprocate it by behaving appropriately.

Furthermore, Akighbe and Sunday (2018); Azim et al (2020) found that trust has a negative influence on workplace deviant behavior. However, the result of the present study reveals that trust does not affect workplace deviant behavior. The most plausible explanation is that some employees tend to take advantage when their superiors trust them, and they start to behave inappropriately and deceive their superiors. Marasi et al (2014) on the other hand stated that not all employees who experience less trust will engage in deviant behavior. Some employees are very committed in their jobs that moderates the relationship between organizational trust and deviant behavior at the workplace. This perspective can be considered by other researchers who are interested to verify the relationship in future.

Multiple regression analysis also shows that organizational support does not have any significant relationship with workplace deviant behavior in this study. The finding contradicts with past studies which stated that negative relationship indeed exists between the two

variables. Tee from The Star (2009) reported that working in public sector does bring numerous benefits to employees such as job security, housing loans with lower interest rate and longer repayment period, guaranteed yearly increment and retirement benefits. These represent must-provide organizational support entitled to government servants. This is the most plausible reason for non-significant relationship between organizational support and workplace deviant behavior.

Multiple regression analysis also reveals that there is a significant positive relationship between organizational justice and workplace deviant behavior. This finding contradicts with the one of past studies that found negative relationship between the two variables. This is probably due to the fact that although the employees are constantly being treated unfairly by the organization, they did not retaliate and engage in deviant acts as they are afraid of being further persecuted or intimidated (Pradhan & Jena, 2019). They are also worried that if they engage in deviant behavior, the organization will punish them through suspension, or in the worst-case scenario, termination. Consequently, it is difficult for them to look for a new job at another workplace in a short period of time.

#### *Implications of the Study*

Ethical work climate is proven to have an influence on workplace deviant behavior in public organizations. Thus, leaders and Human Resource practitioners must find optimal solutions in implementing this factor in the workplace setting. The following are some suggestions for improvement: First, the organization is suggested to establish a code of conduct based on the Islamic principles. Code of conduct refers to a statement of values of the company, responsibilities and expectations of conduct required from the employees. The code aids in reducing ethical ambiguities and addressing ethical dilemmas faced by the employees. Establishment of a clear code will define the conduct desired and ensure that employees from all positions are able to understand and follow it.

Second, the establishment of clear code of conduct will not fully solve the ethical issues if the employees are not trained. Therefore, it is suggested that the organization should conduct training programs focusing on ethics to employees. It helps provide awareness of good and acceptable behaviors desired by the organization. Training programs should be conducted regularly to ensure that employees are well trained and kept abreast with recent ethical concerns. The training programs should be provided to all employees including the new hires during their induction to get them familiarized with the policies and procedures in the workplace as well as the risks and consequences if this code of conduct is violated. Moreover, this training can inculcate the organizations' values that emphasize on integrity.

Third, the leaders must walk the talk. They need to lead by example. There is no use of asking the employees to follow the ethical practices if the leaders do not behave ethically. The action must start from the leaders, especially the top management in the organization. The leaders must be able to convey the values and adhere to the standards of ethics. Most of the time, the employees learn from observing actions of other people, rather than through experience. When the subordinates observe that their leaders are working in the right and ethical way, they tend to follow the leaders' footsteps. Thus, it is important for the leaders to become good role models to their subordinates in the organization.

### *Suggestions for Future Research*

The findings in this study revealed that only one hypothesis is supported which is ethical work climate has a negative influence on workplace deviant behavior. In future research, other variables should be considered to create a comprehensive nomological network among the variables. Perhaps future researchers may consider to include personality factors or work-related factors such as stress, job satisfaction and others to solve deviant behavior issues at the workplace. Besides, future researchers may consider testing the effect of a moderator or a mediator variable on the main relationship. Last but not least, the study can be extended to employees working in the private sector as the outcomes might be different.

### **Conclusion**

Workplace deviant behavior is a critical workplace phenomenon that requires urgent attention from those concerned; the top management, the government and the relevant agencies. Due to its severity, the present study was undertaken to investigate the factors that contribute to workplace deviant behavior at the public sector organizations in Malaysia. It was discovered that organizational justice has positive and significant relationship with employee deviant behavior ethical. Although the employees are constantly being unfairly treated by the organization, they did not retaliate and engage in deviant acts as they are afraid of being further persecuted or intimidated. Furthermore, work climate has a significant negative relationship with workplace deviant behavior. A negative relationship indicates that the lesser ethical work climate exists, the higher deviant behavior at the workplace. It is important for the organizations to improve the ethical work climate among the employees working in the public sector by setting up and enforcing ethical standards in the organization. Furthermore, leadership by example and practicing Islamic principles as the standard of practice will ensure the reduction of workplace deviant behavior cases as employees who are aware of the ethical standards will behave in an ethical manner.

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