

Organizational Justice and Workplace Deviance Behavior: Psychological Capital as Mediator

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Abstract

The present study was conducted to identify the mediating role of psychological capital in the relationship between three dimensions of an organization's justice, namely distributive justice, procedures justice and interactional justice with workplace deviance behavior among employees of multimedia organizations in Malaysia. Data collection was done through personally administered questionnaires from 350 employees. The statistical analysis, namely Correlation analysis, Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Structural Equation Modelling were executed. Results found negative and significant relationship between distributive justice, procedures justice and interactional justice and workplace deviance behavior, a positive relationship between distributive justice, procedures justice and interactional justice and psychological capital, and negative impact of psychological capital towards workplace deviance behavior. Finally, psychological capital partially mediated the relationship between distributive justice, interactional justice and workplace deviance behavior, and psychological capital fully mediated the relationship between procedures justice and workplace deviance behavior. The study makes a significant and unique contribution to literature by showing the mediation effect of psychological capital in the relationship between distributive justice, procedures justice, interactional justice and workplace deviance behavior. Present study's demonstrated that the employees' perception of organizational justice, can enhance the employee's psychological capital, which in turn mitigate workplace deviance behavior.

Keywords: psychological capital, distributive justice, procedures justice, interactional justice, workplace deviance behavior

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Workplace deviance behavior can be defined as “voluntary behavior of organizational members that violates significant organizational norms, and in so doing, threatens the well-being of the organization and/or its members” (Bennett & Robinson, 2000, p. 556). These deviance behaviors’ often damage the organization and its members and include them in such behavior as disturbing colleagues, sabotage other individual projects or deliberately disobeying the organization and spreading negative rumors. According to Fox and Spector (1999), the factors that cause this deviance behavior are due to the pressure faced by the employees.

When employees feel stressed as a result of their work, such as carrying a large burden of duty, can cause employees to take longer breaks than they should. This action can be interpreted as deviant behaviors for violation of organizational norms and rules. Nevertheless, deviant behaviors at work can still be controlled from some aspects of psychology.

Literature shows that psychological capital improves positive work results and reduces deviant behaviors at work (Avey, Luthans & Youssef, 2010; Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2007). Psychological capital includes four elements: hope, self-efficacy, resilience and optimism (Luthans et al., 2007). It is parallel to the concept of positive organizational behavior (Luthans & Youssef, 2004) and is seen as part of an interactive, set of synergistic sources, rather than separate and constructive psychological interdependence. These four constructs together form a psychological capital. Psychological capital is defined as a “an individual’s positive psychological state of development that is characterized by: (1) having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering toward goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and (4) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resilience) to attain success” (Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2007, p. 3). Individuals with high psychological capital are able to withstand stresses to produce more quality work and employees also recognize that these stresses are temporary and with this time of stress the pressure will decrease. This means indirectly, individuals with strong psychological capital will also have positive behaviors and thus reduce deviance behavior.

Deviant’s predictor in the workplace includes personal factors (e.g. Personality traits) and organizational factors (e.g., perception of justice). Previous studies found that organizational justice is one of the factors that can influence deviant behaviors at work (Demir, 2011; Ahmadi, Bagheri, Ebrahimi, Rokni & Kahreh, 2011; Syaebani & Sobri, 2011; Erkutlu, 2011; Liu & Ding, 2012). In addition, organizational justice can also shape employees’ positive behavior. Employees who feel their organization have provided fair treatment, are assumed to reciprocate more organization treatment by demonstrating greater involvement in various positive behaviors (psychological capital) and thus, reducing deviant behaviors.

Although some previous studies have shown that psychological capital as mediator in the relationship between organizational climate and organizational citizenship behavior (Qadeer & Jaffery, 2014). Luthans, Norman, Avolio and Avey (2008) suggest that psychological capital as mediator in the relationship between supervisor support and employee performance. While Malik and Masood (2015) found that psychological capital mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and refuse to change. Qadeer and Jaffery (2014) state that only a few studies have examined the role of psychological capital as mediator because the psychological model is a new concept. Moreover, studies that examine psychological capital as mediator in the relationship between the three dimensions of an organization’s justice, i.e. distributive justice, procedures and interaction with workplace deviance behavior are still limited. According to Nandan and Azim (2015), there are still limited studies that examine the impact of organizational justice on deviant behavior. Therefore, this study takes this initiative to evaluate the psychological capital impact as mediator in the relationship between organizational justice and deviant behavior at work.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Organizational Justice and Workplace deviance Behavior

Based on Social Exchange Theory, this study develops the research framework to explain the relationships between variable. Thibaut and Kelly (1959) began introducing the theory of social exchange in explaining the motive of why individuals had relationships with others. According to this theory, the relationship between the individual depends on the benefits and exchange costs. Individuals involved in the relationship, calculate the benefits they receive, and the costs they need to pay to get their benefits. According to Blau (1964), this theory suggests that good deeds should be rewarded well.

Individuals who receive benefits or support from others/organization will feel responsible for repaying the benefits he/she receives through effort and loyalty (Mossholder, Settoon & Henagan, 2005; Yuan-Duen, Chiu-Chuan, Min-Tzu, & Chen-Fen, 2017). Based on the theory of social exchange and the principle of reciprocity, employees have relationships with other employees in the organization, relate to their behavior. Based on this theory, this study assumes that organizational justice will shape positive employee behaviors and thereby avoid deviant behavior. Workplace deviance behavior includes emotional components (Bennett & Robinson, 2000).

This shows that deviant behavior at work is a direct result of employee emotions (Stone et al., 2004). The theory of social exchanges explains that based on positive employees' emotions, the result of justice in the organization encourages employees to respond by reducing workplace deviance behavior. Previous studies have found a significant negative relationship between distributive justice, procedural justice and interaction justice with workplace deviance behavior (Demir, 2011; Ahmadi et al., 2011; Syaebani & Sobri, 2011; Erkutlu, 2011; Liu & Ding, 2012).

Liu and Ding (2012) found negative correlations between interactional justice and workplace deviance. Priesemuth, Arnaud and Schminke (2013) also found the significant relationship between injustice climate and deviant behavior. O'Neill, Lewis and Carswell (2011) suggested that the procedural justice and interpersonal justice influence employees' deviant behavior, however distributive justice not significantly correlate with workplace deviance behavior. Meanwhile, Nasurdin, Ahmad and Razalli (2014) found that the distributive justice and procedural justice have a significant relationship on workplace deviance behavior.

In particular, distributive justice, procedural justice, and interaction justice are necessary positive terms for psychological capital to flourish. It will then form a positive behavior at work and reduce deviant behavior at work. Based on the above arguments, this study develops three research hypotheses:

H1a: There are significant negative relationships between distributive justice and workplace deviance behavior

H1b: There are significant negative relationships between procedural justice and workplace deviance behavior

H1c: There are significant negative relationships between interaction justice and workplace deviance behavior

2.2 Organizational Justice and Psychological Capital

One of the factors affecting psychological capital is organizational justice. The perception of organizational justice is a major concern for all employees in the workplace. Concerns about justice in organizations exist in various aspects of the workforce. Employees are so concerned about the fairness they receive in resource distribution, such as rewards, pay, etc., it is known as distributive justice (Adams, 1963; Deutsch, 1975; Leventhal, 1976). Employees are also concerned about justice in the process of decision making by an organization that is referred to as Justice Procedures (Thibaut & Walker, 1975; Leventhal, 1980). Finally, employees also pay attention to fairness in interpersonal treatment, known as interaction justice (Bies & Moag, 1986; Greenberg, 1987). All these justice, distributive justice, procedural justice and interaction justice are known as organizational justice. Organizational justice is defined by Greenberg (1990) as a concept that expresses employee perceptions of the extent to which they have been treated fairly, in the organization. Organizational justice creates the positive conditions necessary for psychological capital to flourish (Nandan & Azim, 2015).

Organizational justice can be seen as one of the forms of organizational support in providing a fair service to employees in the organization. Previous studies have found that various organizational support has a positive impact on psychological capital. Organizational support such as recognition, appreciation to employees is seen to form the employees' psychological capital (Azim & Dora, 2016). Organizational support in terms of increasing trust in management has had a profound effect on psychological capital (Qadeer & Jaffery, 2014). Managers can develop psychological capital of subordinates through supervisor's support (Luthans, Norman, Avolio & Avey, 2008; Walumbwa, Luthans, Avey & Oke, 2011) by providing a fair service and encouraging organizational justice.

According to Thomas and Ganster (1995) the supervisor acts as an agent who can develop the positive attitude of the employee. While Nandan and Azim (2015) study, which examines the impact of psychological capital as mediator found a significant positive relationship between organizational justice and psychological capital. The study concludes that employees who know and realize that their organizations practice of justice in terms of distributive justice, procedural justice and interaction justice, have an impact on their emotions and psychology, thereby, increased psychological capital. Distributing justice, procedural justice and interaction justice are forms of justice by organizations that are provided to the employees. These forms of justice will shape the positive behavior of employees (Spector & Che, 2014; Nandan & Azim, 2015). In other words, justice at work will shape the employees' positive behavior or psychological capital (Nandan & Azim, 2015). When employees have positive psychological capital, they will be able to control negative behaviors. The following hypotheses are based on the above literature review:

H2a: There are significant negative relationships between distributive justice and psychological capital

H2b: There are significant negative relationships between procedural justice and psychological capital

H2c: There are significant negative relationships between interaction justice and psychological capital

2.3 Psychological Capital and Workplace Deviance Behavior

Psychological capital refers to individuals with positive mental and personal development, as a result, it affects positive behaviour. This psychological capital as stated by Luthans et al. (2007), has four dimensions namely hope, self-efficacy, resilience and optimism. Hence, it is possible that psychological capital can induce employees to positive behavior and not involve in negative behavior. This study suggests that a positive behavior will reduce workplace deviant behavior. Individuals who have a positive behavior, psychological capital generally tend to achieve goals through one's ability to seek diverse methods to succeed, among them being a positive-minded and unwilling to do things that violate organizational norms. Previous studies have found that stress workers resulting from workload are more likely to perform workplace deviant behavior (Silva, 2017). But for those with psychological capital such as resilient will be able to overcome this stress problem and thus can reduce workplace deviant behaviour.

Another study also found that psychological capital can reduce workplace deviance behavior. The study by Norman, Avey, Nimnicht and Pigeon (2010) suggested that workers with high psychological capital levels are more likely to engage in organizational citizenship behavior and less likely to engage in workplace deviant behavioral. Manzoor, Khattak and Hassan (2015) found that the optimistic psychological capital intercession in the direction of employee performance and reduce the counterproductive behavior. Thus, this study develops the hypothesis as follows:

H3: There are significant negative relationships between psychological capital and workplace deviance behavior

2.4 Mediator

The importance of human capital in a dynamic business environment today, organizations need to create an environment for employees to be treated fairly. The perception of organizational justice is a key requirement for every employee at work (O'Neill et al., 2011). Organizational justice refers to the extent to which employees are treated fairly, and usually operate as employees' perceptions of justice (Roberson & Colquitt, 2005). Unfair treatment not only reduces work performance, but also enhance employees' workplace deviance behavior (Demir, 2011; Ahmadi et al., 2011; Syaebani & Sobri, 2011; Erkutlu, 2011; Liu & Ding, 2012).

Social Exchange Theory serves as the basis for psychological capital considerations as mediators between organizational justice and deviant behavior. Based on this theory, it can be concluded that the positive action of the organization (stimulus) is considered "fair" will lead to building positive behavior (psychological capital) and when the behavior becomes positive, it will reduce the negative behavior, thereby as an exchange it will reduce workplace deviance behavior. Based on the social exchange theory, this study develops a research framework as in Figure 1, and the following hypotheses are constructed:

H4a: Psychological capital mediates relationship between distributive justice and workplace deviance behavior

H4b: Psychological capital mediates relationship between procedural justice and workplace deviance behavior

H4c: Psychological capital mediates relationship between interactional justice and workplace deviance behaviour

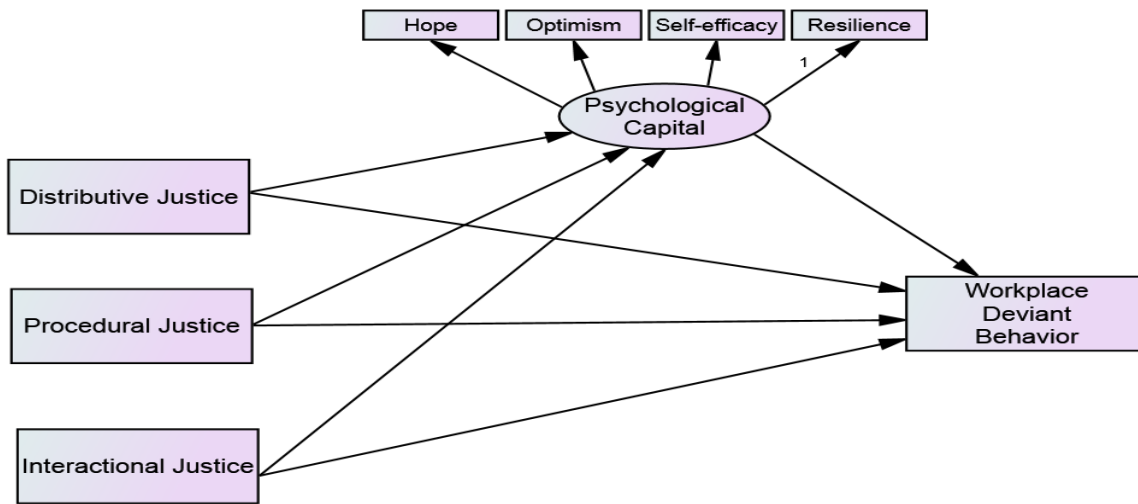


Figure 1: Research Framework

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Sampling

3.2 Instrument

Scale 1: Psychological Capital was measured using 24 items developed by Luthan, Youssef and Avolio (2007). This scale analyzed four dimensions of Psychological Capital: hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism. Each dimension has 6 items. This is a 5 point scale and scores on the scale varies from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree.

Scale 2: Organization Justice Scale (OJS): This scale was developed by Niehoff and Moorman (1993). This measurement consists of 19 items to measure three dimensions of organizational justice, namely distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice. The five items for both distributive justice and procedural justice, meanwhile interactional justice is consists of nine items. Response to the items is based on a 5 point Likert scale. High scores indicate a high perception of justice in the organization and low scores indicate low perception of justice.

Scale 3: Workplace deviance Behavior was measured by 12-items from the scale developed by Bennett and Robinson (2000) in Peterson (2002). The item ratings were obtained on a 5-point Likert-type ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Two dimensions made up organizational deviance: organizational and interpersonal deviance. Factor 1 (organizational included production and property deviance) was measured by three-items each. Factor 2 (interpersonal included political deviance and personal aggression) was measured by three-items each. Table 1 shows the items measuring workplace deviance behavior..

Table 1. Deviance Workplace Behavior Questionnaire

Production Deviance	
1	Worked on a personal matter instead of worked for your employer
2	Taken an additional or longer break than is acceptable at your place of work
3	Intentionally worked slower that you could have worked
Political Deviance	
1	Showed favoritism for a fellow employee or subordinate employee
2	Blamed someone else or let someone else take the blame for your mistake
3	Repeated gossip about a co worker
Property Deviance	
1	Padded an expense account to get reimbursed for more money than you spent on business expenses
2	Accepted a gift/favor in exchange for professional treatment
3	Taken property from work without permission
Personal Aggression	
1	Cursed at someone at work
2	Made an ethnic or sexually harassing remark or joke at work
3	Made someone feel physically intimidated either through threats or carelessness at work

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings of the study show one item that measures distributive justice and two items that measure interaction justice have a loading factor less than 0.5. According to Hair et al. (2018), items with a factor loading less than 0.5 should be dropped as it indicates that the item does not have general equations with items measuring the same construct. Once these items are removed, they have been excluded from the analysis. The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is used to measure the overall suitability of the model. The findings from this analysis show that the value of RMSEA is satisfactory which is less than 0.08, but if the value is less than 0.05, it is indicate that the model fit well (Steiger, 1990). In addition, the fit model can also be determined by chi square divided by df (degree of freedom), if the value obtained from the result is almost equal to 2, it is suggested that the model is fit enough. While GFI, IFI, TLI, and CFI indicators greater than 0.9 indicate that the model is fit (Byrne, 2009). Finally, the PGFI indicator greater than 0.5 indicates that the model is also fit (Mulaik et al., 1989). According to Hair et al. (2018), at least three indicators are sufficient to demonstrate that the model is fit. In this current study, the model fit indices ($\chi^2/df = 1.765$, RMSEA = 0.046, GFI = 0.911, IFI = 0.933, TLI = 0.922, CFI = 0.932, PGFI = 0.735) were acceptable, refer Figure 2.

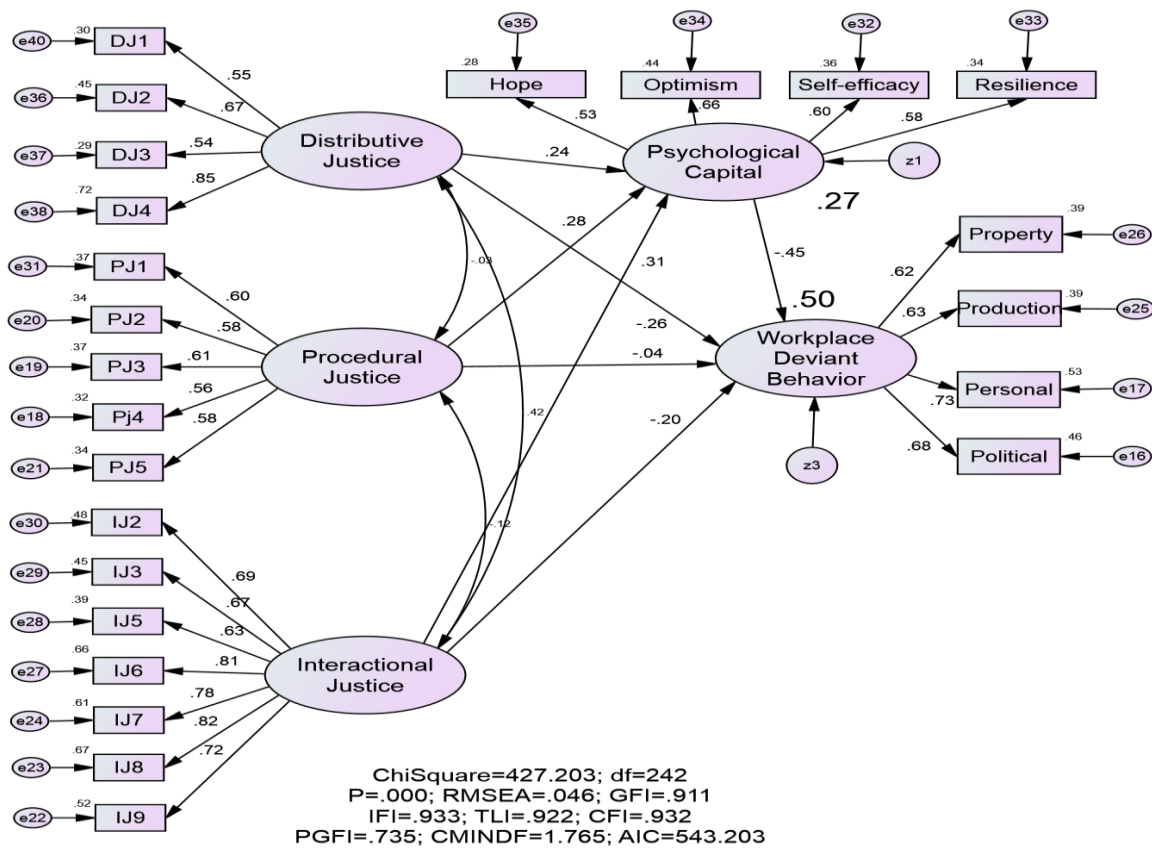


Figure 2: SEM (Estimated path coefficients of the full mediation model)

Table 2 show the result of standardized regression weights. The result shown that the significant negative relationships between distributive justice and workplace deviance behavior ($\beta = -.361, p < 0.001$), and this factor is the most dominant factors contribute in reducing deviant behavior in this study. Next, the result reveal that the procedural justice have significant impact on workplace deviance behavior ($\beta = -.163, p < 0.01$), and interactional justice and workplace deviance behavior ($\beta = -.328, p < 0.001$), hence, supporting Hypothesis 1a, 1b and 1c.

Table 2: Partial, Indirect and Direct Model

Dependent Variables	Independent Variables	Partial	Indirect	Direct
Psychological Capital	← Procedural Justice	.278***	.272***	
Psychological Capital	← Interactional Justice	.306***	.356***	
Psychological Capital	← Distributive Justice	.243**	.319***	
WDB	← Interactional Justice	-.196**		-.328***
WDB	← Procedural Justice	-.041		-.163*
WDB	← Psychological Capital	-.447***	-.712***	
WDB	← Distributive Justice	-.258***		-.361***

*** Sig. at .001; ** Sig. at .01 * Sig. at .05

This study found there are significant positive relationships between distributive justice and psychological capital ($\beta = .319, p < 0.001$), procedural justice and psychological capital ($\beta = .278, p = 0.007$), and interactional justice and psychological capital ($\beta = .319, p = 0.010$), thus supporting Hypothesis 2a, 2b and 2c. Table 1 also shows a significant relationship between psychological capital and workplace deviance behavior ($\beta = -.712, p < 0.001$) thus supporting Hypothesis 3. Further, the findings show a significant path from distributive justice and interactional justice to psychological capital and psychological capital to workplace deviance behavior. The effect of distributive justice ($\beta = -.196; p < 0.01$) and interactional justice ($\beta = -.258; p < 0.001$) on workplace deviance behavior reduce upon the addition of psychological capital, as a mediator into the model.

This indicate that psychological capital partially mediated the influence of the distributive justice and interactional justice on workplace deviant behaviour. Based on Table 2, the results in the partial mediation model showed that the direct influence of procedural justice on workplace deviance behavior ($\beta = -.041, p > 0.05$) became insignificant when psychological capital was entered in the relationship suggesting that psychological capital fully mediated the influence of procedural justice on workplace deviance behavior.

This suggests that psychological capital partially mediates the influence of distributive justice and interactional, meanwhile the psychological capital fully mediated the influence of procedural justice on workplace deviance behavior, supporting Hypothesis 4a, 4b, and 4c. The amount of variance in workplace deviance behavior explained by distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice and psychological capital is 50%.

Table 3: Bootstrapping

Constructs	Bootstrap BC 95% CI				
	SIE	SE	LB	UB	p
Distributive Justice	-.109	.044	-.210	-.036	.005
Interactional Justice	-.137	.046	-.254	-.063	.001
Procedural Justice	-.124	.048	-.247	-.048	.002

This study also run bootstrapping in order to confirm the mediation effect of psychological capital in this model. Based on the results in Table 3, this study found that the Standardized Indirect Effects (SIE) value for all independent variables is between Lower Bounds (LB) and Upper Bounds (UB) as well as significant (p) values less than .05. This means a significant mediating effect of psychological capital between all elements of organizational justice and workplace deviance behavior.

The present study developed and tested a research model that investigate the effects of distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice on workplace deviance behavior, and the mediating role of psychological capital in the relationship between distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice and workplace deviance behavior in multimedia organization.

The hypothesis suggests that organizational justice in terms of distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice, mitigate workplace deviance behavior was confirmed by the result of this study. Similar finding was also reported by Priesemuth et al. (2013) where employees who perceived that their organization treated fairly, reported that they were less likely to exhibit workplace deviance behaviors. The results of this study similar with previous studies. Nasurdin et al. (2014) found that the employees perception of procedural justice practice by their organization reduce workplace deviance behavior. O’Neill et al. (2013) also suggested that distributive justice reduces the workplace deviance behaviors in the model that they tested. Liu and Ding (2012) found that significant negative relationship between interactional justice and workplace deviance behavior. This study indicates that employees’ positive perceptions of distributive justice in their workplace mean that the employees are less likely to pursue workplace deviance behaviors. Similarly, employees who perceived that their organization has unfair in terms of decision-making procedures may be less likely to exhibit workplace deviance behaviors. Finally, employees’ perception that the organization allowed them to voice out their ideas and fairness in terms of interpersonal communications will be mitigate them to perform workplace deviance behaviors.

This study suggested that the employees who are perceived that their organization have practice justice in terms of distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice, will influence their emotion and psychology, thus, affect their psychological capital. Even though, not many studies have explained these relationships, Nandan and Azim (2015) suggested that if employees have a proactive personality they would be high on all components of psychological capital. With such a psychological set up, if the organization practice all components of organizational justice, it will shape employees’ psychological capital. Azim and Dora (2016) also suggested that workers who received support from the organization would develop their psychological capital. So this study suggests that the three elements of organizational justice can shape the psychological capital of the employee.

This study supports previous studies when we found that the psychological capital have given impact to workplace deviance behavior. Norman et al., (2010) and Manzoor et al. (2015) also showed that there was a significant relationship between psychological capital and workplace deviance behavior.

This study implies that the positively-oriented psychology development situation, which includes four components: hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism (Luthans et al, 2007), could be a complete resource to counter with problems and facing any critical situation, and these factors causes a person shows a positive behavior and thus, mitigate workplace deviance behavior.

This study also tested the mediating effect of psychological capital in the relationship between distributive justice, procedural justice, interactional justice and workplace deviance behavior. Psychological capital significantly mediates the relationship between distributive justice, procedural justice, interactional justice and workplace deviance behavior, implied that the psychological capital is an important element in reducing employees' workplace deviance behavior. This can be concluded that the employees' perception of organizational justice will influence and develop employees' psychological capital, and in turn, employees tend to exhibit less likely workplace deviance behavior.

The results reported here may only be generalized to employees in multimedia organizations. Perhaps after this, studies on workplace devian behavior can be extend to other private organizations as well. Another limitation of this study is that there was no effort to compare this sample group with other groups of business, such as employees in manufacturing industries, which is another important industry in Malaysia. Doing so may offer information about the differences or similarities of the groups for the rationale of future research and understanding into the findings. Another theoretical limitation of this study is that psychological capital can be influenced by factors outside the organization, such as cultural (Brandt, Gomes & Boyanova, 2011). Therefore, we suggest that the future study should explore the effect of culture on psychological capital, since previous studies suggested that the supervisor or leader who are the important person in implementing policy and promoting fair treatment that will develop employees' psychological capital. Supervisors or leaders should understand the culture variation in a country (Nandan & Azim, 2015) where they are operating, in order to enhance employees psychological capital and thus mitigate the workplace deviance behavior.

5.0 CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the psychological capital plays a significant role in reducing employees' workplace deviance behavior. The provision of organizational justice, such as distributive justice, prosedur justice and interactional justice are vital since employees will develop positive behavior namely, hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism, and hence will exhibit less likely workplace deviance behavior.

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