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Assessment of Counterproductive Work Behavior in Service Delivering Employees: The Case of Ethiopian Electric Utility

Kumneger Fikre[1] Wubalem Arefaine[2]

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to assess the counterproductive work behavior of service delivering employees working in Ethiopian Electric Utility. The study was conducted in the South, North, East and West Regions of the Utility. The study employed concurrent qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. Quantitative data was collected using questionnaire and qualitative data is collected using in depth interview and FGD. Quota sampling technique was used to select the 219 survey participants and purposive sampling technique is used to select interview respondents and FGD discussants. Participants of the study includes are Marketing and Customer Service Strategy Head, four regional heads, center heads, supervisors, 1 to 5 change army team leaders and performers. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and content analytical procedure. The study revealed the existent of both organizational and interpersonal counterproductive work behaviors at EEU. The major CWBs manifested by the participants are presented as conceptual, attitudinal and practical gaps. The study also identified contributing factors that are related to individuals, the organization and interpersonal communications between employees and supervisors, employees and the organization and employees and work teams. The research recommended the organization to solve the structural problems which are aggravating counterproductive work behaviors, to consistently plan and implement capacity building programs and the employees should be abide by the chain of command and develop their workplace communication skills.

Key Words: Counterproductive, behavior, service delivery, employee, EEU

1. Introduction

Since last decade, counterproductive work behavior has consistently become a topic of study among organizational behavior scholars due to pervasiveness and costly problem confronted by today's organizations; Bennett and Robinson, (2003); Spector and Fox (2005). Counterproductive work behavior (CWB) is a common occurrence in organizations that may range from minor (e.g. taking long breaks during working hours) to severe (personal aggression) type of CWB.

[1]Training and Consultancy Division, Ethiopian Civil Service University, E-mail: kfkumnegerf@gmail.com
[2] Training and Consultancy Division, Ethiopian Civil Service University, Email: siersoui@yahoo.com
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Studies revealed that majority of employees were reported to engage in some form of CWB such as filing fake accident claims, absenteeism, abusing sick day privileges and stealing company's property (Ariani, 2013; Salami,2010). The consequences of CWB are very detrimental to the organization in terms of low productivity, higher maintenance cost due to stealing or damaging property, and tarnishing the company's image (Bennett & Robinson, 2003). Moreover, the employees were also affected by the act of their colleagues' CWB such as feelings of dissatisfaction, job stress, and frustrations (Salami, 2010; Spector & Fox, 2005).

The government of Ethiopia is investing a lot to fight poverty and in this struggle the role of Ethiopian Electric Utility is tremendous as it is the sole source of electric energy throughout the nation. As stated by Embassy of Japan in Ethiopia (2008), for Ethiopia to achieve the strategic plan of becoming a middle-income country in 20-30 years, it should target on strong industrial development. And a stable supply of enough energy is a must for industrialization. EEU is serving individuals, organizations and the public at large. Hence, wellbeing, satisfaction and productivity of its customers are either directly or indirectly linked with the quality of service it provides. All in all, the service provided by EEU is mandatory for the day-to-day successful accomplishment of almost every type of transactions.

On the other hand, a couple of studies conducted on EEU customer satisfaction has already made known that customers of the utility are not getting satisfying services.

A study conducted by Seyoum (2012) on prepayment customer service of EEU revealed that, the existence of a substantial gap between customers' expectation and service received has been adversely affecting the overall customer service experience within the utility. The researcher mentioned certain incidence about the unnecessarily long hour's customers have to wait for power supply:

> *"For example, technicians who take care of customer complaints, during outside the working hours of CSCs (Customer Service Centers), are not trained to handle customer problems related to prepayment meter and card. As a result, the respondents said that they, as customers, would be in practice required to wait for long time without power supply (such as for the whole night, or long hours during the day time) for the reason that there is not any clear direction pertaining to and /or training of employees about the prepayment service."*

Another study conducted by Temam and Mesfin (2013) on industrial customer satisfaction at EEU showed that staffs of the Utility are not in a position to provide both formal and informal means of communication with industrial customers. Employees are not sure of the nature of their job and are clear about the duties, role and responsibilities involved.

The above findings clearly exposed that the Utility is highly suffering from counterproductive work behavior. Since both researches were conducted from customers' perspective, they only show the effects rather than the types of the counterproductive work behaviors and the contributing factors. And yet for EEU, in order to fully internalize the problem and act accordingly it needs to have a good knowledge from its own internal organizational perspective.

Therefore, this research is targeting in identifying the major counterproductive work behaviors of employees working in Ethiopian Electric Utility and then exploring the motivation behind the manifestation of such behaviors.

The study has been focused on employees working at customer service centers for three major reasons. Firstly, the centers encompass significant number of employees; and it is the conviction of the researchers that identifying and addressing the major problems accordingly will be a good ground for the organization to focus on its productivity by dealing with the counter. Secondly,

customer service centers are interfaces and image builders of organizations. It is through this gateway that organizations interact with the outside world. Hence, the image of the organization is highly dependent on the knowledge, skill and attitude of its service providing employees. Thirdly, these centers are responsible to realize organizational policies and strategies. Service delivering employees are the major actors for actually implementing policies and strategies by properly executing the tasks assigned to them.

Hence, especially for a reviving country like Ethiopia and for a promising organization like EEU it is mandatory to study the behaviors that limit employees' productivity so as to have a clear image of the problem and its contributing factors so as to work on the way out to solving the observed problems from their roots. The purpose of this study is assessing the counterproductive work behavior of employees at EEU. Accordingly the following research questions were devised: a) What are the most common counterproductive work behaviors being experienced by employees of EEU? b) what are the major contributing factors of the counterproductive work behaviors manifested by the employees? c) to what extent do supervisors control/block the exhibition of counterproductive work behaviors? d) to what extent do organizational policies control/block the exhibition of counterproductive work behaviors? e) who are experiencing counterproductive work behavior more (in terms of sex, position, income, tenure)?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Social Exchange Theory (SET)

Even though social exchange theory was originally introduced by the sociologist George Homans in 1958, it has been highly influential in a variety of disciplines including anthropology, psychology and sociology. Accordingly, several researches have been conducted based on SET (Barbalet, 2018; Clark, 2016) The theory is used to better understand and predict when and why individuals choose to continue or end relationships (Hogg & Vaughan, 2010). According to this view, interactions between parties are determined by the rewards or punishments that one expects to receive from the other, which is evaluated using a cost-benefit analysis model (Hofer, 2007).

It can be stated that SET is a behavioral model used for interpreting relationships in various social settings. According to this theory, interactions that exist between entities such as individuals and institutes are determined by the perceived benefits and perceived costs of the relationship.

The Social Exchange Theory starts with the premise that humans interact in social behavior in order to maximize benefits and minimize costs, which then leads to a positive outcome (Hutchison & Charlesworth, 2003, p. 46). The central message is that people weigh the pros and cons before making a decision. In economics for example, people would decide between costs and benefits before agreeing in an exchange (Okyere-Kwakye & Otibu, 2016, p. 99).

According to Hofer (2007), parties will remain in a relationship as long as the parties judge the relationship satisfactory. In a satisfactory relationship the benefits of the relationship outweigh the costs. SET follows the premise that humans strive for a positive outcome, meaning to maximize benefits and minimize costs when engaging in an exchange (Holthause, 2013). SET acknowledges that rewards may come in various forms, such as: economic, information, product or service, and social rewards such as emotional satisfaction, view sharing, etc. These rewards are acquired through a history of interactions; the relationship being the lens through which firms

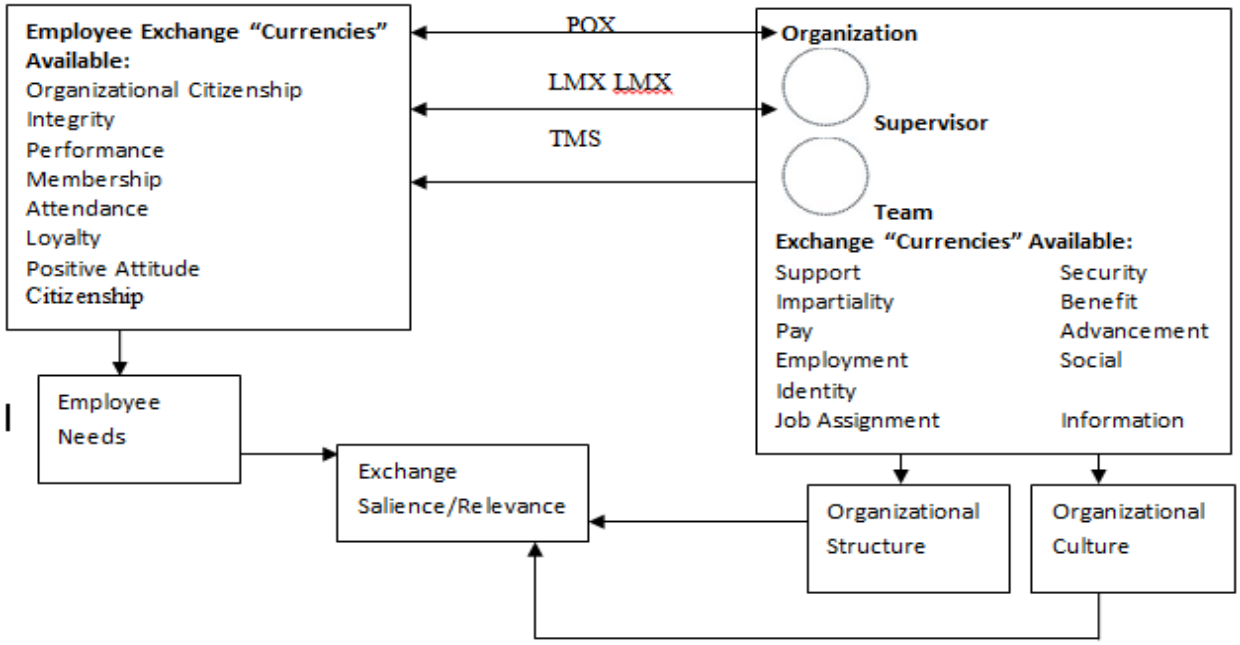
anticipate future costs and benefits. If previous experiences have been positive, SET assumes that firms will expect future interactions to have positive outcomes as well.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

Jabareen, (2009) defined a conceptual framework as a visual or written product, one that "explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied—the key factors, concepts, or variables—and the presumed relationships among them."

Similarly, Alice and Sue (2012) stated that, the conceptual framework of a study refers to the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that supports and informs the research; it is a key part of the design.

The conceptual framework of this study focuses on a sociological and psychological theory named Social Exchange Theory. Social exchange theory (SET) is among the most influential conceptual paradigms for understanding workplace behavior. Its venerable roots can be traced back to at least the 1920s bridging such disciplines as anthropology, social psychology and sociology (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Although different views of social exchange have emerged, researchers claim that social exchange involves a series of interactions that generate interdependence between the interacting parties (Barbalet, 2018; Clark, 2016; Holthause, 2013). This theory explains that the relationship of individuals is determined by the cost-reward ratio. When applied to the workplace setting, employees weigh the cost they payoff to get a positive reward from the other party; be it the organization, the supervisor/leader or the work team. What follows is that parties involved in a relationship become unsatisfied when the cost exceeds the reward. In practice, people exchange resources with one another in the hope that they will earn a profit: that is, one in which the rewards exceed the costs.



Source: Conceptual Framework Adopted from Cole, Schaninger, & Harris with slight own modification

In this study, the three major types of exchanges are investigated. The first one is the exchange that occurs between employee and organization; which in most social exchange

literatures is referred to as Perceived Organizational Support (POS) (Xerri, 2012). As described in Wang (2014), the second is the exchange that occurs between employee and supervisors/leaders; which is conceptualized as leader member (LMX) While the third type of exchange occurs between employee and other work teams; which is typically conceptualized as team member exchange (TMX). The model shown in the next page is adopted from Cole, Schaninger, and Harris (n.d.) and depicts the conceptual framework of this study.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This research employed descriptive and explanatory and exploratory design. Descriptive research design is selected for the purpose of describing the types of CWBs manifested by the employees and their level of severity. Explanatory research design is selected to identify the factors that promote CWBs in the organization and exploratory research design is chosen to explore the types of CWB's within the utility.

Apart from the above research designs, the study employed both quantitative and qualitative concurrent mixed research methods. As noted before, the purpose of this research is identifying counterproductive work behaviors of EEU employees and the major contributing/ motivating factors of these behaviors. Hence, some of the data was collected through questionnaire; which is a quantitative data collection method and it also implemented in-depth interview and FGD which are qualitative data collection method.

3.2 Research Site

The research is conducted at the selected Customer Service Centers of EEU which are found in the four Addis Ababa Regions.

3.3 Target Population

The population of the study comprises all employees working in the four Addis Ababa Regions. The total number of employees in the four regions was 1227. There were 385, 314, 307 and221 employees in the EAAR, WAAR, SAAR and NAAR respectively.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The study employed probability and non-probability sampling techniques such as random sampling, quota sampling and purposive sampling method.

Based on Solven's sampling formula with 95% confidence level, a total of 219 participants were considered in the study. After allotting proportional number to each Region, the actual participants were selected based on quota sampling technique.

FGD was conducted with three purposively selected groups (head office managers and center supervisors /heads and Change Army team leaders) each comprising ten participants. In-depth interview was conducted with district managers, operational level supervisors and Change Army team leaders. Purposive sampling technique is used to select FGD discussants and interview respondents.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

Since the study employed mixed concurrent research method, various tools were developed and used to collect appropriate data from the participants. Questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data while in-depth interview and FGD were used to collect qualitative data.

Questionnaire was designed and distributed to collect data from the target participants. The items are developed using Likert Scale to maximize the chance of participants to accurately label their attitude on the scale.

FGD and In-depth interview were conducted with selected head office managers and center supervisors /heads and Change Army team leaders respectively. The interview was undertaken based on semi-structured interview guideline which gave the respondents the opportunity to provide in-depth information on the points raised by the researchers. The diversified tools and techniques used in this research are listed below:

3.5.1 Survey

The questionnaire is composed of open and closed ended questions. Most of the items, especially those that are intended to collect attitude are developed using Likert Scale. Careful considerations were taken in preparation of well-crafted questions and the questionnaire was originally prepared in English and then it is translated into Amharic. It was a self-administered questionnaire which enabled the employees to use their convenient time and place to fill the questionnaire.

3.5.2 In-depth Interviews

In-depth interview was conducted with a total of 5 heads; one of these interviewees is the Marketing and Customer Service Strategy Head from Head Office and the four interviewees are the district heads.

3.5.3 FGD

The study undertook three Focus Group Discussions, where each FGD comprised of ten discussants. The first FGD took place with managers taken from the Head Office. The second was conducted with SAAR center supervisors/heads and the third one with one-to-five change army team leaders.

3.6 Methods of Data Analysis

Since data is collected using both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, the analysis need to be presented with the intention of simplifying data cross validation and grasping different dimensions of the same phenomena easily. Hence, every data relevant to each research question and specific objective has been presented in a mixed manner.

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 is used to analyze the data collected through questionnaire. The Quantitative data is analyzed using descriptive statistics percentages and frequencies so as to describe the characteristics of the samples or the given population. The qualitative data was analyzed based on content analytical procedure which prescribes summarizing comments and then coding perceptions and issues into groups of emerging themes (Cummings & Worley, 2005).

4. Findings

The major counterproductive work behaviors manifested by participants are analyzed based on two thematic areas namely; organizational counterproductive work behavior and interpersonal counterproductive work behavior. The organizational CWB thematic area is then further analyzed based on the three basic components of behavior which are knowledge, attitude and practice. Finally, the attitudinal and practical aspects of the interpersonal CWB are analyzed.

4.1 Counterproductive Work Behavior of Participants

Under this section, the major counterproductive work behaviors manifested by participants are analyzed based on two thematic areas namely; organizational counterproductive work behavior and interpersonal counterproductive work behavior. The organizational CWB thematic area is then further analyzed based on the three basic components of behavior which are knowledge, attitude and practice. Finally, the attitudinal and practical aspects of the interpersonal CWB are analyzed.

4.1.1 Organizational Counterproductive Work Behavior

- **Being Ignorant of Major CWB**

Absence, arriving late, leaving early and taking longer than authorized tea and lunch breaks are identified as a major counterproductive work behaviors by researchers (Coralia, 2005; Jixia & James, 2009). In addition, Josh (2012) has identified conflicts that occur between supervisors and coworkers as a major counterproductive work place behavior.

In this study, items that assess the knowledge of employees regarding major types of counterproductive work behavior were included in the questionnaire. Accordingly, the research found out that 21(9.6%) and 8(3.7%) of the participants do not think and do not know that absence from work is a counterproductive work behavior respectively. This implies that even though the majority has a good knowledge of absenteeism, 13.3% of the participants lack awareness and knowledge regarding this counterproductive work behavior. The responses given for coming late indicated that 26(11.9%) of the participants do not think that coming late to work is a counterproductive work behavior. And 11(5.0%) do not know whether coming late to work is a counterproductive work behavior or not. This implies that 37(16.9%) do not have the appropriate knowledge in counterproductive work behaviors. Similarly, 37(16.9%) and 11(5.0%) of the participants do not think and do not know that leaving early from work is a counterproductive work behavior respectively. This indicates that 48(21.0%) of the participants do not have appropriate knowledge regarding counterproductive work behavior. Regarding taking longer tea/lunch breaks, 26(11.9%) and 13(5.9%) of the participants do not think and do not know that this act is a counterproductive work behavior. This also shows that 39(17.8%) of the participants have knowledge gap in counterproductive work behaviors. 31(14.2%) and 11(5.0%) of the participants do not think and do not know respectively that negative interaction among employees is a counterproductive work behavior.
Hence, 42(19.2%) of the participants are not fully aware of counterproductive work behaviors.

- **Attitudinal Gaps related to counterproductive work behavior**

Items that reflect employees' attitude towards the work environment such as the organization, their supervisors, work teams, other employees and their job were presented in the questionnaire.

Attitudinal aspects that reflect counterproductive work behavior of the participants are presented below.

The participants were asked questions that assess their organizational citizenship behavior. To this effect, items that check if the participants share the vision, mission and objectives of the organization, if they have a feeling of belongingness in the organization, and if they believe that they are benefiting by being a member of the organization are presented in the questionnaire. Accordingly, it is noted that 9 (4.1%) participants do not share the vision, mission and objectives of the organization. This indicates that even though they are few in number there existed participants who manifested counterproductive work behavior among the service delivering employees since sharing the values, mission and objectives of an organization is identified as a primary and strong force that pushes employees towards productivity.

One of the interviewees added a point regarding sharing the organizations vision. He stated that:

> *"The vision of the organization seems very attractive. However, it only resides on papers not in the heart of employees."*

10(4.6%) of the participants do not have a feeling of belongingness in the organization. This is an indicator for the existence of counterproductive work behavior among the service delivering employees since lack of feelings of belongingness hinders organization's productivity.

A participant stated the following point in the open-ended question:

> *"Even though we [the operational level workers] are the one who are working a lot for the organization, our managers do not consider the effort we exert. They rather ignore and belittle us. They believe that the organization belongs to them and decide whatever interests and benefits them. We have no part in the decision-making process.*

Another participant also supported the above idea:

> *"The organization belongs to the corrupt managers who want to fulfill their own selfish interest. We are excluded by the dictator and selfish management of the organization."*

36(16.5%) of the participants indicated that they are not benefiting by being employee of the organization. This is an affective level counterproductive work behavior.

Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement/ disagreement to the item "I like my job" in a Likert Scale. Accordingly, 10(4.6%) of the participants do not like their job. This shows that the aforementioned participants are engaged in jobs that they don't like which causes job dissatisfaction.

196(89.5%) of the participants believed that they deserve better position than the one they are working now. This implies that the participants are not satisfied by the position they assumed currently.

Regarding job and position assignments, one of the region heads stated that:

> *"Due to structural problems and lack of merit-based assignments, some employees are forced to work in areas that they don't fit and don't like. On top of that, most of them have been working in one position for many years."*

The participants' perception of their financial benefit in the organization was also assessed. To this effect, 199(90.8%) of the participants believe that they deserve better salary than what they are currently earning. This implies that the participants are not satisfied by the payment they earn.

In the open-ended question, many participants reflected their disappointments regarding the salary scale and payment mechanism of the organization. One of these views is presented below:

> *"The salary scale does not consider living cost of the time. In addition, the organization does not provide timely payment for over-time works. Even when salary raises are there, the actual payment is done after waiting for long period."*

From the above findings, it can be learned that some participants do not like their jobs and there are few participants who believed that they deserve to work in a better position than the position they currently assumed. In addition, some participants are not satisfied by the financial benefit they get from the organization.

This implies the existence of employee dissatisfaction in the organization which is identified as one of the counterproductive work behaviors by many researches ((Pelin & Funda, 2013).

- **Practical Counterproductive Work Behavior**

59(26.9%) of the participants stated that customers complain on their service delivery. One of the supervisors stated that:

> *"Customers complaint on the quality of service delivered to them and on the way they are treated by our staff. We know that some of our employees seek to get and even request money that they are not entitled to from customers."*

In addition to this, participants were asked to rate the extent to which they satisfy their customers. To this effect, 15(6.8%), 8(3.7%) and 5(2.3%) of the participants sometimes, seldom and never satisfy their customers respectively. On top of that, 16(7.3%) of the participants have been accused or have received complaints on disciplinary misconducts such as mistreating customers.

From the above findings it is possible to conclude that some employees behave in a way that dissatisfies and disrespects customers; which are counterproductive work behaviors. Responses related to withdrawal i.e., absenteeism, being late, leaving early, taking longer breaks indicated that 42(20%) of the participants get absent from work either for 1 or 2 days per month. 36(16.4%) of the participants get late to work either 1 or 2 days per week on average. 39(17.7 %) of the participants get late to work at least one day per week and 36(16.4%) of the participants are sometimes late to work. 26(12%) of the participants take longer tea/lunch breaks at least one day per week while 48(21.9%) of the participants take longer tea/lunch breaks sometimes.

One of the managers reflects a view that supports the above point:

> *"Generally, all and particularly technicians and meter readers intentionally and unnecessarily take longer periods to execute their tasks. Some of our meter readers even use the whole time for their own purpose and come with fake figures; which leads both the organization and consumers to a great loss and dissatisfaction."*

Regarding misuse of organization's resource, it is found out that 13(6%) of the participants use organization's resource for personal use. The qualitative data collected through interview and FGD also support the practical counterproductive work behaviors manifested by the employees. Regarding this point, one of the region head interviewees stated that:

> *"Yes, there are complaints coming from different customers in regard to counterproductive work behavior of our employees and these complaints were also appealed to the nearby city administration. And there is a forum where I am the chairperson so we discuss about these issues in that forum and gather a lot of inputs regarding customer complaints. Most of the complaints forwarded are related to absenteeism, favoritism, intentionally working below one's capacity*

and come up with so many lame excuses, taking long break and neglecting customers."

The other region head interviewee also said:

"From customer reports, suggestion boxes, the center news, reports and from the forum and reform meetings we know counterproductive work behaviors are manifested by our employees. Some of the counterproductive work behaviors manifested at the region include carelessness towards their jobs, favoritism, absenteeism, sabotage, taking long breaks, coming late and theft."

The finding shows that the major CWBs manifested by above data clearly indicated the existence of practically demonstrated counterproductive work behaviors in the organization. These include disciplinary misconducts such as mistreating customers and carelessness, illegal acts such as theft, withdrawal and misuse of organizations' resource.

4.1.2 Interpersonal Counterproductive Work Behavior

- **Communication Problem**

8(3.7%), 11(5%) and 2(1%) of the participants sometimes, seldom and never communicate with their colleagues smoothly. This implies that 21(9.6%) of the participants do not have a regular smooth communication with their colleagues. 18(8.2%), 8(3.7%) and 5(2.3%) of the participants sometimes, seldom and never communicate with their supervisors smoothly. This implies that 31(14.2%) of the participants do not have a regular smooth communication with their supervisors.

Regarding the participants perception of their supervisors, it is noted that 23(10.5%) of the participants do not agree that their supervisors have a positive attitude towards them. 33(15.1%) of the participants said that their supervisors do not have a good knowledge of their work. Similarly, 89(43.6%) of the participants believed that they will be more productive if they work under a different supervisor. Moreover, 108 (49.3%) of the participants think that they will be more productive if they work in a different work team. This implies that the participants believe their level of productivity is affected by the team they work with.

Most of the participants stated that even though they are not comfortable with their current supervisor, they are afraid to get a better person. One of the participant's reflections is presented below:

"My current supervisor is not supportive enough but I don't think I will be more productive with another supervisor. Because, it is not working with another supervisor that matters, it is rather working with quality supervisor. And I am not sure about the quality of the coming supervisor; future is uncertain."

The responses show that most of the participants are not getting professional support from their supervisors and they neither expect to get a supportive supervisor in the future. This indicates the employees' disappointment towards their actual and potential supervisors.

13(5.9%) of the participants do not agree that their colleagues have a positive attitude towards them. This attitude of participants hinders the social support the participants would otherwise get from the organization's community.

The data collected through interview and FGD also supported the findings presented above. To this effect, one of the region head interviewees stated that:

> *"Moreover, the interaction or relationship between managers and employees is very poor and distant. Such types of poor communications hinder productivity of employees."*

As the findings indicated employees manifested interpersonal counterproductive behaviors in the workplace. These include lack of smooth communication between colleagues and with supervisors and negative attitude towards colleagues and supervisors.

4.2 Variables Related to Counterproductive Work Behavior

In this section, factors that aggravate counterproductive work behavior are analyzed based on three thematic areas; individual factors, interpersonal factors and organizational factors. Analysis of the data is presented below.

4.2.1 Individual Factors

Related to participants knowledge, skill and attitude, the research found out that 50(22.9%) of the participants' education is not directly related to the job they are doing. Task related educational background contributes a lot for the successful accomplishment of tasks. However, as the data shows there are employees whose educational background is not directly related to their job which will reduce employee's productivity. In addition, 18(8.2%) participants stated that they do not have enough experience on the job they are doing. Lack of experience is observed among the participants this in turn might limit the employees' productivity. Similarly, 8(3.6%) of the participants indicated they do not have enough skill on the job they are doing. Lack of skilled employee reduces organization's productivity.

The data collected from the FGD made with region heads also supported the survey data collected regarding the knowledge, skill and experience of employees. To this effect one of the discussants reflected that:

> *"The human resource management is not well structured and organized. The regions' human resources are not placed based on their education and experiences."*

In addition, from the responses given to open ended question, participants indicated that the knowledge and skill they have is not updated to accommodate the changing needs of customers. One of the participants provided further explanation for this:

> *"My educational background is partially related to the job I have been assigned and I have a good deal of experience in it. However, I have never taken trainings related to my job so I do not know how to do things in a better and modern way. I also lack the skill of proper customer handling. The trainings provided by the organization so far are not related to the jobs we are doing."*

As can be seen from the above finding some employees are not working jobs related to their educational background. Some employees also lack experience and skill to manage their work and their customers properly. Such gaps aggravate counterproductive work behaviors.

4.2.2 Organizational Factors

Participants were asked to label their attitude towards the item "I have clear job description and responsibility" in a Likert Scale. 74(33.8%) of the participants stated that they do not have clear job description and responsibility. Lack of clear job description and responsibility facilitates

counter productivity. So, the data reveals the tendency of behaving counterproductively among employees due to lack of clear job description and assigned responsibility.

Data regarding stable programs that the organization devises to build the capacity of its employee were collected. The data is analyzed here.

Many participants also expressed their disagreements towards the above point in the open-ended question. One of these participants stated:

> *"There is no such a thing called job description at all. The tasks/ the jobs themselves are not well organized, so we are engaged in any emerging task. Due to these, the tasks we execute are unrelated."*

Regarding performance evaluation, notification and actions taken, 52.2% of the participants stated that the organization conducts performance evaluation consistently. 208(95%) of the participants have consistently obtained good performance evaluation. Only 2(0.9%) of the employees disagree to the question "I have consistently obtained good performance evaluation". The data shows that almost all employees consistently obtained good performance evaluation. This implies that participants can hardly identify behavioral gaps, knowledge and skill gaps that they should modify from the performance evaluation feedback provided by the organization.

75.7% of the participants disagree and strongly disagree with the statement that says "The organization creates conducive work environment." This implies that the organization's work environment is not conducive for majority of the participants. Lack of conducive work environment is a contributing factor for counterproductive work behavior.

One of the discussants during the FGD with the 1 to 5 team leaders stated that:

> *"Ethiopian Electric Utility has been structured newly for the last three years. However, it lacks trained professionals and in relation with this new structure, so many defaults were enormously seen. Moreover, it has a centralized system so this structure created so many problems that lead to the emergence of bureaucratic work system."*

During the FGD with region heads, one of the discussants said that:

> *"Moreover, there are quality issues for example; unavailability of modernized technologies or machines has direct impact on the lives of the employees."*

Most of the region head discussants stated that the centralized organizational structure as the major problem which makes the organization inconvenient for employees and for the manifestations of their counterproductive work behavior. Regarding this point, one of the discussants said:

> *"To start with employees are dissatisfied due to the centralization of the organization and the structure therefore this are the major sources for Counterproductive behaviors."*

The other discussant also added this point:

> *"Most employees are demoralized because almost all functions of the organization are centralized rather than being decentralized. Because of this employees are not happy and due to these customers are not satisfied and this has a direct impact on the organization's revenue."*

The Marketing and Customer Service Strategy Head has also reflected on the problem related to the organizational structure:

> *"In terms of the organization, there are structural problem due to this we can't operate our activities smoothly. For example, there is no job position for store man and Cashier. Moreover, employees do not give quick response to customers;*

> *intentionally perform jobs later than expected, maltreatment of customers, and shows corruptive behavior like collecting extra money. In terms of employee's interaction, employees do not keep hierarchy when they come up with complaints they just directly go to the manager and complain so this results transparency problems and responsibility towards work interaction."*

In relation with capacity building programs, 113(51.6%) of the participants have not taken a training on customer handling and problem solving. This implies that the organization did not arrange programs that foster customer relationship management skills of employees. This in turn limits the capacity of employees to effectively and efficiently handle problems related to their customers; which is one factor that promotes counterproductive work behavior of employees.
Similarly, 149(68%) of the participants have reflected their disagreement with the item that asked if the organization has helped them to capacitate themselves by providing training and education opportunities. The details are given in the

The above data has also been supported by one of the discussants of the FGD made with district heads. The discussant stated that:

> *"It is better to say the organization do not work towards capacitating the employees. Trainings are not planned and budgets are not placed as well and educational opportunities do not exist."*

The other discussant added that:

> *"We [the district heads] are not doing anything to capacitate our team because the organization itself doesn't have these mechanisms."*

One of the region head interviewees also supported the discussants idea:

> *"The main problem that is exhibited in our organization is that the organization doesn't provide educational opportunities to employees, training needs have never been assessed and given as per our needs so because of this problem, the employees complain a lot and even the managers are considered as figure head or symbols because they neglect the development of employees capacity."*

The Marketing and Customer Service Strategy Head has also supported the points mentioned by the above discussants:

> *"The organization has budget for human resource development but we can't say it is working on the HR. There are few trainings and educational opportunities given to employees."*

4.2.3 Interpersonal Factors

As stated by the Social Exchange Theory, if employees perceive that what they provide for the organization and the parties is greater than what they gain from them, they become dissatisfied and want to terminate the relationship. Items that indicate participants' perception of the social exchange they have with the organization, their supervisors, colleagues and the organization's community at large are analyzed below.

49% of the participants believed that the service they provide to the organization is more than the benefit they receive from the organization. According to SET, these participants are dissatisfied by the relationship they have with the organization since the cost they exert is more than the benefit they obtained from the relationship.

38.8% of the articipants claimed that the service they provide to their supervisors is balanced with the benefit they gain from the supervisors. In SET, this is a relationship with zero profit. The second largest figure is 32.5%, this percentage of the participants perceived that they

provide more to the organization than the benefit they received from it. According to the theory, parties become motivated to continue in a relationship when they perceive that they are profiting. Majority of the participants (52%) believed that the service they provide to and the benefit they gain from their colleagues is equivalent. This implies that the relationship these participants have with their colleagues has a zero profit. Similarly, participants have a zero-profit relationship with the organization's community and with their clients.

The participants perceive that their relationship with the organization and with their supervisors is costly. This causes employee demotivation and reduces commitment.

4.3 Counterproductive Work Behavior Based on Demographic Detail

4.3.1 CWB and Year of Service

Out of the 36 participants who get late to work 1 or 2 days per week on average, 14(38.8%) have less than ten years of experience at EEU. Similarly, 80% of the participants who are late 3 or 4 days per week have less than ten years of experience and all participants who are late a minimum of five days per week also belong to this group. This implies that the recently hired employees are frequently late than the senior ones.

Amongst the 29 participants who leave early from work 1 or 2 days per week, 41.4% have below 10 years of experience. Out of the 4 participants who leave early from work 3 or 4 days per week, 50% have less than 10 years of experience and from the 5 participants who leave early from work 5 and more days per week, 80% have below 10 years of experience.

Amongst the 42 participants who get absent from work 1 or 2 days per week, 54.8% have below 10 years of experience. All participants who get absent from work 3 or 4 days per week belong to this group.

Amongst the 19 participants who take longer tea/lunch breaks 1 or 2 days per week, 42.1% have below 10 years of experience. All participants' who take longer tea/lunch breaks 3 or 4 days per week belong to this group. And from the 3 participants who take longer tea/lunch breaks 5 and more days per week, 66.6% have below 10 years of experience.

4.3.2 CWB and Gender

Amongst the 42 participants who get absent from work 1 or 2 days per week on average, 40(59.5%) are male. Similarly, the 2 participants (100%) who are absent from work 3 or 4 days per week are male. On the other hand, 53% of the participants who get late to work 1 or 2 days per week on average are female. Among the participants who leave early from work 1 or 2 days per week, 63% are male. All participants who take longer tea/lunch break are male.
This implies that male employees are frequently absent, leave early from work and take longer tea/lunch breaks whereas female employees are frequently late from work.

4.3.3 CWB and Income

The data does not show any difference between exhibiting counterproductive work behaviors and income level of employees.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study identified major counterproductive work behaviors manifested by service delivering employees of EEU. The major organizational counterproductive work behaviors are identified at cognitive, affective and practical levels. Accordingly, there are employees who do not know poor time management such as leaving early from work and taking loner tea/lunch break is a counterproductive work behavior. Negative attitude towards the organization and their job and abusing organization's time such as absenteeism and taking longer tea and/ or lunch breaks, and using organization's resource for personal use respectively.

Regarding interpersonal counterproductive work behaviors, the study found out that communication problem in the work place, disciplinary misconduct and negative attitude towards supervisors and colleagues are the major counterproductive behaviors manifested by participants.

The research has also identified factors that foster counterproductive work behavior of employees in the organization. These factors are individual organizational and interpersonal factors. Individual factor such as knowledge, skill and experience are attributed. Accordingly, the research identified working on jobs that are not related with educational background, lack of experience and lack of skill to execute the assigned task as major individual factors that promote counterproductive work behavior.

The organizational factor includes, lack of having clear job description and responsibility, lack of responsibility and commitment in evaluating employee performance, inability to take actions based on performance evaluation results, inability to create conducive work environment, limited training and education opportunities are identified as factors that maximize counterproductive work behavior of employees.

Regarding interpersonal factors, a closer look is given to the relationships the participants have with the organization, their supervisors, colleagues and the organizations community at large and the social exchange behavior is investigated. In view of that, the participants perceived that they are losing the relationships they have with the organization and their supervisors' while their relationship with colleagues and customers has no profit at all. In all cases, the participants are in a situation that promotes counterproductive work behavior such as lack of motivation, commitment, and lack of feelings of belongingness.

5.1 Recommendation

The recommendations listed below are made based on the major findings of the study and the conclusion presented above.

- There are employees who do not think and do not know that using organization's time and other resources for personal use is a counterproductive work behavior. Hence, the organization should design and implement consistent awareness creation/raising programs such as orientations and inductions to the staff with this knowledge gap.
- There are employees who do not share the vision, mission and objective of the organization, who do not have feelings of belongingness in the organization, who do not like their job, and who do not accept their position and salary. Such types of attitudinal gaps are related to counterproductive work behavior. Hence, the organization should facilitate attitudinal changes by creating participatory and transparent work environment and implementing merit-based assignments.

- There are employees who receive complaints from their customers and corrupt organization's resource. Employees should equip themselves with the knowledge, skill and attitude that will let them satisfy their customers. And also, they should develop feelings of responsibility and accountability for their professional and disciplinary misconducts.
- Employees should abide by the organization's chain of command and develop their work place communication skill.
- The organization should develop a clear job description and assign clear responsibilities for the employees.
- Performance evaluation results are consistently inflated so they are not indicative of gaps related to counterproductive work behaviors. Consequently, the management cannot take actions based on the results since it is not possible to distinguish one from the other. Hence, the management and employees at all level should have a clear understanding on the purpose of evaluation, should reflect professional ethics while evaluating themselves and others, and should be critical while approving and accepting results.
- The organization should capacitate the customer handling and problem-solving skill of its employees through designing and implementing capacity building programs such as short-term training on identified gaps and long-term education related to the major tasks performed in the organization.

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