

Employee Participation in Decision Making: A Correlate of Employee Citizenship Behaviour and Counterproductive Workplace Behaviour

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Abstract

This study examined employee citizenship behaviour and counterproductive workplace behaviour as correlates of employee participation in decision making among workers in the private sector establishments in Awka city, Anambra State, Nigeria. 496 participants comprising of 222 males and 274 females were used as respondents for the study. The participants' ages ranged from 26 to 54 years with a mean age of 34.90 years and standard deviation of 3.45. The participants were sampled using simple randomization sampling technique. The problem of the study quided the formulation of two hypotheses and data was collected using employee participation in decision making inventory by Ojukuku & Sajuyiqbe (2014), organizational citizenship behaviour questionnaire by Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Moormam & Jetter, (1990) and counterproductive workplace behaviour questionnaire by Spector, Fox, Penney, Bruursema, Goh, and Kessler (2006). The design of the study was correlational survey design while Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used a statistical tool to test the hypotheses. Findings revealed a mixed result; organizational citizenship behaviour significantly and positively correlated employee participation in decision making at r(1, 496) = .653, p < .05, whereas counterproductive workplace behaviour significantly and negatively correlated employee participation in decision making at r(1, 496) = -.429, p < .05. It is recommended that in order to increase organizational pro-social behaviour which has direct implication for performance



and employee satisfaction at all levels, employee participation in decision making should be encouraged in the organizations. The starting point may just begin with anyone who has a subordinate in the organization.

Key Words: Employee Participation, Decision Making, Organizational Citizenship Behaviour, Counterproductive Workplace Behaviour, Motivation, Organizational Performance,

Introduction

Global enterprise is becoming more competitive and more organizations have become causalities to the recent global economic downturn with several organizational consequences both for the organizations and their employees in terms of lowered productivity and profitability, and job insecurity leading to massive lay-offs respectively. Today's turbulent economic and business environment has forced firms to seek ways to remain relevant in their industry by being more flexible, adaptive and consequently competitive in order to survive the rapidly changing markets (Sigh, 2009). In view of the above premise, the authors are of the opinion that more than before, the need for this flexibility, adaptability has implicated several changes in organizational policies and structures aimed at harmonizing available organizational resources in terms of labour, time, ideas and material resources towards surviving the current harsh economic environment. Such harmonization most times has resulted in re-integrating the employees into participatory leadership in the organization through more involvement and participation in decision making process. This is because firms are discovering that people really are their most important assets (Irawanto, 2015).

Increasing evidence (e.g. Han, Chiang & Chang, 2011; Zainnudin & Isa 2011; Batthi & Qureshi 2007; David 2005 and Ladd & Marshall, 2004) abounds that organizational success in the face of these turbulent economic environment depends more on involving the workforce's entire capacity to generate new ideas and ways of working to overcome the competitors. As a matter of necessity, employees must be involved decisions if organizations are to advantage in the abundant capability of human creativity and ingenuity to sail across turbulent tides in the organizations. In order to harvest this human potential, there is need that employees must be involved if they are to be committed to changing their behaviours in work, in new and improved ways to increase efficiency and effectiveness. Employee participation is one important aspect of organizational life used to achieve increased organizational effectiveness and positive employee perceptions towards job derivatives and outcomes.

According to Singh (2009), employee participation in decision making (PDM) is one of the many current forms of employee involvement in the workplace decision making. Managers are encouraged to allow a high degree of employee participation and autonomy, which are intended to increase workforce commitment and to humanize the workplace with the intention of improving work performance and organizational good citizenship behaviour (Cohen, Chang & Ledford, 1997).

Participation in decision making (PDM) is not new and its research can be traced back to several decades. Approaches such as PDM gained new prominence in the 1980s because businesses



faced new competitive challenges that demanded higher levels of performance (Paul, Niehoff, & Turnley, 2010). According to classic definitions of Vroom (1974), participation had been proven as an involvement. In the views of organizational researchers at various times, there are several dimensions which help in the description and definition of the principle of participation:

- i. Opportunity;
- ii. Idea generation and creativity; and
- iii. Responsibility.

With regard to opportunity, it provides the platform for workers to utilize their ideas and energy to achieve their goals and organizational mandate. With idea generation and creativity, workers bring on board new methods to task execution, mandate delivery and flexibility to organizational bureaucracy to increase efficiency and effectiveness by maximizing productivity with minimized organizational inputs. In the context of responsibility, the mandate of achieving organizational goals is internalized with each employee taking responsibility for certain outcomes and filling gaps which could lead to task execution failure, delivery delays and increased cost to the organization.

In view of the above three premises, the authors are of the view that participation in decision making is the process of liberalizing employees' involvement in organizational activities in a way that it creates opportunities to the utilization of employees' individual ideas and mental energy in new ways that deepen employees' responsibility for organizational success and effectiveness. It is also a process that harvests employees' unique talents and commitment towards unlocking organizational deadlocks and/or improving on the organizational derivatives and objectives outside the inherent retrogressive organizational bureaucracy. In the instance of the later, an implication therefore, stems from effective employee participation in decision making in the organization. The first one is pro-social behavior i.e. organizational citizenship behavior which accompanies the sense of responsibility attach to liberalizing decision making principle of the organization and secondly, the feelings of deviant bhaviour such as counterproductive workplace behaviour which may result from neglect and non-inclusive participation in decision making in the organization. In the instances of the two, employee participation in decision making might therefore be a positive or negative correlate of organizational citizenship behavior as a pro-social behavior and counterproductive workplace behavior as a deviant behavior. Hence, there is need for empirical evidence for this anticipated relationship.

Organizational citizenship behavior which is a kind of organizational pro-social behaviour is an individual employee's discretional behavior not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system which nevertheless promotes effective functioning of the organization (Katz, 1964; Organ, 1988 & 1997). In most contemporary organizational setting, there are no known rewards or punishments for organizational citizenship behaviours; hence, its prevalence is entirely voluntary without fear of organizational consequences. Most pro-social behaviours correlate highly with employee satisfaction and performance which are usually achieved through effective employee motivation and commitment. In the views of the authors, the later is elicited on the premise of employees' psychological evaluation of existing and hopeful fulfillment of psychological contract which is inclusive of psychological satisfaction that comes



from recognition of employees' relevance and inputs such as his involvement in participative decision making. It is usually the expression of this commitment by the employees that leads to discretional behaviours like organizational citizenship behaviour whereas in its absence, all forms of inimical behaviours which inflict ruinous injury to the organization productive process and integrity may emanate. These inimical behaviours are termed organizational deviant behaviours and an example of them is counterproductive workplace behaviour as hypothesized in the model of this current study.

Counterproductive workplace behaviour which is the organizational antonym for organizational citizenship behaviour is organizational misbehavior; antisocial behavior, dysfunctional workplace behavior, employee vice, organizational retaliation behavior, workplace deviance, counterproductive work behavior and aggression in workplace which impinge on the progress of productive processes or organizational integrity. These behaviors are similar because all of them violate significant organizational norms and in so doing threatens the well being of an organization, its members, or both (Peterson, 2002). Conterproductive workplace behavior is a class of behaviours that acts against the interests of the organization, which individuals, usually, consciously choose to engage in (Idiakheua & Obetoh, 2012).

Although, this is widely researched in the western cultures of Europe, the current problem of the study is whether human attitude in the workplace are the same across cultures e.g. in Sub-Saharan Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. In local context of the authors, employee participation in decision making has not been fairly researched and one question that may arise as a consequence is: how acceptable are the generalizability of Western job attitudes over job attitudes in typical African workplace?

Theoretical Framework

In consideration of the above, certain theories and empirical evidence offer some insightful explanation into the influences of the variable (employee participation in decision making) on employee outcome such as organizational citizenship behaviour and counterproductive workplace behaviour. These theories might help explore whether employee participation in decision making will display more pro-social behaviour with different employee outcomes than the traditional bureaucratic given theoretical and empirical literature support.

Motivation Theories

The appreciation of employee participation in decision making can be made using the solid theoretical foundations laid by the motivation content theorists who viewed participation in decision making as relative to employee psychological motivation. Classical theorists like Maslow, Alderfer, McClelland, and Herzberg theorized that employee participation in decision making relates to employee higher needs such as recognition and respect. McGregor's theory of X and Y explicitly explains management's view of employees and its impact. Useful frameworks for understanding employee motivation in the workplace can be provided by reviewing contributions of the need theories developed by these theorists. In today's modern organizations, these need theories imply that higher level needs are responsible for motivating



people and interestingly, participating literature and research has identified employee participation in decision making to satisfy these needs (Zainnudin & Isa, 2011; Lunjew, 1994). Empirical evidence also supports positive association of some motivational constructs, prosocial behaviour such as organizational citizenship and performance. For example, Adenike (2011) explored organizational climate as a predictor of employee job satisfaction of academic staff from a private Nigerian University. The results showed a significant positive relationship exists between organizational climate where workers are motivated and employee satisfaction; and between satisfaction and performance.

Employee Risk Triangle Theory (Terris, 1985)

Employee Risk Triangle theory was put forward by Terris (1985). Empirical research supporting this model has focused heavily on the attitudinal component. This model identified three forces which act on an employee's propensity to engage in unethical behaviors like employee theft and counter productivity – Need, Opportunity, and Attitude. The theory also posits that when employees find themselves at the confluence of these three forces, then the odds of them engaging in on-the-job deviance are significantly higher. This theory also has relevance to better understanding unethical employee behaviour during a turbulent economic downturn. For example, during an economic downturn one's need for engaging in on-the-job deviance for financial gain is arguably higher (Deloitte Financial Advisory Services, 2008).

Moreover, there is empirical evidence in Ariani (2013) who tested the relationship between employee engagement, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), and counterproductive work behavior (CWB) that a significant positive relation between employee engagement and OCB and a significant negative relation between employee engagement and CWB and between OCB and CWB.

Trust

Trust is considered crucial for organizational effectiveness (Gomez & Rosen, 2001), hence Interpersonal trust is at the heart of organizational coordination and control (McAllister, 1995). Many are in agreement that even when control is limited to the process of decision making, such as in having the opportunity to voice opinions, it is positively associated with trust in managers (Bauer & Green, 1996). Employees have greater control over decisions that affect them when managers involve them in decision making and, therefore, can protect their own interests. In agency terms this form of control by employees reduces the risk of opportunism on the part of the manager. When superiors are comfortable with the competence level of employees, there seem to be trust for the subordinates (Bauer & Green, 1996; Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Mayer et al., 1995; Whitener & Brodt, 1998) and trust has been seen to be highly correlated with participative styles of leadership (Klauss & Bass, 1982). Hence, trust has been identified as an individual factor that could influence employee participation in decision making. However, there are very limited studies that have examined trust as a factor influencing employee participation in decision making. Similarly, Zin (1998) highlighted in his study on participation among Malaysian professionals that any successful employee participation in decision making programme must have a manager's trust.



In support of this theoretical assertion, Nwankwo, Kanu, Obi, Agbor, Agu and Aboh (2013) investigated psychological contract breach and work overload as predictors of emotional exhaustion among bank employees. The result showed that psychological contract breach which is a form of distrust was a significant predictor of emotional exhaustion while work overload was also significant. The implication of their results in the current study is that emotional exhausted workers are not most likely to display pro-social behaviour towards the organization.

Compensating Differences Theory

This theory argues that workers who face particularly desirable (undesirable) working conditions will receive lower (higher) wages (Williamson, 1985). If employees regard employee involvement as a benefit because problem-solving tasks and job redesign relieve the tedium of traditionally-organized work (Hackman and Oldham 1980), then firms that have it could offer lower wages and workers would not be worse off. Conversely, if employee involvement requires extra effort and tighter work demands, then plans with employee involvement might offer better compensation.

For example, Babamiri, Sabbagh and Harsini (2013) investigated the relationship between perceived organizational justice (distributive, procedural, informational and interpersonal) and personality characteristics (conscientiousness and agreeableness) with counterproductive work behavior (CWB). Results indicated that there is a negative significant relationship between four facets of organizational justice and two dimensions of personality characteristics with organizational oriented CWB and interpersonal oriented CWB. The results further indicated that policies that increase personnel's perceived justice and respect (such as employee participation in decision making) have an important role in decrease of counterproductive work behaviour and the reverse could be the case if former (justice dimensions) decreases.

Efficiency Wage Theories

Efficiency wage theories predict that paying higher wages may increase workers' productivity through three main channels (Katz, 1987; and Levine, 1993). A higher wage may increase worker effort due to the greater cost of job loss, so workers would want to reduce the chances of being dismissed for low effort. A higher wage may also increase effort by increasing workers' loyalty to the firm, which may be especially important in systems that require greater discretionary effort from employees and in group activities such as problem solving in which effort and output are costly to monitor (Akerlof, 1982; Milgrom & Roberts, 1995). Indeed, the core concept of the mutual gains enterprise or high commitment systems (Walton 1985) is consistent with Akerlof's (1982) theory of labor contracts as partial gift exchange and the role of fairness conceptions in determination of expectations, effort, and wages. Finally, a higher wage may reduce firms' turnover and recruitment costs, which might also be important if it requires more careful recruitment or increased firm-specific training.



Incentives and Complementarity

The prescriptive literature on organizational design emphasizes the importance of aligning decision making rights with incentives to make good decisions. If undertaken seriously, the use of greater employee involvement involves substantial changes in decision making rights when frontline employees collect and analyze more data for improvements. In these circumstances, it makes sense to structure incentives in ways that reward quality and improvement and align frontline workers' goals with their new authority (Milgrom and Roberts 1995; Levine 1995). Because workplaces with greater employee involvement depend more on employee initiative, the theory of complementarities between involvement and incentives implies pay practices such as gain sharing, profit sharing, and stock ownership plans will be more common. If these forms of variable compensation substitute for base pay, shift earnings risk to workers, or are introduced in the context of concession bargaining (Bell and Neumark 1993), then one would observe lower regular wages in their presence, though perhaps less employment variability in some cases as well. However, if the firm's strategy is to introduce a supplement or at least avoid putting current pay levels at risk, then total earnings may be no different or slightly higher. If the practices work as intended and increase motivation and productivity, earnings may be significantly greater, assuming firms share gains with workers.

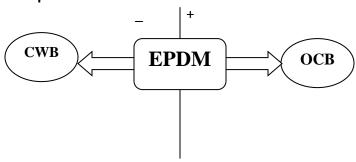
Conflict Theories

The theories emphasize that employee involvement can shift bargaining power within the enterprise. To the extent employers become more dependent on hard-to-monitor discretionary effort of employees, employees' bargaining power can increase. High-involvement workplaces with just-in-time inventory makes it easier for employees to disrupt the production process, so that worker non-cooperation or other reactions to perceived unfairness are more costly to the firm. At the same time, several authors have referred to high-involvement systems as "management by stress," positing that employee involvement is simply a method of sweating the workforce and curbing worker power and influence. Firms reduce employee and union power by using ideological appeals, suggestion systems, and peer pressure in small work groups to instill a culture of company loyalty, appropriate workers' tacit knowledge, and enforce discipline (Graham 1993; Parker and Slaughter, 1988). This view predicts increased workloads, faster work pace, closer monitoring, and more job stress, without offsetting compensating differences such as higher wages.

Case studies provide examples of firms that devolve responsibilities to workers but refuse to increase wages (Bailey & Bernhardt, 1997; Zuboff, 1988,). Press reports indicate that some employers, particularly when times are tough, ask for wage cuts, more skills, and increased participation simultaneously; such an effect implies employee involvement might be correlated with wage declines, but not cause them. Other press reports, though, suggest participatory workplaces are willing to pay higher wages. Some researchers argue that workers require union representation to give them the leverage to compel firms to share gains resulting from El programs given the unequal bargaining power of firms and workers in the current environment (Black, Lynch & Krivelyova 2004).



Figure 1: Conceptual Model



KEY: CWB = counterproductive workplace behaviour, EPDM = employee participation in decision making and OCB = organizational citizenship behaviour. CWB and OCB as negative and positive correlates of EPDM respectively.

The conceptual model above explains the expected linear interaction along the positive and negative practice of employee participation in decision making to elicit OCB in the positive direction and CWB in the negative direction given other organizational constancy.

In consideration of the state of affairs in the Nigeria economy with several implications and consequences for organizational effectiveness, certain pertinent questions arise:

- i. Will employee participation in employee participation in decision making positively and significantly correlate organizational citizenship behaviour?
- ii. Will employee participation in employee participation in decision making negatively and significantly correlate counterproductive workplace behaviour?

In view of the above research questions, the following hypotheses have been formulated to guide the current study.

- i. Employee participation in decision making will significantly and positively correlate organizational citizenship behaviour.
- ii. Employee participation in decision making will significantly and negatively correlate counterproductive workplace behaviour.

Method

Participants – responses of 396 workers comprising of 262 males and 134 females from Enugu Electricity Distribution Company (EEDC) in Awka, Onitsha and Enugu offices were analyzed as for the study. The participants' ages ranged from 26 to 54 years with a mean age of 34.90 years and standard deviation of 3.45. The participants were sampled using simple randomization sampling technique. In terms of participants' marital status, one hundred and ninety-five (195) participants were married while two hundred and one (201) were single. In terms of educational qualification, 11 workers have SSCE, 79 have Ordinary Diploma (ND), 156 have HND, 124 have B.sc/B.A, 26 have Masters while 3 had Ph.D.

Measures – Being a survey study, data for the study was obtained with the aid of three questionnaires namely: Employee participation in decision making inventory by Ojukuku and Sajuyigbe (2014), Organizational citizenship behaviour questionnaire by Podsakoff, Mackenzie,



Moormam and Jetter, (1990) and Counterproductive workplace behaviour questionnaire by Spector, Fox, Penney, Bruursema, Goh, and Kessler (2006). The instruments are scored in 5-point likert scale with response options ranging from 1 – strongly disagree to 5 – strongly agree. All responses were in direct order score. In order to enhance the suitability of the instruments in the current study, the researcher performed a pilot study which revealed a Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .70, .89 and .77 respectively for Employee participation in decision making inventory, Organizational citizenship behaviour questionnaire and Counterproductive workplace behaviour questionnaire.

Design/Statistics - The study adopted a correlational survey design since relationship was sought among the variables and Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used as appropriate statistical tool for analyzing the data.

4. Result

Table 1

Descriptive statistics of the variables showing the mean; standard deviation, and number for the participants.

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Organizational citizenship behaviour Counterproductive workplace behaviour	43.50 69.02	2.3475 3.8602	496 496
Employee participation in decision making	37.33	2.2724	496



Table 2

Shows Pearson product moment correlation which shows the relationship among variables of the study namely: Employee participation in decision making, Organizational citizenship behaviour and Counterproductive workplace behaviour

Correlations

		OCB	EPDM
OCB	Pearson	1	.653
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.010**
	Sum of Squares		
	and Cross-	88.963	239.851
	products		
	Covariance	21.345	.604
	N	496	496
CWB	Pearson	534	429
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.028*	.032*
	Sum of Squares		
	and Cross-	230.851	262.567
	products		
	Covariance	.702	2.766
	N	496	496

^{*}p < .05, **p < .01 (2-tailed), EPDM = Employee participation in decision making, OCB = Organizational citizenship behaviour , CWB = Counterproductive workplace behaviour

Result from tables 1 and 2 above indicated that organizational citizenship behaviour and counterproductive workplace behaviour significantly correlated positively and negatively with the criterion - variable employee participation in decision making at r (1, 496) = .653, p < .01 and r (1, 496) = .429, p < .05 respectively. The findings imply that as employee participation in decision making increases organizational citizenship behaviour also increases; whereas counterproductive workplace behaviour increases as employee participation in decision making decreases.

Discussion

The study examined employee participation in decision making: a predictive study of employee citizenship behaviour and counterproductive workplace behaviour. The conceptual model of the study emphasizes that given organizational circumstances, increase in employee participation in decision making will elicit increase in organizational citizenship behaviour whereas decrease in employee participation in decision making will elicit increase in



counterproductive workplace behviour. Consequently, the above led to the formulation of two hypothetical assumptions which included that employee participation in employee participation in decision making will positively and significantly correlate organizational citizenship behaviour and employee participation in employee participation in decision making will negatively and significantly correlate counterproductive workplace behaviour. After analyses of the data obtained from the field work, the result revealed that the both hypothesis were accepted.

In hypothesis one, employee participation in decision making positively and significantly correlated organizational citizenship behaviour showing that as employee participation in decision making increases, organizational citizenship behaviour increases as well. This finding finds support from the study by Adenike (2011) which explored organizational climate as a predictor of employee job satisfaction and performance of academic staff from a private Nigerian University. The results showed a significant positive relationship exists between organizational climate where workers are motivated and satisfied, and between satisfaction and performance. Such motivating organizational climate which includes being involved in decision making and employee engagement correlates significantly and positively with employee's pro-social behaviour such as organizational citizenship behaviour. The current finding and that of Adenike (2011) amply supported by classical motivation theories such as the needs theory which emphasize that higher needs such as need for recognition and respect may serve a motivation to employees in the modern organization (Zainnudin & Isa, 2011; Lunjew, 1994).

Another theoretical consideration that supports the current finding is that of theory of trust. Trust in form of employee participation decision making has been identified as an individual factor that could influence employee outcome such as pro-social behaviours. However, there are very limited studies that have examined employee participation in decision making as a form of trust which can influence employee outcome e.g. organizational citizenship behaviour or counterproductive workplace behaviour. However, Zin (1998) highlighted in his study on participation among Malaysian professionals that any successful employee participation in decision making programme must have a manager's trust.

Further, the finding is also supported by the theoretical and empirical assertions of Nwankwo, Kanu, Obi, Agbor, Agu and Aboh (2013) investigated psychological contract breach and work overload as predictors of emotional exhaustion among bank employees. Their result showed that psychological contract breach which is a form of distrust was a significant predictor of emotional exhaustion while work overload was also significant. The implication of their results in the current study is that emotional exhausted workers are not most likely to display prosocial behaviour towards the organization.

In the second hypothesis, employee participation in decision making negatively and significantly correlated counterproductive workplace behaviour. This implies that as employee participation in decision making decreases, counterproductive workplace behaviour increases at the ruin of



the organization. The finding in this study is supported by employee risk triangle theory which was put forward by Terris (1985) which has focused heavily on the attitudinal component. This model identified three forces which act on an employee's propensity to engage in unethical behaviors like employee theft and counter productivity – Need, Opportunity, and Attitude. The theory also posits that when employees find themselves at the confluence of these three forces, then the odds of them engaging in on-the-job deviance are significantly higher. This theory also has relevance to better understanding unethical employee behaviour during a turbulent economic downturn such as one currently in Nigeria. Moreover, there is empirical evidence in Ariani (2013) who tested the relationship between employee engagement, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), and counterproductive work behavior (CWB) that a significant positive relationship between employee engagement and OCB; and a significant negative relation between employee engagement and counterproductive workplace behaviour (CWB) and between organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) exist.

Also, support for the current finding can be deducted from the study of Babamiri, Sabbagh and Harsini (2013). The authors investigated the relationship between perceived organizational justice (distributive, procedural, informational and interpersonal) and characteristics (conscientiousness and agreeableness) with counterproductive work behavior (CWB). Results of their study indicated that there is a negative significant relationship between four facets of organizational justice and two dimensions of personality characteristics with organizational oriented CWB and interpersonal oriented CWB. The results further indicated that policies that increase personnel's perceived justice and respect (such as employee participation in decision making) have an important role in decrease of counterproductive work behaviour and the reverse could be the case if former (justice dimensions) decreases. These and other theoretical and empirical exertions objectively confirm that positive and negative relationship exists between employee participation in decision making and organizational citizenship behaviour; and counterproductive workplace behaviour respectively.

In view of the current economic challenges facing the Nigeria nation due to the current recession in the country, survival of organizations is crucial to a struggling nation. This survival can better be achieved with organizational climate where participatory leadership is enthroned. The unique individual characteristics of each employee can be harnessed if the employee is given a chance to partake in decisions regarding his or her job and other job outcomes. Increasing the level of employees' participation in decision making rationally increases employees' support and trust to their superiors as well as acts as psychological incentive and booster of recognition and respect of the employees' inputs and value to the organization. These being in place will increase the employees' propensity towards pro-social behaviour in favour of the organization and decreased incidences of counterproductive workplace behaviour. It is recommended therefore, that ways to elicit employees' pro-social behaviour such as discretional behaviour that promote organizational success should be encouraged.



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