

Extended Abstract

Unethical Pro-Organizational Behavior*

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Abstract

Without any explicit demand from their organization or pressure from their managers, do employees still behave unethically for their organizations' benefit? If so, which reasons drive them to do this? What kind of intra-personal, inter-personal, organizational, and contextual factors lay the groundwork for this particular behavior? In order to investigate the possible answers to these questions, we explore a very recent topic of business ethics, unethical pro-organizational behavior, which has gained growing academic attention yet is still not well-known in Turkey. As a review article, this study examines published articles, dissertation studies, and papers from proceedings on this topic while providing some recommendations for future studies.

Keywords

Unethical Pro-Organizational Behavior • Ethical Behavior • Business Ethics

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Unethical behaviors in business organizations have been studied for decades in the literature on management and organizations. However, most of the studies have focused on behaviors that are contrary to the people in an organization or to the organization itself (Herchen, 2015). Meanwhile, an increasing number of studies have emphasized the unethical behaviors employees perform in the name of their companies. Due to the recent emission scandals of Volkswagen and Mitsubishi, this particular type of behavior shows it can result in billions of dollars of losses for companies, as well as a loss of reputation.

Umphress (2003) first investigated unethical pro-organizational behavior (UPB) and, particularly since Umphress, Bingham, and Mitchell's (2010) first article, this topic has become more common in the literature. UPB is comprised of two behavior types, the first being unethical behavior, which is defined as behavior that violates the generally accepted moral norms of society. The second one is pro-organizational behavior, which is defined as behaviors presented in support of an organization or its members without being defined in the employee's job description or ordered by a supervisor (Umphress & Bingham, 2011).

Two other review studies are found on UPB. First is Liu and Qiu's (2015) study, which investigated six publications (five articles and one thesis). The second is Tsiavia's (2016), which performed a review study on six articles. These previous review studies have not yet sufficiently analyzed scholarly efforts on this topic. So after doing a vast amount of research in various scholar databases, 28 studies have been found and investigated in this review: 22 articles, three doctoral dissertations, one master's thesis, and two papers from proceedings. The method most frequently used in these studies has been the questionnaire-based survey (21 studies). Also, four studies held experiments. Fourteen studies used regression analysis to analyze the data, eight used the simple slope test, two used structural equation models, and one used content analysis.

The relationship between organizational identification, organizational commitment, and psychological ownership with UPB has been researched in 23 studies, with most of them finding a significant positive relationship. Six studies also found a positive relationship between transformative leadership and UPB. Interestingly, the relationship between moral leadership and UPB has been examined in four studies with controversial results. While some situational and individual factors such as moral disengagement, neutralization, ethical pressure, moral justification, risk of exclusion, in-group salience, distance from power, peer behaviors, Machiavellianism, prosocial identity, need for cognition, and accountability had been found to have significant positive relationships with UPB, other variables such as moral identity, ethical development, moral ideology, magnitude of consequences, and authenticity at work were found to have negative relationships with UPB. Also, in accordance with the inconsistent results from these studies, the existence of a strong, clear relationship between demographic factors such as age, gender, position, education level, or job tenure with UPB is difficult to say.

The two UPB scales, one developed by [Umpfress et al. \(2010\)](#) and the other by [Matherne and Litchfield \(2012\)](#), measure the intention of behavior, rather than the behavior itself. Thus in order to prevent self-reporting biases, the recommendation is made to develop a tool for measuring UPB directly. Furthermore, in order to analyze UPB more profoundly, qualitative research methods and certain new techniques like IAT and fMRI can be used in future studies.

Additionally, all previous studies have investigated UPB as a dependent variable. Hence, future studies examining the results of UPB would benefit from a holistic view of this topic. Moreover, future longitudinal studies can provide precious insight into the dynamics of UPB. Finally, some independent factors such as implicit attitudes towards business, moral exclusion, dehumanization, heuristic language, moral disengagement, and national culture can be investigated to further the understanding of UPB.

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Ek/Appendix

Tablo 10
Yayınevi İstatistikleri

Yayın Adı	Yayın Kısaltması	Yayın Sayısı
Journal of Business Ethics	JBE	6
Journal of Applied Psychology	JAP	3
Organization Science	OS	2
Australia and New Zealand Academy of Management	ANZAM	1
Business Ethics: A European Review	BEER	1
Journal of Digital Convergence	JDC	1
Journal of Human Resource and Sustainability Studies	JHRSS	1
Journal of Leadership, Accountability and Ethics	JLAE	1
Journal of Managerial Psychology	JMP	1
Management Communication Quarterly	MCQ	1
Metallurgical and Mining Industry	MMI	1
Personality and Individual Differences	PID	1
Science Journal of Business and Management	SJBM	1