Modeling behavior with difficult employees (case study: human resource managers of the Islamic Revolution Housing Foundation)

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Abstract

Propose: This research aims to model the behavior towards difficult employees and provide effective strategies for human resource managers at the Islamic Revolution Housing Foundation.

Method: This study employs a mixed-methods research approach. In the qualitative section, content analysis is used to identify behavioral patterns, and in the quantitative section, Pearson correlation, Friedman, and Student's t-tests are utilized to assess the impact of various variables.

Findings: The results showed that effective communication and the ability to manage conflicts play a significant role in improving behavior with difficult employees. Enhancing these skills can lead to reduced tensions, increased job satisfaction, and improved organizational performance. The findings indicated that the construct of "patterning" had the highest score with an average of 3.35, while the construct of "information manipulation" had the lowest score with an average of 3.07 among the constructs of information capture in the model with difficult employees.

Conclusion: Managing difficult employees is one of the main challenges for human resource managers, especially in public non-governmental organizations like the Islamic Revolution Housing Foundation. Unstable behaviors and resistance to change can negatively affect productivity and employee morale. The presented model can be used as a practical guide for human resource managers in managing difficult employees.

Keywords: Behavioral model, difficult employees, human resource management, job satisfaction.

Introduction

Organized crime and terrorism are among the most pressing global challenges, posing significant threats to security, legal systems, and economic stability. These two phenomena, while distinct, often overlap, as organized criminal networks provide financial and logistical support to terrorist groups. The transnational nature of these activities, combined with their ability to exploit legal loopholes and advanced technologies, complicates efforts to combat them effectively. Criminal organizations engage in activities such as drug trafficking, human smuggling, arms trade, and cybercrime, which not only fuel terrorism but also undermine the rule of law.

Despite the existence of international conventions and national legislations, legal systems worldwide face substantial challenges in addressing these threats. Jurisdictional conflicts, limitations in evidence collection, and concerns regarding human rights protection often hinder effective prosecution and enforcement. Additionally, differences in legal definitions and enforcement approaches among countries create barriers to international cooperation. As a result, criminal networks and terrorist organizations exploit these gaps to continue their illicit activities.

This research aims to analyze the legal challenges associated with combating organized crime and terrorism, focusing on existing legislative frameworks and their effectiveness. It seeks to answer key questions: What are the main legal obstacles in addressing organized crime and terrorism? How can legal frameworks be improved to ensure both security and justice? By reviewing legal theories, case studies, and policy implementations, this study will propose practical solutions to enhance legal mechanisms at both national and international levels. Addressing these issues is crucial to strengthening global security, preventing illicit activities, and promoting effective law enforcement strategies.

Materials and Methods

This study employs a two-phase qualitative and quantitative research design based on the Saunders Research Onion model. In the first phase, a qualitative approach is adopted to develop a conceptual framework. A systematic literature review is conducted using databases such as Emerald, Ebsco, Elsevier, Scopus, and WOS to identify key research gaps and formulate relevant interview questions. Semi-structured interviews are conducted with 30 senior managers from provincial Housing Foundation offices and affiliated companies, including CEOs, board members, and deputy directors. The interviews continue until theoretical saturation is reached, meaning no new insights emerge from additional participants. The collected data is analyzed using content analysis to extract key behavioral components related to managing difficult employees.

In the second phase, the validity of the developed framework is tested through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire is designed based on the identified components from the qualitative phase, ensuring alignment with stakeholder expertise and research objectives. A positivist paradigm guides this phase, employing a deductive research approach and a quantitative methodology. Structural equation modeling (SEM) is used as the primary analytical technique to validate the proposed model. The research follows a cross-sectional design, with data collected through field surveys. This mixed-methods approach ensures both depth in understanding managerial behaviors and empirical validation of the findings.

Results and Discussion

The present study utilized a qualitative case study approach to develop a behavioral framework for managing difficult employees based on a strategic leadership perspective. Data analysis was conducted using content analysis and concept network formation, which are effective techniques for structuring qualitative research data.

Initially, structured interviews were conducted, and transcripts were carefully reviewed multiple times to identify primary codes. A total of 90 initial codes were extracted. Subsequently, these codes were categorized into related groups, and the concept network was refined through multiple rounds of analysis. Finally, 14 organizing themes and 90 basic themes were identified as key factors influencing the behavioral framework for managing difficult employees.

Data analysis involved a multi-stage process, including descriptive and inferential statistical methods. A researcher-designed questionnaire was distributed among employees and managers to examine the dimensions of interactions with difficult employees. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale. Data were analyzed using SPSS software.

To provide a better understanding of the study population and variables, descriptive statistics were applied before hypothesis testing. The central tendency parameter (mean) was used to indicate the average value of variables, while the minimum and maximum values represented the range of variation within the dataset.

For the emotional capture component of the behavioral framework for managing difficult employees, the highest mean score was for the "impression management: exaggerating others' work to gain future approval" component. In contrast, the lowest mean score was for the "self-promotion: creating a favorable self-image in others' minds" component. Other components such as "attention-seeking" and "justification and apology" also showed varying levels of influence.

In the informational capture category, "modeling" had the highest mean score, while "manipulation of information" had the lowest score, suggesting differing levels of impact on employee behavior.

Regarding social games, the "breaking promises with employees" component had the highest mean score, whereas the "explaining the reasons for decision-making to employees" component had the lowest. This indicates that actions like promise-breaking may be more prominent in difficult employee behavior compared to transparency in decision-making.

Within power dynamics, the highest mean score was observed for the "awareness and evaluation of power bases" component, with the "overcoming resistance: using power to counteract opposing forces" component scoring the lowest. This points to a more significant role of understanding power structures than employing power to overcome resistance.

Lastly, in the political personality aspect of managing difficult employees, the highest mean scores were for the components "ability to interpret political situations within the organization" and "having the ability to influence others." These highlight the importance of political awareness and influence in the management of challenging employee behaviors.

These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of behavioral strategies for managing difficult employees, highlighting key psychological, informational, and political factors that influence workplace dynamics.

Conclusions

The present study aimed to develop a behavioral framework for managing difficult employees based on a strategic leadership perspective, utilizing a qualitative case study approach. The findings revealed that managing difficult employees is influenced by a complex set of factors, including emotional capture, informational capture, power dynamics, political personality, and other related components.

The results of the quantitative analysis highlighted that "attention-seeking," "promise-breaking," and "awareness and evaluation of power bases" had the greatest impact on managing difficult employees, while "self-promotion" and "explaining decision-making reasons" had the least impact. These findings align with existing theoretical foundations, reinforcing the importance of addressing psychological, informational, and political factors in the management of challenging employees.

The study emphasizes the necessity for managers to pay close attention to emotional intelligence, power structures, and political dynamics to effectively manage difficult employees. The practical implications of this research suggest that enhancing strategic leadership skills in these areas could lead to improved employee relationships, organizational efficiency, and better overall management outcomes.

Future research should focus on exploring how these factors can be integrated into training programs for managers to develop a more comprehensive approach to managing difficult employees in various organizational contexts.

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