

Self-Defeating Work Behavior in Wood Industry: An Empirical Investigation

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ABSTRACT

Self-defeating work behavior will become more common if human resources exploitation continues. A good organization practice needs to be performed to avoid employees' self-defeating work behavior. Our research is among the first to examine the organizational antecedents of self-defeating work behavior. The purpose of this research is to test whether perceived CSR initiatives, implementation of high-performance working practices, and authentic leadership are the antecedents of self-defeating work behavior. Questionnaires are distributed to 204 employees of 19 wood companies in Central Java. Regression analysis is used to test the connection between the variables. The result shows that perceived CSR initiative and authentic leadership negatively affect self-defeating work behavior. It also reveals that high-performance work system does not significantly affect self-defeating work behavior. It is recommended that practitioners employ good CSR in social environment and apply authentic leadership to maintain the employees' positive behavior

Keywords: *perceived CSR initiatives, high-performance work practice, authentic leadership, self-defeating work behavior, human resource management*

1. INTRODUCTION

Productivity is an important element of a company's competitiveness to gain superior advantages in its business. A part of productivity gets contributions from human resources activities, especially in a labor-intensive business. However, efforts to maintain, let alone to increase the employees' productivity are difficult to carry out. Some efforts believed to boost productivity are in fact decrease it [1]. Moreover, employees might exhibit various counterproductive behaviors at work that lessen their work productivity.

One of the counterproductive behaviors at work is self-defeating work behavior (SDWB). It is manifested in diverse forms, such as fear of learning, anxiety under pressure, discouragement to express work needs, work revenge, inability to comply with instructions, and so forth [2]. These kinds of behaviors cause many productivity issues like decreased performance, unachieved targets, low quality of the working relationship, bad decision-making, and low team cooperation spirit, and employees' poor ability to take care of themselves [3].

Research on SDWB antecedents needs to be conducted considering the importance of SDWB in business. Studies in this field are still very rare [2]. Previous studies treated every behavior grouped in SDWB as a separate behavior. Thus, a general conclusion on factors influencing SDWB could not be drawn.

Among the factors affecting forms of SDWB are perceived CSR initiatives [4], implementation of the high-performance work system (HPWS) [5], and authentic leadership [6]. However, the results of the research are contradictory in terms of the effects of these variables on certain behavior. For example, perceived CSR initiatives

are known to increase employees' procrastination [7] but they can also decrease unethical, dishonest, and corrupt behavior [8]–[10]. Some parts of SDWB are unethical behaviors such as work only under supervision, blaming others for the mistakes, not complying with the instruction, and so forth [2]. Meanwhile, HPWS is famous for increasing discretionary work efforts, a specific aspect of an organization's member, which is work-oriented such as working hard, holding down a new challenging job, complying with organization rules, and giving constructive suggestions for the company [11]. This may raise work tension and escalate commitment probability for the employees. It means the employee is committed to finish the job albeit it is a waste or a failure. Nevertheless, HPWS is also known for reducing working stress [12] and also choking under pressure. Only authentic leadership has not shown controversial results because generally, it also prevents commitment escalation [13].

Previous reviews on general SDWB suggest that this kind of research hardly exists [2]. It is concluded that SDWB is a variable for future research space. Thus, this research aims to find the relationship between the before-mentioned factors and SDWB.

1.1. Self-Defeating Work Behavior (SDWB)

Baumeister and Scher [14] generally define SDWB as all behaviors intentionally conducted to generate obvious, certain, or probable negative effects on oneself or the project. Meanwhile, Amen [15] defines SDWB as "self-sabotaging ways or habits that destroy a person's chances of getting what he or she wants out of life." Specifically, some experts have identified SDWB as a behavior of dodging or refusing certain fun experience, being drawn to

a situation or relationship that leads to suffering, and refusing other people’s help [16]–[18]. In this research’s context, the definition by Renn, Steinbauer, and Biggane [2] is adopted because it refers to self-inflicted and self-controlled behaviors that hinder an employee from obtaining a healthy work attitude or basic work relationship.

1.2. Perceived CSR Initiatives

Perceived CSR initiatives are associated with employees’ perceptions of the scope of a company’s social responsibility [4]. In other words, perceived CSR initiatives are employees’ point of view on the CSR executed by the company. Based on some conceptual explorations conducted by experts and supranational foundations, perceived CSR initiative has been defined as employees’ perception of CSR contribution on the company’s and society’s success [19], company’s honesty [20], and company’s commitment to protect legitimate stakeholders’ interests and boost social welfare [21]. Considering the concepts and definitions of perceived CSR initiative, this research defines it as employees’ perception of the CSR contribution in succeeding social welfare encouragement.

1.3. High-Performance Work System (HPWS)

One of the important factors in boosting employees’ psychological capital is HPWS [22]. Besides, HPWS also negatively affects working pressure [12] and reduces employees’ choking under pressure. This research adopts the definition provided by Fu, Ma, Bosak, and Flood [23] in which HPWS is characterized by human resources practices designed to elevate employees’ skills, commitment, and productivity that will become the company’s competitive advantages. Choi [24] highlights HPWS’s assumption that human resources practices interact to create a positive working attitude, working-related behavior, and the company’s performance.

1.4. Authentic Leadership

The appropriate leadership will positively affect employees, including preventing employees from SDWB. Authentic leadership is a type of leadership that lives and acts following self-determined values and standards to encourage employees’ productivity [25]. Jo and Jo [26] define authentic leadership as a superior’s behaviors that are based on and encourage psychological capacity, that have positive ethical climate, internalize moral perspective, balance information procession pattern, and have a transparent relationship. These are manifested in the relationship with the employees to boost their development. Meanwhile, Calderon-Mafud, Moreno, Colunga-Rodriguez, and Preciado-Serrano [27] define authentic leadership as an individual who is well-aware of his/her values and beliefs, strengths and weaknesses and realizes how he/she affects and is perceived by his/her subordinates. An authentic leader is a leader with a healthy mental state

capable of encouraging his/her employees to have good and productive mental states.

1.5. Underlying Theory

The relationship between variables in this research is based on the social cognitive theory [28]. This theory states that a person’s reaction to something, referred to as self-observation, is mediated by his/her consideration process. Thus, SDWB is one form of a person’s reactions. Bandura differentiates three kinds of self-reactions namely evaluative self-reaction (positive or negative), perceptible self-reaction (rewards or punishment), and no reaction. SDWB can be considered as evaluative and perceptible self-reaction. Evaluatively, SDWB is a negative self-reaction. Perceptively, SDWB is a self-punishing reaction.

These reactions derive from judgment over self-supervision of the surrounding social situation. The supervision comprises of what aspect is supervised (called the performance dimension) and how well the supervision is (called the supervision quality dimension). Within these two dimensions, all three research variables are involved. Perceived CSR initiatives are performance dimensions at the organization level. The social cognitive theory holds that the performance dimension includes quality, productivity, originality, sociability, morality, and deviation. Perceived CSR initiatives may also cover the morality element. It particularly means that employees see their organization has conducted good morality. This, in turn, will positively affect employees’ self-reactions and prevent SDWB emerges. Meanwhile, HPWS is an organization’s activity directed towards quality and productivity aspects, which also gives positives input to employees’ social cognitive systems. Authentic leadership plays a role as an enhancer of supervision quality as it allows employees to get regular, close and accurate information on positive things. They include an exemplary leader that will be a positive input for employees’ social cognitive.

Figure 1 illustrates a research model and the relationship between variables in this research. The free variables are perceived as CSR initiatives, HPWS, and authentic leadership. Those three variables have never been tested at the same time in research. Being seen from social cognitive theory, CSR is a performance element directed at the organization's external environment, while HPWS is a performance element directed at inside the organization. Authentic leadership is an element of self-supervision quality.

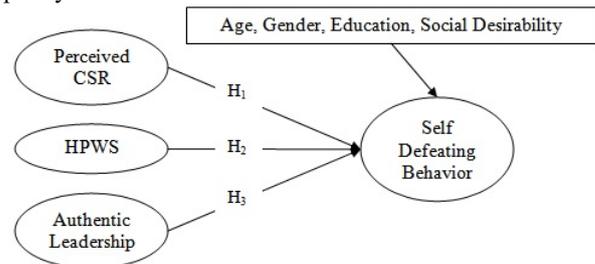


Figure 1 Conceptual Research Model

Some research [8]–[10] support that perceived CSR decreases the employees’ unethical behaviors. Nevertheless, at least one research [7] suggests that perceived CSR increases unethical behaviors. It is due to visionary procrastination, which means employees postpone present kind deeds because they will do it in the future through CSR. Based on the social cognitive theory, the existing relationship supposed to be negative because the employee feels that he/she has taken part in morally good deeds. This is part of a person’s performance in social life. This will, in turn, generate the person’s positive attitude and behavior. One of these is avoiding behavior classified as SDWB. Moreover, visionary procrastination is taken place for future CSR instead of the past CSR. Thus, it is postulated that:

H1: Perceived CSR has negative effects on SDWB.

Studies on the relationship between HPWS and employees’ various behaviors show inconclusive results. A study by Souchi and Liao [12] shows a negative relationship between HPWS and output in the form of work stress reduction that can prevent SDWB. Kramar [29], using several case studies in Xerox, Interface, and Ikea, also found that HPWS can create a positive social system at workplace which also lessens SDWB. On the other side, research conducted by Frenkel and Bednall [11] yield a contradictory result. It shows that HPWS increases discretionary work effort, that is employees’ high working spirit. Although this commonly is seen positively, it also potentially affects the self-defeating work behavior by escalating the commitment. When the social cognitive theory is applied, it can be argued that HPWS pushes down SDWB as the system encourages the employees’ performance and capability and makes the employees confident with a good self-image. By considering that HPWS is definitively directed towards employees’ positive outputs [23], [24], it is postulated that:

H2: HPWS negatively affects SDWB

The literature claims that authentic leadership has positive effects on employees’ outputs [13], [25], [27]. Jo and Jo [26] found that authentic leadership provides psychological empowerment and organization citizenship behavior. Both are positive aspects to push down SDWB. The social cognitive theory sees that authentic leadership can be a variable of enhancing employee supervision quality since an authentic leader encourages working transparency and enlarges employees’ psychological capacity. It is then formulated that:

H3: Authentic leadership has a negative effect on SDWB

2. METHOD

2.1. The Sampling Technique

Cross-Sectional survey design is utilized while the data were collected from the employees of 20 wood companies in Central Java. They were randomly chosen, 10-30 persons for each company. In eight weeks, we managed to collect 204 responses from 19 companies. To avoid response bias,

the means of all variables on the first third respondents are compared to the last third. There is no significant difference between the initial response and the last, indicating the absence of non-response bias [30]. The descriptive statistic of demographic variables is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Respondents Participated in This Study

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
21-26	26	13%
27-32	48	24%
33-38	90	44%
39-44	30	15%
45-50	10	5%
Gender		
Male	128	63%
Female	76	37%
Education		
Junior high school	44	22%
Senior high school	160	78%

2.2. Data Collection Method

The researchers gathered data on wood companies in Central Java province. After that, the team contacted the Human Resource Department personnel by phone or email to have permission to conduct the research in their companies. The data collection took two-week time and was aided by the company’s management.

2.3. Measures

To ensure the validity and reliability of the instruments used to obtain the data, the questionnaires are developed by adopting indicators that have been used in the previous studies. Perceived CSR construct is measured in four (4) items adapted from Zhou, Luo, and Tang [4]. HPWS 29 items are adapted from Yi and Yan [22], while the authentic leadership construct is measured in 35 items taken from Henderson and Hoy [6]. The measures have been used in various contexts [4], environmental companies [22], and education [6]. SDWB construct is measured in 28 items adapted from Renn, Steinbauer, dan Biggan [2]. Age, sex, and education are the control variables. All variables, except the control variables, are measured on a five-item Likert scale, from which “1 = strongly disagree” to “5 = strongly disagree.”

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 reports the descriptive statistics and reliability coefficients for each construct. The alpha Cronbach coefficient of the research construct ranges from 0.66 to 0.85, which is higher than the 0.60 thresholds [31]. The criteria are fulfilled by all variables, showing sufficient internal consistency.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	α
Perceived CSR	3.72	0.61	0.82
HPWS	3.50	0.56	0.74
Authentic leadership	3.08	0.76	0.85
Self-defeating behavior	3.09	0.58	0.66

Note: High-Performance Work System (HPWS)

Table 3 shows the correlation and multicollinearity of all the research variables. The correlation absolute value lies between 0.13 to 0.69. It means that there is no multicollinearity as the value is lower than 0.70. Variance inflation factors and tolerance statistics are taken into consideration to address the multicollinearity potentials. The result shows that all values are under the threshold, indicating the absence of multicollinearity.

Table 3 Correlation Statistics

	CSR	HPWS	AL	SDWB	Tolerance	VIF
CSR	1	0.56**	0.13	-0.27**	0.48	2.10
HPWS	-	1	0.64**	-0.56**	0.32	3.12
AL	-	-	1	-0.69**	0.48	2.11

Note: Perceived CSR (CSR), High-Performance Work System (HPWS), Authentic Leadership (AL), Self-Defeating Work Behavior (SDWB), Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)

Table 4 displays the linear regression analysis to test hypotheses 1 – 3. The model reflects 53% of dependent variable variance. The ANOVA confirms that the model is sufficient ($F = 36.84, p = 0.000$) to elaborate the self-defeating work behavior variability, which means that the model has predictive power. The beta coefficient shows the negative impact of perceived CSR ($\beta = -0.22, t = -3.49, p = 0.001$) and authentic leadership ($\beta = -0.49, t = -8.66, p = 0.000$) to the self-defeating work behavior. Thus, the first and third hypotheses are confirmed. However, HPWS ($\beta = -0.03, t = -0.44, p = 0.662$) does not significantly affect the self-defeating work behavior. The result does not confirm our hypothesis that HPWS plays an important role in decreasing the self-defeating work behavior.

Table 4 Regression Analysis Results

Predictors	Un-standardized Beta Coefficient	t-value
Control variables		
Age	0.05	1.90
Gender	-0.02	-0.07
Education	0.39	1.09
Independent variables		
Perceived CSR	-0.22	-3.49**
HPWS	-0.03	-0.44
Authentic leadership	-0.49	-8.66***
R Square	0.53***	
F-Statistics	36.84***	

Note: Dependent Variable = Self Defeating Work Behavior, High-Performance Work System (HPWS), ** significant at 0.01 level, *** significant at 0.001 level

Previously, HPWS was assumed to be a source of positive input for employees' social cognitive systems. Social cognitive theory views that social cognitive systems are influenced by evaluations of self-supervision of surrounding social situations. The research found that CSR

and authentic leadership indeed positive inputs to performance dimension of social cognitive system of employees. The insignificant influence of HPWS on SDWB can be sourced from the unclear value generated by HPWS for employees in monitoring their social situation. That is, HPWS can generate both positive and negative signals for employees. Previous studies are conflicting. There are studies that show that HPWS has a negative effect on SDWB [12][29]. Nevertheless, the study conducted by Frenkel and Bednall shows that HPWS elevates the discretionary work effort, which in turn will increase self-defeating behavior in the form of commitment escalation [11]. These differences indicate that context can play an important role in this relationship. In the present wood industry, both effects seem to cancel each other out and make the relationship insignificant. HPWS practiced in the wood industry does not seem to be in line with industry characteristics or there are certain norms that are not well-practiced in HPWS in the wood industry. Further research with more rigorous methods such as structural equation modeling can clarify whether HPWS in the wood industry does not have an impact on the SDWB of its employees.

4. CONCLUSION

The research result indicates that perceived CSR and authentic leadership significantly and negatively associated with self-defeating work behavior in Indonesia's wood industry. On the other hand, HPWS does not have a significant effect on self-defeating work behavior. A company can be sure of performing CSR and invest in authentic leadership to decrease self-defeating work behavior.

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