

# Workplace Deviance and spirituality in Muslim Organizations

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## Abstract

Deviant workplace behavior of employees is becoming a common problem in today's organizations. The increasing deviance has an economic as well as social cost associated to it, which victimizes the organization and its stakeholders. This Study is an attempt to study workplace deviance in Muslim organizations. A sample of 10 respondents was selected, 8 males and 2 females. Most of them have long experience in management. They are from various industries such as, manufacturing, telecommunications, banking and education. The study found that workplace deviance is of great concern to all organizations, highlighting that injustice or perception of not being treated fairly does provoke employees to indulge in such deviant behaviors. And significantly that with the help improving spirituality among employees, organizations can overcome the prevailing issue of workplace deviance.

**Keywords:** workplace deviance, spirituality, responsibility, injustice, Taqwa (Islamic piety)

## 1. Introduction

When employees in an organization believe that they are treated unfairly, they experience feelings of anger, outrage, frustration, and a desire for revenge (Bies & Tripp, 1996; Greenberg, 1990). Under certain situations and conditions, these negative feelings can manifest into workplace deviance (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Workplace deviance refers to counterproductive behavior in organizations (Griffin & Lopez, 2005).

Deviant workplace behavior of employees is becoming a common problem in today's organizations. Many researchers are interested in studying workplace deviance because of its high rate of occurrence and serious negative impact on organizations. The workplace deviance appears in the form of a number of employee behaviors. Chirasha and Mahapa (2012) posit that 75% of employees involve in workplace deviance like theft, fraud, vandalism, sabotage and voluntary absenteeism. It is estimated that 95% of organizations have experienced theft by their own employees (Case, 2000), causing financial losses between \$50 and \$200 billion annually on the US economy (Chirasha & Mahapa, 2012). KPMG-UK fraud barometer for 2013 confirms that identity fraud in 2012 reached to a level high of £ 26.3 million from £12.3 million the year before. Forged goods scam rose to £22.9 million with ponzi schemes worth £72 million came to courts. The report also presents a similar rising trend for procurement fraud, which grew to £21.4 million in 2012. What's more, the number of cases involving employee fraud increased to 35 in 2012 from 22 as compare to 2011, with values climbing from £12.0 million (2011) to £ 25.1 in 2012.

With such increasing deviance that does not only have economic but social cost associated to it, the growing interest, curiosity and finding answers as why employees engage in deviant behavior is understandable (Aquino, Lewis, & Bradfield, 1999; Colbert, Mount, Harter, Witt, & Barrick, 2004; Fagbohunge, Akinbode, & Ayodeji, 2012).

Spirituality is expected to stimulate employee's honesty, creativity, commitment and personal fulfillment (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002). Research supports the belief that workplace spirituality programs in an organization do certainly result in encouraging positive outcomes, like increased joy, serenity, job satisfaction, and commitment (Fry, 2003; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003; Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002; Reave, 2005). Organizations that support and encourage spiritual and caring work environments not only benefit from employees who are less apprehensive and more principled but also see an increase in the commitment, productivity, adaptability and innovation (Eisler & Montouori, 2003; Mat & Naser, 2012).

Kazmi (2004) affirms that the field of management is experiencing a rising interest in religion and spirituality.

However, there is still inadequate research that gears towards Islamic spirituality as well as its contribution to the overall development of organizations (Kamil et al., 2011b; Kamil, Sulaiman, Osman-Gani, & Ahmad, 2011). In Islamic view point, spirituality is the realization of the existence of supreme power together with the significance of the relationship with this supreme power (Kamil et al., 2011b). As stated by Mohsen (2007) and Kamil et al. (2011) Islamic spirituality is a concept that is embedded in Taqwa (Islamic Piety). Importantly, Taqwa which embodies spirituality and social responsibility has not received much attention from the researchers in this area. Kamil et al. (2011) affirms that Taqwa is to obey Allah's orders and to stay away for all that has been forbidden by Him, in such a way that we strive towards the light of His guidance, acceptance and rewards and fear His torment and severe punishment in the hereafter.

## 2. Research Objective

Therefore, the current study attempts to explore the dimensions of workplace deviance and understand the role of spirituality in avoiding workplace deviance. The need for such a research has become more urgent due to the fact that organizations at present face many challenges including change, at a speedier pace than ever before. This paper will also explore whether organizational justice plays a role in workplace deviance.

## 3. Literature Review

Workplace deviance is a voluntary behavior that violates significant organizational norms and in so doing threatens the well being of an organization, its members, or both (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Giacalone and Greenberg (1997) affirm that workplace deviance are actions that bring harm or would intend to bring harm, to an organization, its employees, and/or the organization's stakeholders. Sackett and DeVore (2001) insist that any intentional behavior on the part of an organization member that is viewed by the organization as divergent and contrary to its valid or legitimate interests is deemed as workplace deviance. Workplace deviance also can be explained as the intentional or planned desire to cause damage to an organization (Omar, Halim, Zainah, Farhadi, Nasir & Kairudin, 2011). However, the most commonly cited definition by researchers is the one that is presented by Robinson and Bennett (1995). The definition presented by them covers both the organizational and interpersonal deviance, whereas, the other researchers (Bordia, Restubog, & Tang, 2008; Hollinger & Clark, 1982; Kidwell & Martin, 2004; Mangione & Quinn, 1974; Spector & Fox, 2005; Omar et al., 2011) focus mainly on organizational deviance or interpersonal deviance but not both. Some of the very common cases of deviance as highlighted in the past studies are; aggression, antisocial behavior, violence, employee theft, fraud, workplace sabotage, acting rudely, arguing, bribery, corruption, embezzlement and and so forth (Robinson & Bennett, 1995; Bennett & Robinson, 2003; Chirasha & Mahapa, 2012; Fagbohunge, Akinbode, & Ayodeji, 2012).

Robinson and Bennett (1995) classified workplace deviance into four categories (as shown in the figure 1); Property deviance, Production deviance, Political deviance and Personal aggression. Based on the four categories of deviance, they also identified two primary types of workplace deviance; Interpersonal and Organizational deviance. They further affirmed that Interpersonal deviance refers to deviant behavior toward individuals within an organization like co-workers, supervisors and subordinates; such as, saying something unkind/hurtful, acting impolitely/rudely, endangering co-workers, gossiping about work colleagues, quarreling and stealing from the co-workers (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). On the other hand, organizational deviance refers to deviant behavior towards the organization, such as leaving early, wasting company resources, stealing from the company, deliberately working slower than their ability, and sabotaging or damaging office equipment (Bennett & Robinson, 2000; Fagbohunge et al., 2012; Nurmaya, 2012; Omar et al., 2011; Robinson & Bennett, 1995).

|                              | <b>Minor</b>   | <b>Serious</b>  |
|------------------------------|--|---|
| <b><i>Organizational</i></b> | <b>Production deviance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaving early from office</li> <li>• Taking excessive breaks</li> <li>• Intentionally working slow</li> <li>• Wasting company resources</li> </ul> | <b>Property deviance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sabotaging office equipment</li> <li>• Accepting kickbacks</li> <li>• Lying about working hours</li> <li>• Stealing from company</li> </ul> |
| <b><i>Interpersonal</i></b>  | <b>Political deviance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Showing favoritism</li> <li>• Gossiping about co-workers</li> <li>• Blaming co-workers</li> <li>• Competing non beneficially</li> </ul>             | <b>Personal aggression</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual harassment</li> <li>• Verbal abuse</li> <li>• Stealing from co-workers</li> <li>• Endangering co-workers</li> </ul>                |

Figure 1. Robinson and Bennett (1995) typology of deviant workplace behavior

Source: (Robinson & Bennett, 1995, p. 565)

In answering questions as why employees engage in deviant behavior, researchers (Aquino, Lewis, & Bradfield, 1999; Colbert, Mount, Harter, Witt, & Barrick, 2004) have classified antecedents of workplace deviance into two categories: situational and individual. Situational antecedents include justice (Aquino, Galperin, & Bennett, 2004; Aquino et al., 1999; Berry, Ones, & Sackett, 2007), perceived work situation and perceived organizational support (Colbert et al., 2004), socialized charismatic leadership (Brown & Trevino, 2006) and abusive supervisor (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007). Individual antecedents include trait anger (Douglas & Martinko, 2001), motivational trait (Diefendorff & Mehta, 2007), negative affectivity (Aquino et al., 1999; Douglas & Martinko, 2001) the Big Five traits (Colbert et al., 2004). Therefore, situational and individual deviance helps to answer as why employees engage in workplace deviance.

Notably in last few years the most readily investigated antecedent of workplace deviance is perceived organizational justice (Colquitt, 2001; McCardle, 2007; Nurmaya, 2012). Where perceived organizational justice refers to the individuals and the group's perception of the fairness of treatment received from an organization and their behavioral reaction to such perceptions (Aryee, Budhwar, & Chen, 2002). Although, the past studies (e.g. Colquitt, 2001; Tepper, 2000; Tepper et al., 2009; Bennett & Robinson, 2003; Colquitt et al., 2001; Forret & Love, 2008; Syaebani & Sobri, 2011) certainly help in providing an understanding how perceived organizational justice may lead to workplace deviance. Still the problem of workplace deviance is prevailing and is a key area of interest for academicians and practitioners (McCardle, 2007; Nurmaya, 2012).

Islam can provide some meaningful solutions to such organizational challenges faced by a range of organizations globally (Al-Attas, 2001; Kamil, Al-Kahtani, & Sulaiman, 2011b). As affirmed by Kazmi (2004), the field of management is experiencing a rising interest in religion and spirituality. However, there is still inadequate research that gears towards Islamic spirituality as well as its contribution to the overall development of organizations (Kamil et al., 2011b; Kamil, Sulaiman, Osman-Gani, & Ahmad, 2011). The theoretical definition of Islamic spirituality is the responsibility between one's self and Allah (SWT) (Kamil et al., 2011b; Mohsen, 2007). Kamil et al. (2011, p.37) affirms that "Islamic Spirituality is the activities that Muslims do at all places and at all times in organizations, in ways that are in line with the Islamic teachings and principles, such that one constantly strives towards seeking the pleasure of Allah and His Guidance". Importantly, Islamic spirituality is a concept that is embedded in Taqwa (Islamic Piety) (Mohsen, 2007; Kamil et al., 2011). Since Islam is a complete way of life, the main and the most recurrent characteristic, which Allah (SWT) directed the Messengers and all believers to hold onto in Quran, is Taqwa (Islamic piety). Taqwa and its derivatives are mentioned 258 times in Quran. Quran is full of many traits and characteristics that have been related with Prophets (may peace be upon all of them) such as honesty, tolerance, Iman (belief), forgiveness and kindness (Sulaiman, Mohsen, & Kamil, 2013). Magnificence of Taqwa is that it encompasses most of these characteristics, with major emphasis on Iman (belief) as it is the most common among Prophets (Sulaiman et al., 2013). In Quran Allah says;

*"This is the Book (the Quran), whereof there is no doubt, a guidance to those who are Al-Muttaqin (People of Taqwa)" (Quran, 2: 2).*

Allah also says;

*"Verily we have directed the people of the book before you and you (O Muslims) to have taqwa of Allah" (Quran, 4:131).*

Hence, Taqwa is to obey Allah's orders and to stay away for all that has been forbidden by Him, in such a way that we strive towards the light of His guidance, acceptance and rewards and fear His torment and severe punishment in the hereafter (Kamil et al., 2011). Notably, the western perspective of workplace deviance and justice is more attuned to attain effectiveness, commitment, profits and better returns for the stakeholders. Whereas, Islam covers not only the aspect of al-dunya (worldly) but also al-akhirah (hereafter) in which the aspect of dunya must be related in a profound as well as inseparable way to the aspect of akhirah and where the akhirah-aspect has the crucial and ultimate importance (Kamil et al., 2011). Moreover, there is a lack of research with respect to employing Islamic concepts to overcome the issue of workplace deviance.

#### 4. Research Methodology

The study is the beginning of a bigger study, starting with qualitative (case study) research. Qualitative methods were used by the researchers in order to explore and understand the opinions and experiences of respondents on the issue under study. In all interactions with respondents, the researchers presented no preset ideas about what answers may likely be expected from them. Indeed, the interview was designed in such a manner that it encouraged participants to add their own ideas and share their own experiences through significant examples.

Importantly, the researchers used semi-structured interview for data collection. Berg (2007) affirms that structured interviews use of pre-determined questions, allowing interviewer the freedom to explore far beyond the answers, and understand the fact that different individuals perceive the world in different ways. As suggested by Berg (2007), in interviews essential questions, probing questions, and throw-away questions were asked; there were no extra questions. Essential questions were directed at the core themes of the study— understanding of workplace deviance, organizational rules and regulations on deviance, disciplinary actions against deviant employees, common deviant behavior among employees, fair treatment and employee deviant behavior, injustice and deviance, Taqwa and workplace deviance. During interviews, probing questions were asked to see additional information from respondents and to provide them leads during the interview. It is customary to use throw-away questions to build rapport with participants.

##### 4.1 Research Participants

A sample of ten experienced practitioners and academicians from well-known private organizations and academic institutions were selected for the present study. The respondents were selected through purposive sampling since the researchers intended to get a comprehensive understanding of dimensions of workplace deviance and the role of Taqwa in avoiding workplace deviance.

The researchers selected the knowledgeable and experienced professionals from Pakistan and Malaysia by using their personal and professional networks. The respondents were senior business consultants, full-time employees in senior managerial positions with not less than eight years of working experience. Importantly, all respondents for this research were Muslims and work in Muslim organizations. Therefore, religious belief and values played a vital and key role in their professional behavior, decisions and actions. A general consensus among the participants was observed that as Muslims, it is obligatory for them to adhere Taqwa not only in their organizations but also in their day to day activities. The important experts from the interviews are given the following pages.

Table 1. Participants profile

| Respondent   | Gender | Title and Organization   | Age | Work Experience |
|--------------|--------|--|-----|-----------------|
| Respondent 1 | Male   | Former CEO (Multinational) / Business consultant                             | 60  | 36 years        |
| Respondent 2 | Male   | Former Director General (Govt)/ Managing Director (Private Education system) | 60  | 36 years        |
| Respondent 3 | Male   | Relationship Manager (Multinational Bank)                                    | 34  | 10 years        |
| Respondent 4 | Female | Asst Professor (Higher Education)  | 46  | 18 years        |
| Respondent 5 | Female | Asst. HR Manager (Telecommunication)   | 32  | 9 years         |

|                      |      |  |    |          |
|----------------------|------|--|----|----------|
| <b>Respondent 6</b>  | Male | Operations Manager (Chemical Company)  | 43 | 19 years |
| <b>Respondent 7</b>  | Male | Account Director (Advertizing)   | 35 | 10 years |
| <b>Respondent 8</b>  | Male | Business Development Manager (Industrial manufacturing)  | 36 | 11 years |
| <b>Respondent 9</b>  | Male | Finance Manager (Industrial Manufacturing)   | 54 | 30 years |
| <b>Respondent 10</b> | Male | Former Dean (Higher Education)/<br>Former General Manager (Automotive company)/<br>Now Professor | 68 | 44 years |

#### 4.2 Data Collection and Analysis

The researchers conducted in depth face-to-face interviews with the respondents. They were asked essential questions, probing questions, and throw-away questions. The interviews with the respondents lasted approximately between 30 minutes and 45 minutes. All interviews were audio taped and transcribed. The transcribed data are coded and reduced to meaningful themes following the guidelines given by Miles and Huberman (1994). Importantly, the researchers encouraged the participants to express their feelings freely on the subject matter. As indicated in Table 1 the respondents include 8 males and 2 females. Most of them have long experience in management. They are from various industries such as, manufacturing, telecommunications, banking and education.

### 5. Findings and Discussions

The present section presents the reporting of the results of this exploratory study, arranged in context to the research objective. From the interviews the following themes were found.

#### 5.1 Understanding of Workplace Deviance

A number of explanations were provided by the respondents that could exhibit their understanding regarding workplace deviance. But, all respondents agreed that workplace deviance has a high negative impact on the organizations well being. In elucidating their understanding about workplace deviance respondents have the following to say:

*Respondent 1* affirmed that workplace deviance is of growing concern in organizations since such behaviors can affect the administration of affairs with in the organizations and may also be detrimental to their financial well-being. "In my view, employees involved in workplace deviance are the ones that perform poorly, do the minimum, push deadlines and show lack of commitment towards their assignments or responsibilities. Some employees may be arrogant towards their seniors or colleagues". *Respondent 2* was of the view that workplace deviance means moving away from the normal or accepted course of action. "I personally believe that employees with deviant behavior are ones that perform inadequately, show lack of commitment, enclose lay back attitude, push deadlines and find excuses and safe passages for not doing there required work or job. Moreover, employees being bigheaded, proud and at times arrogant towards their seniors or colleagues relatively in my opinion fall under the same category".

*Respondent 5* expressed that "workplace deviance is an act of violating the set standards of performance as set by an organization". *Respondent 6* felt that any behaviour or action which disturbs a healthy working environment as well as disturbs other colleagues from focusing on their work is considered as workplace deviance. *Respondent 7* from his vantage point of view affirmed that "workplace deviance is a social behavior problem which is undesirable and it departs from what is the norm. Most often, it causes conflict from and among colleagues, causing damage to the organization". *Respondent 10* stated that every organization would have experienced some form of employee deviance. "It's only a matter of degree of seriousness. Bribery, theft, sabotage are serious offences. Lesser ones include time wasting, absenteeism etc".

It is evident from the explanations that respondents hold a clear perspective regarding workplace deviance. Moreover they deem workplace deviance as a violation of significant organizational norms, which threatens the well being of an organization and its members or both.

#### 5.2 Organizational Rules and Policies on Workplace Deviance

To handle workplace deviance in an effective manner, enforcement of disciplinary rules and regulations is of paramount importance for any organization. *Respondent 2* stated that organizational set up does and should have a

set of rules /regulations that can keep a check on cases of deviant behavior. However, it does vary from organization to organization as in some organizations there is issuance of warning, stoppage of annual increment and the extreme being the exercise of firing from the job. Having said such rules should be used prudently. "Hanging like a sword of Damocles over the heads of employees, stringent rules may lead to disturbing the workplace environment".

*Respondent 5* confirmed that every organization has certain disciplinary rules and regulations that are set to be followed by their employees. "In our case, have our own service law called "Service Regulation" including disciplinary rules under which employees are preceded against negative work behaviors. It covers wide range of deviant behaviors such as, intentionally working slow, arriving late, theft, rumor spreading, leaking confidential information, giving concessions to clients/suppliers or service providers, not treating co-workers with respect and/or acting rudely with co-workers, sexual harassment, vandalism, corruption/bribery and corporate sabotage etc.

*Respondent 9* affirmed that "Certainly! Every organization has a set of rules to deal with disciplinary cases. From verbal to handwritten warning, show-cause notice, denial of benefits (like annual increment) and ultimately show the door to employees who persist in their negative work attitude". Indeed such instances should not go unnoticed. Likewise, *Respondent 6* affirmed that a company should have clear definitions of negative behaviours in their code of conduct. "Our organization has very well defined rules and regulations regarding deviant behaviour, including the disciplinary actions to be taken. Some clear disciplinary rules and regulations are set for bullying or harassment, intentionally working slow, arriving late, theft, rumor spreading, leaking confidential information, not treating co-workers with respect, vandalism, corruption/bribery and corporate sabotage etc". *Respondent 10* stated that most organizations, big and small, private and public would have an SOP (Standard Operating Procedures). "The SOP details the do's and don'ts for all employees. Any transgression would be deemed deviant". Hence, in order to manage the issue of workplace deviance in an effective manner, enforcement of disciplinary rules and regulations is of utmost significance for any organization.

### 5.3 Disciplinary Actions against Deviant Employees

The magnitude of the action against delinquent employee generally depends on the degree of the offence. *Respondent 1 and Respondent 2* affirm that the employee delinquencies at work place may include and range from insubordination (not following the senior's instructions), intentionally slowing down the work cycle, arriving late, committing petty theft, rumor spreading, leaking confidential information, giving un-authorized commitments or concessions to clients/suppliers or service providers etc, not treating co-workers with respect and/or acting rudely with co-workers to sexual harassment, vandalism, and corporate sabotage etc. In such deviant behavior disciplinary action ranging from censuring to termination from service may have to be taken. In more serious cases legal course or criminal proceedings may also be taken to safeguard institutional interest.

*Respondent 1* states "as head of various departments as well as Chief Executive, there had been tens of instances where employees were hauled up over deviant behaviour. The disciplinary action ranged from issuing of warnings to removal from services". He further mentioned that in one of the cases Finance Manager along with Procurement Manager were involved in high-level financial mishandling. Where he had to dismiss both of them from service, and referred their case to state agencies for criminal proceedings. *Respondent 2* confirmed that during his tenure as a Director-General, he had to do downgrading of few officers because of their lazy, lethargic and lay back attitude. He also confirmed that in one of the cases few employees were involved in procurement kick backs. He not only sacked them but also ensured that the state legal division and law agencies take serious action against them.

*Respondent 3* affirms that "Yes, there have been instances where the organization was forced to take severe disciplinary actions against employees indulging in deviant behavior. For instance recently, a fellow colleague was issued a warning letter for sharing sensitive information with outsiders". *Respondent 4* mentioned that "employees in the past have been hauled up over deviant behavior. Strict measures like warning and dismissal for service were taken by the university disciplinary committee over; misappropriation of research funds, instigating students to start opinionated activities, not doing justice with courses taught". Adding further, she stated that recently as a member of the disciplinary board, she had to vote for dismissal from service for one of the lecturers who was found guilty for instigating students to demonstrate in front of Dean's office for removal of another fellow lecturer.

*Respondent 10* recalled that "when he was a General Manager, he had to recommend the dismissal of a Marketing Manager, who was found to be sleeping in the office". He also related that two executives were as well dismissed for being absent without leave. Moreover during his tenure as a Dean of a Business School, a contract lecturer was given a warning because of sexual harassment of female colleague. It is evident from the

respondent's points of view that deviant behavior occurred and rules and regulations are significant for controlling deviant employees.

#### *5.4 Causes of Deviant Behavior among Employees*

According to all the respondents some of the most common deviant behavior among employees are; "not following the manager's instructions, intentionally slowing down the work cycle, arriving late, committing petty theft, rumor spreading, not treating co-workers with respect and/or acting rudely with co-workers to sexual harassment, vandalism, and corporate sabotage, fraudulent activities, misappropriations of funds, sharing sensitive information of organization with irrelevant parties, misappropriation of research funds, instigating students to start opinionated activities, not doing justice with courses taught, bribery, bullying and greed". One of the respondent surmised that moon lighting is also one of the most common deviant behaviour i.e., lecturers in one university would teach at other universities, without approval of his/her Parent University.

It was also highlighted by respondents that the reasons behind employee's indulging in deviant behavior are varied. *Respondents 3 and 9* argued that "employees engage in such behaviours because they lack moral and ethical awareness, their perceptions of organizational injustices, and sometime monetary gains also compel one to indulge in such activities". *Respondent 2, 4, 5, 8 and Respondent 6* stated that "employees engage in deviant behavior because of injustice, weak management, policies being not clear and transparent and importantly leaders/managers or seniors themselves violating the set standards and values". *Respondent 10* viewed "human weakness (greed, self interest) as the most important reason for deviant behavior". He affirmed that when an opportunity arises for them to enrich themselves or to work less, they do it.

#### *5.5 Fair Treatment and Employee Deviant Behavior*

Every employee anticipates that he/she would be treated fairly by their employer. *Respondent 1 and 2* asserted that "in professionally managed organizations, generally employees are treated fairly and incidents of deviant behaviours are minimal. However there is always diversity in human behaviour and if one perceives unfair treatment, the chances of developing deviant behaviours in such employees will be more".

*Respondent 5, 6* agreed that if an employee is treated fairly in an organization, he/she would avoid such deviant behaviours or violation of disciplinary rules and regulations. *Respondent 7 and 9* also agreeing affirmed that if employees are treated fairly in an organization they would avoid such deviant behaviours, adding further that "employees incline towards deviant behavior due to biasness, favoritism or nepotism".

#### *5.6 Injustice and Deviance*

*Respondent 10* expressed the view that one of the strongest human emotions is aroused by injustice. "A person treated unfairly either through a missed promotion or through an unjust disciplinary procedure may react adversely. It would be an impetus for deviant behavior". Unanimously all *Respondents* agreed that "if an employee perceives organizational injustice he/she would indulge more in violation of disciplinary rules and regulations". Moreover *Respondent 5* further added that "being in the HR department we do come across cases now and then where employees retaliate because of injustice". Hence, it is deemed that unfair treatment or injustice may possibly cause as well as aggravate employees to engage in deviant behavior, as an attempt to express their experience of wrong, unfair and injustice.

#### *5.7 Taqwa and Workplace Deviance*

Taqwa is considered as an essential quality of a Muslim. It is conceptualized as a state of absolute maturity in which mind, heart and body are united and completely synchronized (Al-Atrash, 2002). Importantly whoever believes and observes the rule of Allah (SWT) in private and public is a person of Taqwa (Al-Atrash, 2002). Hawa (2004) explains Taqwa as a state of heart which guides to a behavior that compiles and is in line with Allah's (SWT) rules.

*Respondent 1* affirms that as Muslims we are not supposed to indulge in any type of deviant behavior, as that is against our religious belief, principles, values and teachings. Moreover, "I agree with the notion that probability of deviant behavior in practicing Muslims (having Taqwa) will be comparatively very little. Moreover, a Muslim possessing Taqwa would not only be spiritually strong but would also recognize his/her social responsibilities what Allah has laid upon him or her". Importantly, "seniors being role model, their abiding to Islamic injunctions, high moral standards and professional ethics (i.e., being spiritually strong) would certainly help to create positivity and deviant free environment in the organization". *Respondent 2* insists that "No religion or creed advocates deviance from accepted norms of behavior. A fair system of reward and punishment which is in line with Quran and Sunnah can for sure deter deviant behavior. In addition, a seniors abiding to Taqwa, with high moral standards and professional ethics would surely assist in crafting a positive and deviant free environment in an

organization”.

*Respondent 3 and 9* avow that “indeed, religious people with Taqwa and firm belief that man is answerable for his every action to Almighty Allah, will not indulge in deviant behavior. In fact he will try to shape up his way and manners in accordance with the teachings of Islam and Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H). It is important to note that individuals with high spiritual motivation would tend to show the best of their behavior and properly fulfill their responsibility”. Additionally, *Respondent 5* states that As a Muslim we are required to show the best of our behavior at all times. “I do agree that a person with Taqwa does play a key role in establishing a just environment, that would improve basic values, standards and principles for instance to be honest, be kind/polite, sincere to their work and providing justice to all”. *Respondent 6* also supporting the principle adds that “as a Muslim, fear of Allah in our hearts and minds does help in restraining from all negative actions and doings”.

*Respondent 10* agreed that Muslims are not supposed to engage in deviant behavior. He quoted that Allah says in Quran “Help one another in Al-Birr and At-Taqwa (virtue, righteousness and piety); but do not help one another in sin and transgression” (*Quran 5:2*). Generally good Muslims are not involved in deviant behavior because they know that their sustenance and what they provide for family have to be halal (according to Islamic Shariah). But there are exceptions. The respondent recalled that “in my faculty there was one lecturer who belonged to an Islamic religious sect which promotes its members to do “Da’wah” (missionary work) for 3 days, 7 days or sometimes 40 days a year. This lecturer would disappear without notice at the end of the semester. He would also submit his grades long after the others, regardless of reminders or deadlines, creating problems for faculty and management. After repeated warning he left the university”

In general, all respondents concur that if a Muslim strongly holds Taqwa he/she will always keep away from all what Allah has prohibited and forbidden. In fact, a Motaqeen (who possess Taqwa) with the fear that he/she is answerable for all his/her actions would motivate him/her self to showcase the best of his/her behavior.

## 6. Conclusion

From the results of the study it is evident that workplace deviance is of great concern to all organizations. The increasing deviance not only has an economic but social cost associated to it, which victimizes the organization and its stakeholders. Although a number of employee deviant behaviors have been highlighted in the study, hitherto, one needs to recognize and understand that an individual is not an offender or an outlaw by birth. Allah states “Surely, We created man of the best stature (mould)” Quran (95:4). In fact, circumstances do play a vital role in motivating ones approach to indulge him/her self in deviant behaviors. The study evidently highlights that injustice or perception of not being treated fairly does provoke employees to indulge in such deviant behaviors. However, experts do firmly believe that as a Muslim and a Motaqeen (one who possess Taqwa) one would show restrain from such activities. Any Muslim with the fear that he/she would be accountable for all his/her actions in the hereafter would surely think twice before doing something that has been forbidden. The results of the present study also reveal that seniors are role models. With their high level of Taqwa they can surely create an environment where the same qualities can be passed on their juniors or subordinates. Therefore, the present study does provide support that with the help improving Taqwa among Muslim employees, Muslim organizations can overcome the prevailing issue of workplace deviance.

## 7. Limitations

For practical purposes this study is pertinent to Muslim employees and employers. However, the Non-Muslims can also learn as how to manage Muslim employees more effectively and efficiently by understanding the Muslim mindset.

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