

Designing a structural model predictors of employees' opportunism

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to design structural model predictors of employees' opportunism. This research is applicable in terms of purpose, and descriptive-survey in terms of nature and method. The statistical population includes employees (7493 people) of small and medium companies in Kurdistan province. Using Cochran's formula, 365 people were selected as a simple random sample. The data collection tool is standard questionnaires. The validity (convergent and divergent) and reliability (factor loading, composite reliability coefficient, Cronbach's alpha coefficient) of these questionnaires show that the measurement tools have good validity and reliability. The results of hypothesis testing using AMOS software show that the direct effect of high performance corporate goals on employee opportunism is 0.39; the direct effect of high performance corporate goals on supervisor opportunism is 0.36; the direct effect of supervisor opportunism on illegitimate tasks is equal to 0.30; and the direct effect of illegitimate tasks on employee opportunism is equal to 0.51. Also, the effect of opportunistic mediators is equal to 0.11; and illegitimate tasks is equal to 0.15; and the successive mediation effect of supervisor opportunism and illegitimate tasks is equal to 0.58. According to the findings of this research, it can be concluded that high-performance corporate goals evaluate supervisor opportunism and illegitimate tasks as stressful factors, and employees show opportunism to deal with this stress. By using appropriate management strategies, the effects of these factors can be reduced in the organization, and a diligent organization can be achieved.

Keywords:

High performance corporate goals,
Employee Opportunism,
Supervisor Opportunism,
Illegitimate duties.

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

Today, deviant behaviors in the workplace have a special place among researchers. Most research has focused on overt unethical behaviors of "bullying and cheating", while hidden unethical workplace behaviors that are invisible and harmful to companies, formally known as "opportunism", have been neglected (Ghaedamini Harouni et al., 2022). Employee opportunism means engaging in unethical behavior with the aim of speeding up work and achieving personal benefits. This type of behavior can be seen at all hierarchical levels in the workplace, and even supervisors may engage in opportunism, which is called supervisory opportunism (Dehghani Soltani et al, 2020). "Supervisor and employee opportunism" are hidden, interpersonal and organizational unethical behaviors in the workplace, which can harm companies (Hosseini et al, 2020). Researchers unanimously agree that opportunism is a common phenomenon in the workplace, but its negative consequences have not been studied (Zong et al, 2021). However, opportunism indicates the achievement of goals that are achieved while ignoring moral conditions (Cecalupo et al, 2022).

Employee opportunism means using unethical behaviors to achieve organizational goals. This type of behavior can have negative effects on managers and employees, and ultimately lead to a decrease in the quality and performance of the organization. In small and medium organizations in Kurdistan province, opportunism should be curbed as much as possible so that it does not have bad effects on performance, productivity, profitability, organizational ethics and organizational commitment. Due to the importance of this issue, proper training and creating an environment free of any unprofessional ethics in companies is necessary; therefore, improving the performance of companies requires an answer to the question of whether high-performance company goals have a significant effect on employees' opportunism through the sequential mediation role of supervisor opportunism and illegitimate tasks in small and medium-sized companies in Kurdistan province.

Theoretical framework

Corporate goals with high performance and employee opportunism

High-performance corporate goals are a type of stressful behavior that is very difficult to achieve, and can be classified into two categories: "self-determined and corporate goals". Corporate performance goals cause anxiety and emotional exhaustion compared to self-set performance goals in employees (Li et al, 2021). High performance corporate targets are threatening and stressful, and can tend to create unethical behavior; such as the opportunism of employees to speed up the work process (Yin et al, 2019). The interactional model of stress and coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) is a fact that deals with the relationship between stress, cognitive appraisal, and coping behavior. According to this model, people in stressful situations like "high-performance corporate targets" need cognitive analysis and appraisal, and based on these evaluations, they use "opportunistic" coping behaviors.

Karevold (2021) conducted a study titled "Managers' Beliefs about Misconduct Reports: How High Goals and Low Performance Levels Can Be Unethical Warning Signals". There were four main conditions: with/without performance targets, and low/high performance levels; and managers rated the likelihood of overreporting beyond actual achievements. The majority believed that goals make exaggeration more likely and that poor performance increases this tendency. This study suggests that managers are ethically aware that targets can promote unethical reporting, but can ignore that high performers may cheat.

Mokhtari (2020) conducted a research titled the effect of managers' opportunism on the company's relative profit performance. The obtained results showed that the opportunism of

managers has a significant and inverse effect on the relative performance of the company's profit, that is, the more the opportunism of managers decreases, the relative performance increases.

Research methodology

This research is applicable in terms of purpose, and descriptive-survey in terms of nature and method. The statistical population includes employees (7493 people) of small and medium companies in Kurdistan province. Using Cochran's formula, 365 people were selected as a simple random sample. The data collection tool is standard questionnaires. The validity (convergent and divergent) and reliability (factor loading, composite reliability coefficient, Cronbach's alpha coefficient) of these questionnaires show that the measurement tools have good validity and reliability.

Research findings

The results of hypothesis testing using AMOS software show that the direct effect of high performance corporate goals on employee opportunism is 0.39; the direct effect of high performance corporate goals on supervisor opportunism is 0.36; the direct effect of supervisor opportunism on illegitimate tasks is equal to 0.30; and the direct effect of illegitimate tasks on employee opportunism is equal to 0.51. Also, the effect of opportunistic mediators is equal to 0.11; and illegitimate tasks is equal to 0.15; and the successive mediation effect of supervisor opportunism and illegitimate tasks is equal to 0.58. According to the findings of this research, it can be concluded that high-performance corporate goals evaluate supervisor opportunism and illegitimate tasks as stressful factors, and employees show opportunism to deal with this stress. By using appropriate management strategies, the effects of these factors can be reduced in the organization, and a diligent organization can be achieved.

Conclusion

The present study was conducted with the aim of designing structural model predictors of employees' opportunism. The results of this research are in line with the results of Mokhtari (2020), Dehghani Soltani (2020), Karevold (2021), and Khan Jamali & Fattahi (2018). Karevold (2021) conducted a study titled "Managers' Beliefs about Misconduct Reports: How High Goals and Low Performance Levels Can Be Unethical Warning Signals". There were four main conditions: with/without performance targets, and low/high performance levels; and managers rated the likelihood of overreporting beyond actual achievements. The majority believed that goals make exaggeration more likely and that poor performance increases this tendency. This study suggests that managers are ethically aware that targets can promote unethical reporting, but can ignore that high performers may cheat.

According to the results of the research, the following suggestions are presented:

It is suggested that the managers of the companies set goals in such a way as to keep them difficult and challenging, and at the same time do not put too much pressure and uncertainty on the employees. Also, managers should be able to create a strong organizational culture to consider any error as a learning opportunity to achieve goals, and use errors as a learning process instead of emphasizing the sign of inefficiency.

It is suggested that company managers determine common and meaningful goals, improve the reward and encouragement system, and strengthen the corporate culture based on moral values, so that they can control the opportunism of the supervisors while achieving high performance corporate goals.