

**MANAGING UNPROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR IN THE WORKPLACE: AN ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY PERSPECTIVE****\*Abdul Khalid Mahdi and Mohamad Ibrani Shahrinin Adam Assim**

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**Abstract**

Unprofessional behavior in the workplace is a significant issue that can adversely impact productivity, morale, and team dynamics. This article aims to analyze the psychological factors contributing to such behavior and proposes effective management strategies. Employing both qualitative and quantitative approaches, this study examines various organizational cases, utilizing contemporary organizational psychology theories as reference frameworks. The findings reveal that awareness of work ethics, effective communication, and employee engagement are key factors in addressing unprofessional behavior. The study concludes that a holistic management approach can lead to substantial improvements in workplace environments.

**Keywords:** Unprofessional behavior, Organizational psychology, Management, Productivity, Work ethics.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Unprofessional behavior in the workplace is a growing area of concern in organizational and occupational psychology studies. It refers to individual or group actions that deviate from the norms and ethical values expected in a work environment, such as unjustified absenteeism, breaches in communication ethics, and inability to collaborate effectively in a team. Such actions not only harm interpersonal dynamics among colleagues but can also have serious implications for organizational productivity and reputation. According to a study by Cropanzano *et al.* (2017), unprofessional behavior has been proven to have a direct, detrimental effect on work performance. Furthermore, it has the potential to reduce job satisfaction among employees, ultimately leading to higher employee turnover rates. In Malaysia, this issue is becoming increasingly relevant as globalization and technological advancements reshape organizational operations. A deeper understanding of these behaviors and efforts to address related issues are essential to foster a more positive and productive work atmosphere while retaining valuable talent within organizations.

**Problem Statement**

The presence of unprofessional behavior in the workplace has become a pressing issue, coinciding with the transformation of work structures and the increasing complexity of workplace dynamics. With high pressure to meet targets and the necessity for effective time management becoming daily challenges, many organizations find themselves operating in demanding conditions. In such settings, unprofessional behavior often emerges as a challenge that cannot be ignored. Behaviors such as verbal harassment, gossip, workplace sabotage, and dishonesty can create a domino effect, damaging workplace relationships. These actions not only result in significant financial losses for organizations but can also erode organizational culture.

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For instance, research by Van der Voet *et al.* (2019) highlights that organizations failing to proactively identify and address unprofessional behavior are at high risk of facing numerous issues, including frequent interdepartmental conflicts, siloed communication, and a decline in the innovation necessary to remain competitive in the market. From an organizational psychology perspective, unprofessional behavior can also trigger significant psychological stress for those involved, whether as perpetrators or victims. This can lead to anxiety, depression, and dissatisfaction with work, ultimately reducing overall organizational effectiveness. Therefore, it is imperative for management to implement preventive and intervention strategies to minimize unprofessional behavior effectively.

**METHODOLOGY**

This study adopts a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Qualitative data were collected through in-depth interviews with managers and employees across various industries, including the services, manufacturing, and information technology sectors. Quantitative data, on the other hand, were obtained through questionnaires distributed to respondents at multiple workplaces in Malaysia. The questionnaire included questions about their experiences with unprofessional behavior, perceptions of management effectiveness, and suggestions for improvement. Quantitative data were analyzed using statistical software such as SPSS, while thematic analysis was employed to evaluate narratives from the interviews. The integration of these two approaches facilitated the identification of behavioral patterns, contributing factors, and effective intervention recommendations.

**DISCUSSION****Factors Contributing to Unprofessional**

Behavior Work Stress Work stress is one of the primary causes of unprofessional behavior in the workplace. Excessive workloads, tight deadlines, and insufficient resources often

lead to behaviors such as frustration, lack of focus, and dishonesty. According to the job strain model by Karasek and Theorell (1990), a combination of high job demands and low job control can result in stress that contributes to unprofessional behavior. Ineffective Communication Poor communication is another major factor. A lack of clarity in communication between managers and employees often leads to misunderstandings, which may escalate into conflicts and unprofessional behavior. Training in interpersonal communication can help mitigate this issue by enhancing message clarity and fostering empathy among employees. Low Job Satisfaction Studies have shown that employees dissatisfied with their jobs are more likely to exhibit unprofessional behavior. Low job satisfaction often stems from inadequate compensation, lack of recognition, or an imbalance between work and personal life.

### Management Strategies

**Ethics Awareness Programs** Well-designed ethics awareness programs can help employees understand the values and standards upheld by the organization. For example, training sessions and workshops on work ethics can contribute to building a more positive work culture. **Psychological Interventions** Stress management programs such as mindfulness training, counseling, and psychological support can assist employees in coping with work-related stress. Regular assessments of employees' psychological well-being can also help identify issues before they escalate. **Effective Reporting Mechanisms** Organizations should provide safe and accessible channels for reporting unprofessional behavior. This can help address issues promptly before they cause significant negative impacts. **Employee Engagement** Offering employees opportunities to participate in decision-making processes can enhance their sense of responsibility and commitment to the organization. This, in turn, can help reduce unprofessional behavior.

### Implications

The findings of this study are crucial for managers and leaders planning effective strategies to address unprofessional behavior. In Malaysia, specifically, cultural and social factors must also be incorporated into management approaches. These include respecting traditional values while fostering innovation and collaboration within organizations. The introduction of technology, such as behavior monitoring software and human resource management applications, can also help in identifying and addressing issues more efficiently. Additionally, continuous education in organizational psychology is essential to ensure managers and employees understand workplace behavior dynamics.

### Conclusion

Managing unprofessional behavior is no easy task, but with the right organizational psychology approach, organizations can mitigate its negative effects. Balancing psychological interventions with effective management strategies may be the key to workplace success. By focusing on effective communication, ethics awareness, and employee engagement, organizations can create a more positive, productive, and inclusive work environment.

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