

## Preliminary Exploring the Influence of Person-Organization Fit on Counterproductive Work Behavior

LIU Zhen<sup>[a]</sup>; XU Meixin<sup>[b]</sup>\*

<sup>[a]</sup>PhD Candidate, School of Business Administration, South China University of Technology, Guangzhou, 510640, P.R China; Joint PhD Candidate, Business School, University of Colorado, Denver, Colorado, 80217-3364, USA. Research area: Organizational behavior and corporate culture, the growth of Chinese enterprise.

<sup>[b]</sup>PhD Candidate, Research Center of Chinese Corporate Strategic Management, School of Business Administration, South China University of Technology, Guangzhou, 510640, P.R China; Double Master Degrees in both South China University of Technology and James Cook University, Australia. Research area: Corporate Strategy Management, Corporate Governance.

\*Corresponding Author

Address: Research Center of Chinese Corporate Strategic Management, School of Business Administration, South China University of Technology, No.381, Wushan Road, Tianhe District, Guangzhou City, Guangdong, 510640, P.R China

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### Abstract

Counterproductive work behavior, an importance work performance, exists widely in organization and hurts the organization seriously. The past research about counterproductive work behavior often based on the model that the behavior is influence by the perception, whereas this paper centers on the influence of person-organization fit on counterproductive work behavior based on the principle that behavior can be influenced by the value. The research frame which includes organizational commitment as a mediating variable and locus of control as a moderating variable is constructed by paper study and may throw light on the further research in future.

**Key words:** Counterproductive work behavior; Person-organization fit; Influence

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### 1. BACKGROUND CASE

Supposing the day salary that an organization gave to an employee is a hundred Yuan, calculated by eight working hours every day, thus the average hour salary will be twelve point five Yuan per hour, it seems that the figure of this unit labor cost is so low that this organization begin to be proud of their competitive edge in the labor cost, in the mean while, employees begin to complain with their such poor income constantly. That is true at a glance, but as a matter of fact, that is not true. Because of some behaviors that employees perform during working, the really amount of cost that an organization paid to the employee is far more than what they believe, at the same time, the wage that the employ acquired according to their effort that dedicated to the task of an organization is not so low as it is looked superficially. A case in point is illustrated in the figure 1, which shows the schedule and arrangement of an employee's working time in a day. That person spent an hour in online purchase, an hour in online talking with family or friends, an hour in reviewing news online, such behaviors had been taken for granted once he was available on the working time, besides, two hours was consumed for an old friend's visiting to his office unexpectedly, and what is more, when it comes to reimbursement of office items he had purchased for the organization yesterday, he reimbursed a hundred Yuan from his organization dishonestly, although the real cost of that items is sixty Yuan, eventually he also bring a box of print paper valued ten Yuan to his home. Therefore, the hours that this employee really contributed to the

organization in a day is just three hours, by contrast, the cost that the organization really paid to him is one hundred and fifty Yuan, as a result, the average salary becomes fifty Yuan per hour instead of twelve point five Yuan per hour in effect.

That looks an extreme case but it is really exists in our life, around us even be behaved by ourselves, when the organization is complacent with their low labor cost, when

persons themselves are complained with their inexpensive price, both organization and person are deceived by the appearance, such things like the stated behaviors performed by the employees are virtually harming our organization, if things continue this way, a deeply scarred organization will not be able to afford far more to the employees in the long run.

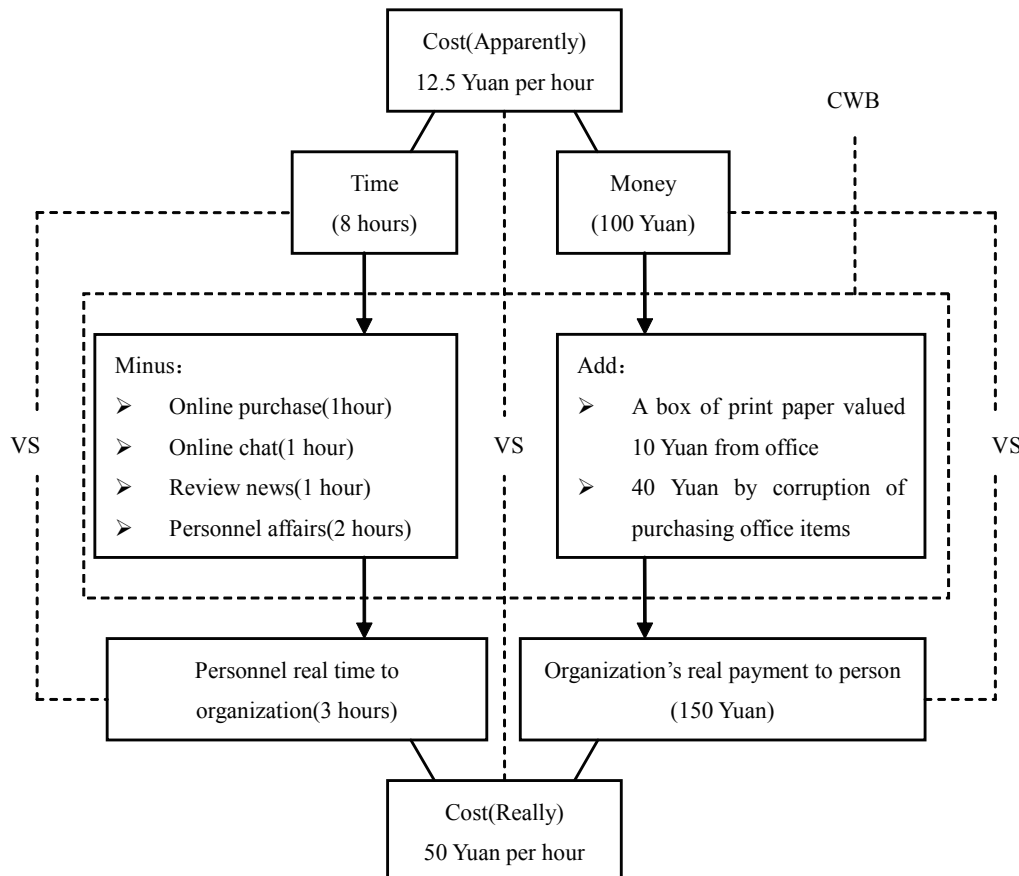


Figure 1 Background Case

## 2. COUNTERPRODUCTIVE WORK BEHAVIOR AS A KIND OF PERFORMANCE

Academically, Counterproductive work behavior means the employee's behavior in the work that harms an organization, a name in its abbreviated is CWB (Martinko et al, 2002). The definition defines clearly four essential points: First, the subject of the behavior is employee; second, the receptor of the behavior is organization; third, the nature of the behavior is the harm to organization; fourth, the range of the behavior is the behavior that happened in the work. To some extent,

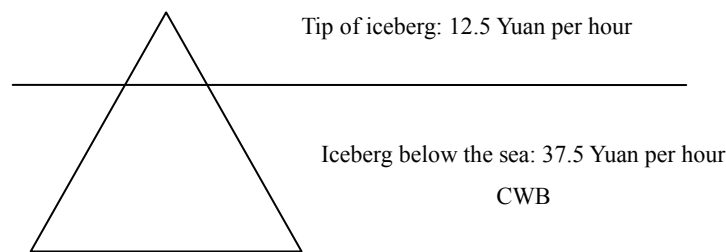
the "labor force" what we called is valuable only if the labor can create productivity, or else, that labor behavior will be counterproductive, which lead to the concept of counterproductive work behavior. In brief, it means that employee will not do things really connected to the work during working time and will not do good to the organization although he or she is belonged to the organization, when it comes to the measurement of the construct, many observed variables can measure it ,which is illustrated in table 1, fundamentally speaking, all those behaviors are the person's work behaviors that are inconsistent with organizational goals.

**Table 1**  
**Observed Variables of CWB**

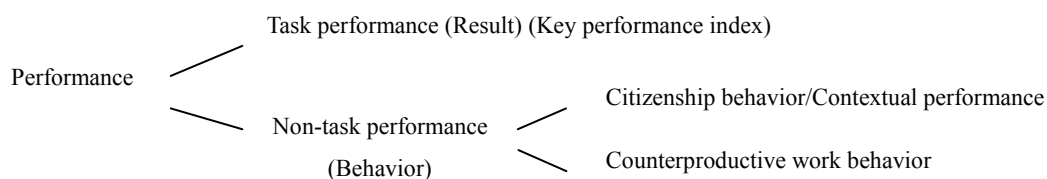
Authors	Variables
Robinson & Bennett (1995)	(1)Production deviance; (2) Property deviance; (3) Political deviance; (4) Personal aggression
Gruys & Sackett (2003)	(1) Theft and Related Behavior; (2) Destruction of Property; (3) Misuse of Information; (4) Misuse of Time and Resources; (5) Unsafe Behavior; (6) Poor Attendance; (7) Poor Quality Work; (8) Alcohol Use; (9) Drug Use; (10) Inappropriate Verbal Actions; and (11) Inappropriate Physical Actions.
PENG(2010)	Individual directed counterproductive work behavior; (2) Organization directed counterproductive work behavior; (3) Passive task directed counterproductive work behavior; (4) Aggressive task directed counterproductive work behavior.
LIU & JING (2010)	Work sloth behavior; (2) Corporate political behavior; (3) Dereliction of duty and abuse of power; (4) Corruption and embezzlement; (5) Hostile damage behavior

CHEN and LIU (2010) have reviewed the concept, measurement and basic principle of counterproductive work behavior, in this paper we need to further reflect on a more important question: what is essential attribute of counterproductive work behavior. CHEN and LIU (2010) have defined the construct system which counterproductive work behavior belonged to in organizational behavior, and counterproductive work behavior was believed as employee’s behavior contrary to the intention of organization, which have answered in the view of behavior itself, furthermore, it is still

necessary to explore so as to throw light on the reason why we study on counterproductive work behavior. In the area of organizational management, a popular topic is to research on the influence of construct A on construct B, and construct B always means performance, the result of such research will provide valuable suggestions for the improvement of performance. By reviewing relevant papers we figure out that counterproductive work behavior is a kind of performance, which is the clearest and simplest answer to this essential question.



**Figure 2**  
**CWB: Invisible Iceberg**



**Figure 3**  
**Category of Performance**

As to the knowledge of performance, there exists a very important view that performance is not only a result but behavior as well (HAN & LIAO, 2006). As a result, employees should be assessed not only based on the result but also on their behaviors, hence, as shown in figure 2, performance then is divided into two main basic kinds: task performance or result performance which emphasizes the result of employee’s work, and non-task performance or behavior performance which focuses on the assessment of employee’s behavior. As far as the study on behavior performance is concerned, early researches were centered on organizational citizenship behavior, counterproductive

work behavior has been formally and clearly recognized as the third kind of performance since recently: job performance is multidimensional and includes task behavior, organizational citizenship behavior, and counterproductive work behavior(Rotundo & Xie,2008). As illustrated in the figure 2 and the background case, the cost of the twelve point five Yuan per hour that people usually see is just a tip of iceberg, the huge part of the iceberg under the sea is what organization really wastes unconsciously due to counterproductive work behavior, in other words, organization has the potential to gain the huge performance of counterproductive work behavior,

the amount will be thirty-seven point five Yuan per hour in the background case, from this point of view, just like logistics has been known as the third new profit source, counterproductive work behavior might as well be named as the third new source of performance.

### 3. PERSON-ORGANIZATION FIT AS A POSSIBLE ANTECEDENT VARIABLE

There exists two types of factor that have influence on counterproductive work behavior in today’s research (CHEN & LIU, 2010), one type is the stimulation of the surroundings, such as the counterproductive work behavior stemmed from the pressure of the environment, research indicated that even the very high temperature could also lead to such behavior, another kind is mood or motion, such as behavior caused when one felt that he was treated unfair in an organization, such behavior could be believed as the outlet of unpleasant feeling. In effect, those two kinds have the same mechanism: the change of environment lead to the change of the state of mind, which causes such behavior, such mechanism can be summarized as “perception influences behavior” in the individual research of organizational behavior.

Person-organization fit is defined as the congruence between the values of organizations and the values of persons (Chatman,1989), according to the viewpoint of Schein (1984) that values is the deepest level of factors that drive one’s behavior, “values influences behavior” is also another very important behavior mechanism in the area of organizational behavior, hence, person-organization fit is extremely helpful in the practice of management and really does good to an organization (LIU & CHEN, 2011), the best practice of person-organization fit in China are Alibaba and Huawei, when ordinary enterprises are focused on the assessment of key performance index, the most effort of Alibaba are spent on the assessment of the values of their employees by

applying thirty specific behavior criteria which reflect the values of Alibaba, the result is that all the employees hold the values organization designed and perform very well in the business, although the values of other enterprises may look like Alibaba, they do not have person-organization fit because they hang the values on the wall (Sull, 2010), so it is person-organization fit facilitates Alibaba to the most successful e-commerce business in China, Huawei is same as Alibaba, the difference is that the making of person-organization fit in Huawei is due to the “Huawei basic law” which is the symbol of the values of Huawei: to be offensive in the market like the nature of wolf , which lead to a very competitive organization as a whole like a strongest group of wolf, so huawei become one of the most outstanding telecommunications companies in the world.

Those cases show us the performance to which high person-organization fit contributes, so we suppose that person-organization fit may also influence counterproductive work behavior in the other side, when employees’ values are contrary to the values of their organization, they may behavior the way that the organization unexpected. Academically, as shown in table 2, researchers have focused many researches on the consequences of person-organization fit, person-organization fit can influence behavior performance, and the fact that the influence on one representative behavior performance OCB has been empirically proved also makes it possible to study another representative behavior performance CWB. When person’s values fits their organization very well, they will perform very well too and do good job to the organization, on the contrary, people whose values are unfit with organization may perform bad behavior in the organization. Hence, as to the basic relationship between person-organization fit and counterproductive work behavior, the following proposition is suggested:

Proposition 1: person-organization fit will be negatively related to counterproductive work behavior.

**Table 2**  
**The Influence of P-O Fit on Attitude, Behavior and Performance**

Consequence		Author	Content
Attitude	Work attitude	Meyer,2010	Person-organization fit has positive impact on employees’ work attitude and organizational commitment, the promotion of the fit can improve both attitudes.
	Commitment	Verquer,2003	
	Organization citizenship behavior	Kristof,1996 , Zhao,2009	Person-organization fit has positive impact on organization citizenship behavior.
Behavior	Turnover behavior	Vandenberghe,1999 Zhang,2005	High person-organization fit can reduce the chance of employees’ turnover behavior.
		Chatman,1989	When person is unfit with their organization, if the person will not change, the person may eventually leave the organization.
	Job search behavior	Cable,1994	Person-organization can influence job search, although salary have important influence, when one find an organization very fit to him, salary may become the second factor.
	Organizational performance	Zhu,2005	High person-organization fit which is oriented to organizational goals will lead to high organizational performance.



#### 4. PRELIMINARY EXPLORATION OF THE MODEL

The research on the influence of person-organization fit on counterproductive work behavior is a typical study topic in the area of organizational behavior. As far as the construction of their relationship model is concerned, the whole philosophy is to search relevant concepts and papers under the guideline of the basic principles of organizational behavior, and then build the model based on the reference. Robbins and Judge (2007) have concluded five bases of individual behavior: values, personality, perception, attitude, and learning. Exist research on individual behavior always be directed by those five basic principles, furthermore, researchers contributes the individual behavior research in the specific concept or relationship. Researches on the antecedents of the counterproductive work behavior in the past were always based on the principle that perception can influence behavior, this paper chooses the principle that values can influence behavior to study this problem since values may play more fundamental role in our behaviors, as the following papers review shows, attitude and personality may also work between the values and behavior, those specific constructs are organizational commitment and locus of control.

Organizational commitment is defined as a state in which an employee identifies with a particular organization and its goals, and he or she wishes to maintain membership in the organization in order to facilitate its goals (Blau & Boal, 1987). There are three types of organizational commitment: affective commitment, which means that the affection dependence of employee on organization and employee's belief on the values of organization, continuance commitment, which means the economic value employee perceived in the organization compared with not in the organization, normative commitment, which means employee's feeling of duty to keep in an organization because of reasons such as ethics (Meyer et al, 1993). Empirical study indicates that person-organization fit can become the predictable variable of organizational commitment, and be positive with organizational commitment in their relationship, the higher person-organization fit is, the more degree of organizational commitment will be (WU et al, 2006; Meyer et al, 2010). The impact of organizational commitment on employee's task performance is not obvious (Riketta, 2002), nevertheless, it has clear relationship with non-task performance, empirical research shows that organizational commitment usually has negative correlation with counterproductive work behavior, however, since what employee need is economic benefit in the type of continuance commitment, the person

who has high degree of continuance commitment may tend to perform counterproductive work behavior, that is, continuance commitment has positive correlation with counterproductive work behavior (Dalal, 2005). Therefore, as to the relationship among person-organization fit, organizational commitment, and counterproductive work behavior, the following propositions are suggested:

Proposition 2: person-organization fit has positive impact on affective commitment.

Proposition 3: person-organization fit has positive impact on continuance commitment.

Proposition 4: person-organization fit has positive impact on normative commitment.

Proposition 5: affective commitment has negative impact on counterproductive work behavior.

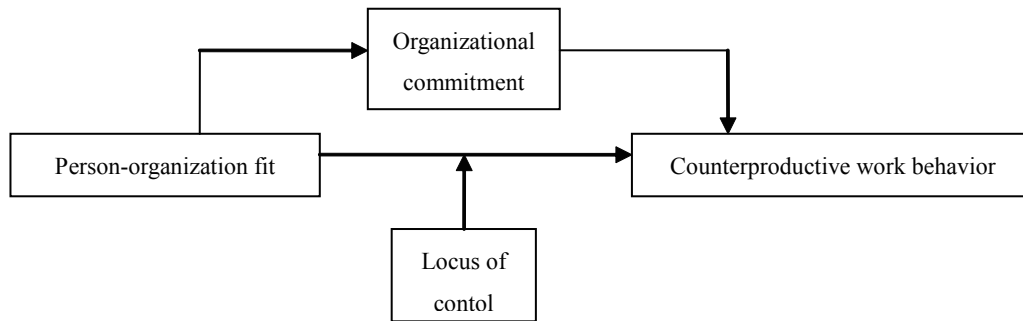
Proposition 6: continuance commitment has positive impact on counterproductive work behavior.

Proposition 7: normative commitment has negative impact on counterproductive work behavior.

Locus of control is a kind of personality referring to the extent to which individuals believe that they can control events that affect them, it includes internal locus of control which means the person believes that they control their life and external which means that they believe that their environment, some higher power, or other people control their decisions and their life, individuals with a high internal locus of control believe that events result primarily from their own behavior and actions, those with a high external locus of control believe that powerful others, fate, or chance primarily determine events (Rotter, 1966; WANG et al, 1999). Individuals with a high internal locus of control have better control of their behavior, empirical study also indicates that the personality of high internal locus of control may prevent counterproductive work behavior, while the personality of high external locus of control may facilitate counterproductive work behavior (Storms & Spector, 1987; Fox & Spector, 1999; Marcus & Schuler, 2004), therefore, locus of control may moderate the influence of person-organization fit on counterproductive work behavior, that is, although person-organization fit maybe high, people may also perform counterproductive work behavior if they are of high external locus of control, although person-organization fit maybe low, people with very high internal locus of control may not perform counterproductive work behavior as well, the following propositions are suggested:

Proposition 8: internal locus of control can positively moderate the relationship between person-organization fit and counterproductive work behavior.

Proposition 9: external locus of control can negatively moderate the relationship between person-organization fit and counterproductive work behavior.



**Figure 4**  
**Preliminary Model**

## CONCLUSION

Nowadays counterproductive work behavior exists widely in the organization and does great harm to organization: a survey by Chinese University of Hong Kong in 2006 indicated that 8% people always did personnel affairs during working time, 12% people had corrupted the fund of their organizations, at least 5% people had stolen money or items of colleagues in office, only 11% people had not done any 37 kinds of counterproductive work behaviors in the questionnaire, and 89% people had done one of those behaviors at least one time. American data indicates that employees' counterproductive work behavior such as steal and dishonesty behavior can lead to mortality of 30% transactions, and the total loss of all the companies due to such behaviors may up to two hundred billion dollars, besides, such behaviors also lead to the bankrupt of Enron corporation, WorldCom, and Sanlu group which was once the largest baby formula company in china.

After realizing the existence and importance of counterproductive work behavior, we should be clear that no matter in China or western countries, counterproductive work behavior should be paid more attention than the price of labor itself, that the competitive advantage of labor is not only determined by the price, however, the competitive edge is more decided by whether the organization has really gained the benefit from an important work performance: counterproductive work behavior, that is, the organization will not really take the advantage of the labor until counterproductive work behavior have been managed effectively. Therefore, the job of theory research should figure out the generation mechanism of counterproductive work behavior so as to provide effective guidelines to the practice of organizational management. As a relative new construct, previous research on counterproductive work behavior have not been done in the perspective of person-organization fit, while the previous research on the person-organization fit have not studied its influence on counterproductive work behavior as well, this paper provides a new research direction: study on the impact of person-organization fit on counterproductive work behavior, both are very importance concepts in the

area of organizational behavior. As shown in the figure 4, a preliminary research model of their relationship is constructed based on case and review, person-organization fit may directly influence counterproductive work behavior or indirectly influence counterproductive work behavior under the mediating effect of organizational commitment, whereas locus of control may play moderating effect in this process, which will provide a basic reference for the further model or empirical study in the future of this area.

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