



Mitigating Counterproductive Work Behavior via Organizational Identification: Evidence from Indian Educational Institutions

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Citation: Radhika Girdhar, et.al (2022). Mitigating Counterproductive Work Behavior via Organizational Identification: Evidence from Indian Educational Institutions, *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 28(4) 510-521
Doi: 10.53555/kuey.v28i4.10350

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

In today's era, counterproductive work behaviors cause a serious concern to the development and reputation of educational facilities, especially in schools and colleges. Despite the extremely well-established importance of employee well-being and organizational congruence, evidence of unethical behavior like early departure, extended breaks, or interpersonal misconduct still stands against institutional harmony. On the basis of social identity theory, this research investigates organizational identification as a psychological process that would minimize such behaviors. The current study assesses the organizational identification (OID) and counterproductive work behavior (CWB) association and how job ambivalence (JA) moderates it. In the present study, 494 northern Indian schools' and colleges' employees were surveyed, and data analysis was conducted using PLS SEM 4. The researchers discovered that organizational identification negatively impacts counterproductive work behavior, and that job ambivalence moderates this relationship. Furthermore, the research provides several theoretical and practical implications for implementing rational decisions and policies aimed at reducing employees' ambivalence at work, which can help organizations achieve greater long-term success.

Keywords: Organizational Identification (OID), Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB), Job Ambivalence (JA), North India

1. Introduction

Employees are the pillars of any organization and for long-term success, their safety and well-being are the first priority. However, they at times develop habits that are detrimental to themselves and their organizations. Such activities may include sneaking out early, taking extended breaks, being rude to others at work, or humiliating other people in public (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). These acts, while seemingly inconsequential, are strong in causing damage to organizational performance and competitiveness. Both organizational and psychological factors may trigger such counterproductive work behaviors (CWB), although they are negative. Based on studies, some of the root causes include abusive supervision (Zhang et al., 2019; Abbas et al., 2021), negative organizational climate (Lipińska-Grobelny, 2021), infringement of organizational promises (Griep et al., 2020), sense of injustice (De Clercq et al., 2021), and perceived organizational politics (Makhdoom et al., 2017). Such causes typically sow seeds of frustration and discontent, which lead employees to behave in counterproductive and negative ways.

Over the last couple of years, CWB has emerged as a rising concern in the educational sector, especially at schools and colleges, where managing such behavior is pivotal to the sustenance of an efficient learning culture. Out of the many different psychological factors, organizational identification (OID) has been recognized as one of the variables known to possess potential in managing CWB. OID is, in line with social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), the degree to which individuals perceive themselves in terms of identification with the organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Vadera & Pratt (2013) state that OID is a strong predictor of ethical

behavior because it encompasses a profound, self-defining identification with the organization. When employees feel a sense of identification with their organization, doing CWB is like behaving against part of themselves.

However, the correlation between OID and lower CWB does not always hold. Some employees who strongly identify with organizations continue to display CWB. This contradiction can be attributed to the experience of job ambivalence—employees' conflicting reactions to their workplace, peers, or institution policies. Job ambivalence is the concurrent experience of both positive and negative feelings regarding one's work, which can undermine the buffering effects of organizational identification. For example, one may be satisfied with his/her job but at the same time frustrated with managerial choices or interpersonal relationships. Ciampa et al. (2021) established that ambivalent identification moderates the negative association between OID and CWB, indicating that blended emotional states can interrupt the advantages of identification.

While earlier work has discussed the negative consequences of OID, like absenteeism (Edwards & Peccei, 2010), interpersonal conflict (Conroy et al., 2016), turnover intentions (Marique & Stinglhamber, 2011), and less focus has been given to its capability in reducing behaviors that more directly damage the organization. There is some evidence to indicate its negative correlation with organizational deviance (Al-Atwi & Bakir, 2014), and research conducted by De Clercq et al. (2021) and Ciampa et al. (2021) replicates this correlation across different industries. Yet, to date, there is a paucity of empirical studies that examine these dynamics within northern Indian educational organizations, particularly with reference to the moderating effect of job ambivalence.

Considering these lacunae, the present study seeks to address two primary goals:

- To investigate the relationship of organizational identification and counterproductive work behavior.
- To evaluate the moderation effect of job ambivalence in the association between organizational identification and counterproductive work behavior.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Organizational Identification

Organizational identification (OID) refers to the extent to which individuals identify themselves with their organization in terms of feelings of oneness or belongingness (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). It is a special form of social identification (Gautam et al., 2004), which draws on Social Identity Theory (SIT), in that it is believed that individuals define themselves through membership in groups and derive self-esteem from social group membership (Kramer, 1993). Through such a psychological identification, employees also adopt organizational goals and values, which lead to higher commitment and emotional involvement towards work (Yusoff et al., 2015; Gray & DiLoreto, 2016). Such identification promotes individuals to uphold high performance levels so they can fulfill goals and objectives of the group (Turner, 1982; Kazmi & Javaid, 2022). Employees who closely identify with their institution are more inclined to engage in behaviors that benefit it (Dutton et al., 1994). Empirical studies find high OID levels have a positive correlation with work motivation (Hoy et al., 2002), job satisfaction (Ugheoke et al., 2022), organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) (Uzun, 2018), and lower turnover intentions (Oguebe & Edosomwan, 2021). Moreover, it also leads to employee well-being through the reduction of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and health complaints (Kazmi & Javaid, 2021; Wegge et al., 2006). It is also associated with less counterproductive work behavior, such as absenteeism (De Clercq et al., 2021) and the intention to quit the organization (Riketta, 2005).

2.2 Counterproductive Work Behavior

Robinson and Bennett (1995) define any behavior that breaches organizational norms in a way that is detrimental to the organization, its workforce, or both. The consequences arise from contextual or external factors, including the environment and organization culture, as well as internal factors such as personality (Penney et al., 2011). It may manifest as a disruptive action for an organization, or as alcohol or drug use for an individual. Organizations have recognized the importance of managing the costs associated with such behavior (LasisiOlukayode et al., 2014). Counterproductive work behaviors exhibit a range of effects, beginning with minor infractions such as theft and potentially escalating to serious offenses, including harassment and physical or verbal aggression directed at a colleague, as well as cheating (Szostek, 2018). CWB-I refers to behaviors directed at individuals who have antagonistic interpersonal relationships, while CWB-O involves actions aimed at organizations, such as sabotage, theft, or withholding effort (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Both forms can lead to significant adverse effects on organizational performance and employee development due to the financial repercussions of fraud, theft, unquantifiable productivity losses, and a lack of self-regulation. (Beauregard, 2014; Butt & Yazdani, 2021).

2.3 Job Ambivalence

The concept of job ambivalence encapsulates the condition of concurrently experiencing both favorable and unfavorable evaluations of one's occupation, with each sentiment holding equal weight. An individual's favorable and unfavorable sentiments regarding their employment may lead to divergent assessments of their job performance. To elaborate further, job ambivalence may emerge from the coexistence of both positive and negative emotions, stemming from beliefs associated with conflicting evaluations or from a discordant

evaluation that develops between beliefs and emotional experiences. In the realm of beliefs, an individual may assert that specific elements of their employment—such as supervision, communication, and the intrinsic nature of the work—are satisfactory while simultaneously contending that other facets of their job, including salary, opportunities for advancement, and job security, fall short of adequacy. On the other hand, affective experiences encompass a range of emotions, including feelings of pleasure, enthusiasm, and pride, which are categorized as positive affect. Conversely, individuals may also encounter emotions such as frustration, fear, and disappointment, classified as negative affect (Fisher, 2000; Ziegler et al., 2012).

2.4 OID and CWB

Organizational identification serves as a catalyst for employees to abstain from participating in counterproductive work behaviors directed at both the organization and their peers. Employees who feel unfairly treated by the organization may decrease their psychological commitment towards the organization, perceiving that it does not deserve their identification (Barclay & Kiefer, 2019). This low organizational identification (OID) could result in counterproductive work behavior (CWB), as employees vent their dissatisfaction through deviant behaviors like tardiness, low performance, or quitting early (Bennett & Robinson, 2000; Qiuyun et al., 2020). They are adaptation strategies to manage disappointment and conserve personal resources in accordance with Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Thus, lower OID has an inverse relationship with work behavior and can increase the likelihood of CWB (Ciampa et al., 2021; Erkutlu & Chafra, 2018). Earlier studies have also identified that organizational identification has a negative correlation with counterproductive work behavior (Ali-Atwi & Bakir, 2014; De Clercq et al., 2021). Based on this, it is hypothesized that

H1: Organizational Identification is negatively associated with counterproductive work behavior

2.5 JA, OID and CWB

When employees have low ambivalence, they are clearer about their identification with the institution, and this explicit self-definition reinforces their motivation to commit to organizational objectives and avoid destructive behavior (Campbell et al., 1996; Mael & Ashforth, 1992). High ambivalence, however, generates mixed thoughts and feelings regarding the institution, rendering employees uncertain about their organizational identity (Pratt, 2000; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004). This uncertainty undermines the negative relationship between OID and CWB, since ambivalent employees will sometimes behave according to the organizational values, but sometimes will disengage, raising the rate of deviant behaviors (Vadera & Pratt, 2013). In addition, ambivalence uses cognitive and emotional resources, lowering the energy to maintain positive behavioral intentions (Ciampa et al., 2021). Therefore, with high job ambivalence, OID's protective effect towards CWB becomes weaker. Therefore, it is hypothesized that

H2: Job Ambivalence moderates the connection between organizational identification and counterproductive work behavior.

3. Proposed Research Model

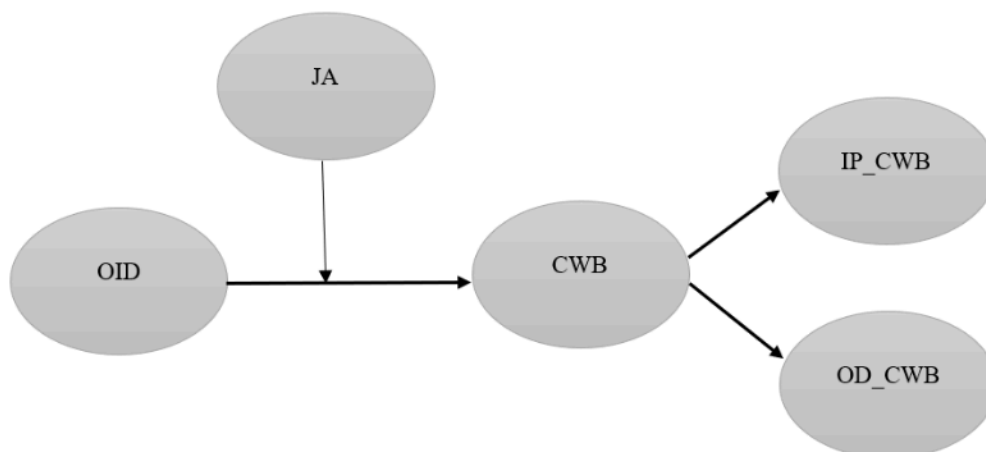


Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author's own

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Sample and Procedure

To test the hypotheses put forward, data were obtained from 494 employees who were working in the education sector (schools and colleges) in the North Indian area through a cross-sectional survey design. A multi-stage random sampling method was used in choosing the sample to reduce the possibility of biased sampling.

At the initial stage, 42 well-known schools and colleges were randomly picked in North India. The researcher met with the management of these organizations to discuss the importance of Organizational Identification (OID) in possibly curbing Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB) and to facilitate data collection access. At the second stage, a random sample from each participating organization among teaching as well as non-teaching staff was taken.

Before data collection, staff members were made aware of the purpose and possible gains of the study. Informed consent was sought from every participant, and they were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their answers. Participants subsequently completed standardized questionnaires measuring their perceptions of Organizational Identification (OID), Job Ambivalence (JA), and Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB).

570 questionnaires were issued, of which 507 were returned, giving a response rate of 88.94%. 13 were incomplete and were excluded, leaving 494 questionnaires that were available for final analysis.

Data analysis was done using SPSS version 22 for demographic profiling and descriptive statistics, and Smart PLS 4 for hypothesis testing and structural equation modeling (SEM). Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents by gender, age, income, marital status, education, and work experience.

Table 1 Descriptive Frequency Analysis Table

Demographics	Category	Frequency	Percentage %
Gender	Male	204	41.29
	Female	290	58.71
Age	Below 30	140	28.34
	30-40	169	34.21
	40-50	121	24.49
	Above 50	64	12.96
Income	Below 2 lacs	198	40.08
	2 lacs-5 lacs	148	29.96
	5 lacs-10 lacs	98	19.84
	Above 10 lacs	50	10.12
Marital Status	Married	268	54.25
	Unmarried	215	43.53
	Others	11	2.22
Education	12 th /Intermediate	38	07.69
	Graduation	193	39.07
	Post-Graduation	177	35.83
	PHD	78	15.79
	Others	8	01.62
Work Experience	0-5 years	191	38.67
	6-10 years	187	37.85
	11-15 years	74	14.98
	16-20 years	27	05.46
	More than 20 years	15	03.04
Type of Institution	School	298	60.32
	College	196	39.68

Source: Survey Data

4.2 Measures

The constructs were assessed using a 5-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from 1 to 5. The research employed a 10-item scale, incorporating 6 items derived from the work of Mael & Ashforth (1992), 3 items from Gautam et al. (2004), and 1 item from Park and Back (2020) to assess the construct of Organizational Identification (OID). The items were generated from employees' insights regarding their sense of belonging to

their organizations. The sample item articulates, “I consider the achievements of my organisation as my personal achievements.”

Moreover, the assessment of counterproductive work behavior employed a 16-item scale derived from the work of Bennett & Robinson (2000). One of the illustrative examples is “I normally waste official materials at my workplace.”

Lastly, Ziegler et al. (2012) used an eight-point scale to assess the job ambivalence variable. An illustration of a statement is, “My attitude towards my job is self- conflicting.” We removed item JA2 due to insufficient loading.

5. Results

SPSS is employed for data cleaning and initial analysis. The missing values were handled using mean replacement, given that the pattern of missing values was random and constituted less than 5% of the data, aligning with the guidance provided by Hair et al. (2010). Following this, potential outliers were assessed based on the criteria established by Tabachnick & Fidell (2012), and no outliers were identified. Consequently, the findings of the study were obtained from a conclusive dataset that included 494 responses. A two-step procedure was employed as the analytical approach for this study, which included evaluating the measurement model and assessing the structural model. The measurement model began with an assessment of reliability, followed by evaluations of discriminant and convergent validity. Following this, the structural model underwent evaluation, which included the calculation of inner VIF values, path coefficients, and moderation analysis.

5.1 Measurement Model

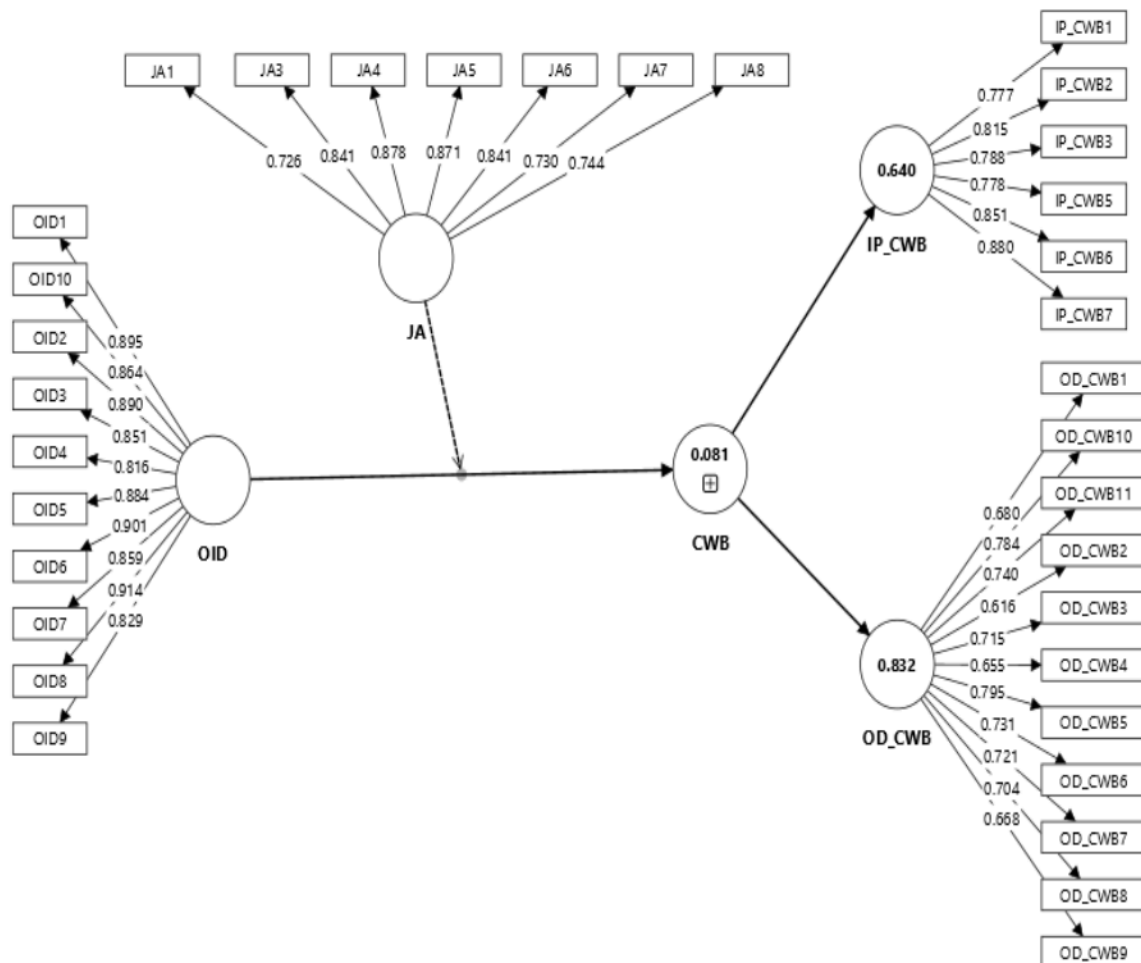


Fig. 2 Measurement Model

Source: PLS derived figure

The measurement model delineates the relationships between latent constructs and their observable indicators. Four critical aspects were evaluated in the measurement model: indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. The reliability of indicators is assessed by outer loadings, with values beyond 0.70 considered acceptable; however, loadings between 0.40 and 0.70

may be retained if other criterion are met (Hair et al., 2021). All the values range from 0.616 to 0.914, thus establishing indicator reliability. Additionally, Cronbach's alpha (α) and composite reliability (CR) values were determined for every construct to check for internal consistency reliability. All the constructs recorded α values higher than 0.70, indicating acceptable levels of internal consistency (Hair et al., 2021). Convergent validity was established via Average Variance Extracted (AVE). AVE values were above the specified threshold of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2021) and thus assured enough convergent validity. The overall results are presented in Table 2. The measurement model comprised first-order constructs (OID, JA, IP_CWB, and OD_CWB) alongside a second-order construct (CWB). The higher-order construct was represented utilizing the two-stage methodology. The results indicated acceptable reliability (CR = 0.844) and convergent validity (AVE = 0.732).

Table 2 Measurement Table

Constructs	Items	Loadings	Chronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
OID	OID1	0.895	0.965	0.969	0.758
	OID2	0.890			
	OID3	0.851			
	OID4	0.816			
	OID5	0.884			
	OID6	0.901			
	OID7	0.859			
	OID8	0.914			
	OID9	0.829			
	OID10	0.864			
JA	JA1	0.726	0.913	0.929	0.651
	JA3	0.841			
	JA4	0.878			
	JA5	0.871			
	JA6	0.841			
	JA7	0.730			
	JA8	0.744			
IP_CWB	IP_CWB1	0.777	0.899	0.923	0.666
	IP_CWB2	0.815			
	IP_CWB3	0.788			
	IP_CWB5	0.778			
	IP_CWB6	0.851			
	IP_CWB7	0.880			
OD_CWB	OD_CWB1	0.680	0.902	0.918	0.507
	OD_CWB2	0.616			
	OD_CWB3	0.715			
	OD_CWB4	0.655			
	OD_CWB5	0.795			
	OD_CWB6	0.731			
	OD_CWB7	0.721			
	OD_CWB8	0.704			
	OD_CWB9	0.668			
	OD_CWB10	0.784			
	OD_CWB11	0.740			

2nd Order Construct Measurement Table

Second Order Construct	Dimension(First Order)	Loadings	Chronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
CWB	IP_CWB	0.778	0.652	0.844	0.732
	OD_CWB	0.926			

Notes: OID= Organizational Identification, JA= Job Ambivalence, IP_CWB= Interpersonal Counterproductive Work Behavior, OD_CWB= Organizational Counterproductive Work Behavior, CWB= Counterproductive Work Behavior, CR= Composite Reliability, AVE= Average Variance Extracted

Source: PLS derived results

5.2 Discriminant Validity

Once convergent validity has been established, it is essential to assess discriminant validity to ensure the constructs are empirically different. The test was completed with two well-established methods: the Fornell-

Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). For first-order constructs, both criteria supported the discriminant validity of the constructs. In particular, following Fornell and Larcker's threshold, the square roots of Average Variance Extracted (AVE), in bold, were greater than the correlations among the constructs (see table 3) (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Moreover, HTMT values fell under the proposed threshold of 0.90 (table 4), thus suggesting adequate discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2019; Henseler et al., 2015).

First order

Table 3 Fornell & Larcker Table

Constructs	IP_CWB	JA	OD_CWB	OID
IP_CWB	0.816			
JA	0.017	0.807		
OD_CWB	0.484	-0.175	0.712	
OID	-0.158	0.123	-0.115	0.871

Notes: OID= Organizational Identification, JA= Job Ambivalence, IP_CWB= Interpersonal Counterproductive Work Behavior, OD_CWB= Organizational Counterproductive Work Behavior

Source: PLS derived results

Table 4 HTMT Criterion Table

Constructs	IP_CWB	JA	OD_CWB	OID	JA × OID
IP_CWB	–				
JA	0.063	–			
OD_CWB	0.529	0.205	–		
OID	0.164	0.121	0.127	–	
JA × OID	0.138	0.085	0.172	0.418	–

Notes: OID= Organizational Identification, JA= Job Ambivalence, IP_CWB= Interpersonal Counterproductive Work Behavior, OD_CWB= Organizational Counterproductive Work Behavior

Source: PLS derived results

Second Order Constructs

The second-order construct of counterproductive work behavior demonstrated adequate discriminant validity when evaluated in relation to other constructs within the model, consistent with the Fornell & Larcker criterion, where the square root of AVE exceeds the correlations with other constructs (see table 5).

Table 5 Fornell & Larcker Table

Constructs	CWB	JA	OID
CWB	0.855		
JA	-0.117	0.808	
OID	-0.151	0.122	0.871

Notes: OID= Organizational Identification, JA= Job Ambivalence, CWB= Counterproductive Work Behavior

Source: PLS derived results

In accordance with the HTMT ratio criterion, all construct values remain below the threshold limit of 0.90 (Henseler et al., 2015), as illustrated in table 6, thus establishing adequate discriminant validity.

Table 6 HTMT Table

Constructs	CWB	JA	OID	JA × OID
CWB				
JA	0.158			
OID	0.193	0.121		
JA × OID	0.169	0.085	0.416	

Notes: OID= Organizational Identification, JA= Job Ambivalence, CWB= Counterproductive Work Behavior

Source: PLS derived results

5.3 Structural Model

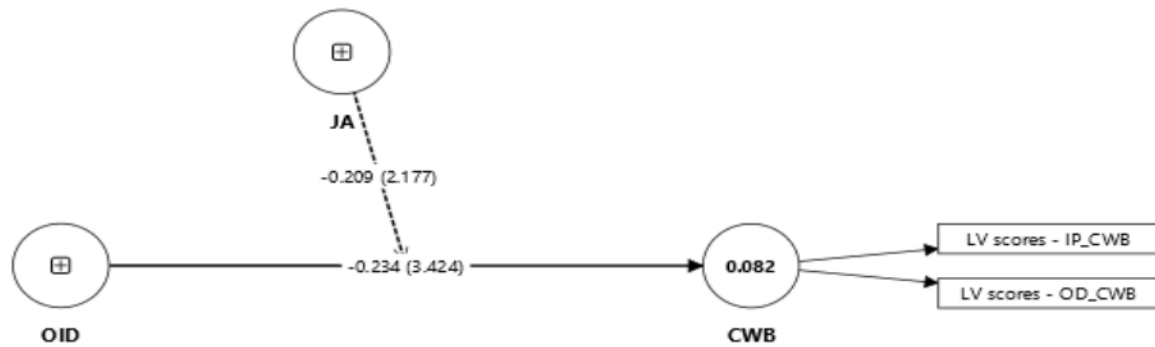


Fig. 3 Structural Model

Source: PLS derived figure

Following the evaluation of the measurement model, structural relationships were tested on the basis of the second-order construct of counterproductive work behavior. It involves computing the VIF values, structural path coefficient and moderation analysis. The bootstrapping procedure with a subsample of 5000, which is non parametric testing, has been used for significance testing and for statistical analysis of the results. The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was computed and there is no concern for multicollinearity as all values were below the threshold of 3.3 ranged from 1.017 to 1.2 (Kock & Lynn, 2012; Kock, 2015). Table 7 presents the hypothesized path with values of standardized regression weight (β), and t-value with a standardized level of significance (p-value) and hypothesis test results. OID was found to have a negative impact on CWB ($\beta = -0.234$, $p < 0.05$). In addition, the results indicated that job ambivalence strongly moderated OID with CWB ($\beta = -0.209$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that the negative association between OID and CWB is stronger (i.e., more negative) when levels of job ambivalence are low. Consequently, H1 and H2 are supported.

In other words, employees who intensely identify with their organization are less likely to have CWB. But when employees are highly ambivalent about their job — experiencing mixed or conflicting emotions regarding their job — this buffering effect of OID on CWB weakens. On the other hand, when job ambivalence is low, the inverse relationship between OID and CWB is stronger, suggesting a buffer effect.

These findings underscore the need for the management of employees' emotional reactions to the workplace. Diminishing job ambivalence could maximize the beneficial effect of organizational identification and decrease counterproductive behavior.

Table 7 Path Analysis

Hypothesis	Paths	Path Coefficient (β)	T Statistics	p values	Result
H1	OID ->CWB	-0.234	3.424	0.001	Supported
H2	JA x OID-> CWB	-0.209	2.177	0.03	Supported

Notes: OID= Organizational Identification, JA= Job Ambivalence, CWB= Counterproductive Work Behavior

Source: PLS derived results

The R-square value of the model is 0.082, indicating that 8.2% of the variance in unproductive work behavior (dependent variable) is accounted for by organizational identification (independent variable). It illustrates a minimal impact on the dependent variable resulting from the independent variable (Hair et al., 2017). The predictive importance of the endogenous construct is determined by the Q-square value, with a score over 0 signifying that the model accurately reconstructs data and possesses predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2017). The endogenous construct (CWB) has a Q^2 prediction of 0.061, demonstrating the model's substantial predictive relevance and accurate reconstruction of values.

5.4 Model Fit Indices

The model demonstrated an acceptable fit by meeting particular thresholds; specifically, the SRMR should be below 0.08 (Hair et al., 2021), and the observed SRMR value of 0.052 is deemed acceptable. The NFI value of 0.887 is within an acceptable range, being closer to 0.9, exceeding 0.5, and nearing 1, which is the threshold for an acceptable fit (Zainab et al., 2019).

5.5 Moderation Analysis

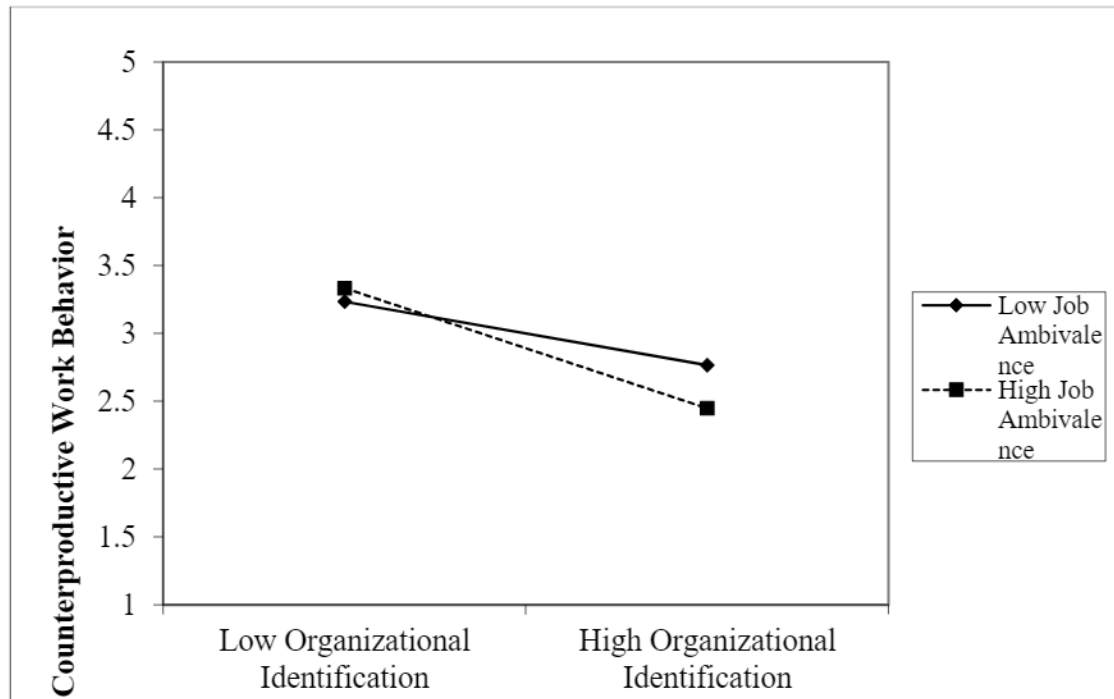


Fig. 4 Interaction Plot

Source: Authors own

The analysis showed that there is a strong negative relationship between organizational identification (OID) and job ambivalence (JA) affecting counterproductive work behavior (CWB) ($\beta = -0.209$, $p = 0.03$). This means that when job ambivalence is low, the negative impact of OID on CWB is stronger, and when job ambivalence is high, the impact is weaker. That is, the OID's negative effect on CWB is more pronounced when there is low job ambivalence and less pronounced when job ambivalence is high.

Even if the interaction plot shown in figure 4, does not reflect a big visual difference in slopes for low and high job ambivalence, statistical significance of the interaction term establishes that job ambivalence weakens the effect of organizational identification on diminishing counterproductive behavior. Therefore, employees who are less ambivalent about their job exhibit a larger decline in CWB through more robust organizational identification than those with high job ambivalence.

6. Discussion and Implications

This study identifies the relationship between organizational identification and counterproductive work behavior and the moderating effect of job ambivalence on this relationship in the education industry, especially in schools and colleges of north India. OID was found to have a strong negative correlation with CWB. This result is in line with the previous findings reported by De Clerq et al. (2021) and Kim & Choi (2021). This finding offers support for Hypothesis 1. Additionally, the measurement involved an analysis of job ambivalence as a mediator between OID and CWB. The results showed that job ambivalence exerts a negative moderation on the relationship between organizational identification and counterproductive work behavior. This finding implies that at lower levels of JA, the relationship between OID and CWB is stronger. The findings are consistent with the previous study by Ciampa et al. (2021), which showed that when employees have a low ambivalent identification, the negative correlation between OID and CWB strengthens.

6.1 Theoretical Implications

This study adds various contributions to organizational behavior theory through confirming the utility of Organizational Identification (OID) in reducing Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB). Consistent with social identity theory, it appears from the findings that those employees who have high identification with their institution are less prone to behavior that hurts the institution or other members. That suggests identification leads to values congruence with the organization, which produces more favorable results for behavior.

A significant theoretical contribution of this research is the exploration of Job Ambivalence (JA) as a moderating variable. Findings indicate that ambivalence reduces the negative link between OID and CWB, indicating that emotional and cognitive conflict can impede the positive effects of identification. This enriches current models by raising the significance of internal emotional states to understanding behavior, and suggests future studies to take into account affective moderators when measuring identity-related outcomes.

In addition, the research contributes contextual insight by considering the education sector (schools and colleges), a field where identity and behavioral dynamics are not typically examined. This extends knowledge within the literature by showing that theoretical constructs such as OID, JA, and CWB can be applied outside of corporate environments. Moreover, through the differentiation of interpersonal (IP_CWB) and organizational (OD_CWB) types of CWB, this research provides a more nuanced perspective on deviant behavior and facilitates more specific intervention design in subsequent research.

6.2 Practical Implications

The results of this study provide some practical implications for schools, colleges, and universities. First, the inverse relationship between Organizational Identification (OID) and Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB) indicates that when teachers, staff, and administrators have a strong feeling of belongingness and identification with their organization, they are less likely to exhibit destructive behavior such as absenteeism, spreading negativism, or resisting school policies. Hence, principals and school heads should make investments in building employees' sense of identification with the organization. This may consist of open management communication, engaging staff in making decisions, acknowledging success in public forums, and instilling a common set of values through mission-based programs.

Second, the moderating effect of Job Ambivalence (JA) suggests the need to alleviate emotional and cognitive conflict among school staff. Teachers might feel caught between professional needs and institutional pressures, or be uncertain because of policy shifts, role conflict, or administrative demands. This ambivalence can undermine the beneficial impact of OID and make CWB more probable. To help counteract this, school and college leaders must adopt regular staff monitoring, peer mentoring, and psychological protection systems like access to counseling or workload management tools.

Moreover, the findings underline the importance of CWB prevention and early detection in educational institutions. Counterproductive work behaviors such as low cooperation with colleagues, holding up tasks deliberately, or sabotaging school goals can have negative effects on student outcomes and institutional image. Institutions should foster a psychological safety culture in which employees feel free to share concerns and doubts without fear of reprisal. Implementing climate surveys and providing professional development in emotional regulation and workplace ethics will also help create a healthier school.

Overall, educational leaders are not merely tasked with cultivating organizational loyalty but should also proactively manage emotional dynamics like ambivalence, as both are key determinants of staff behavior and institutional well-being.

7. Limitations and Future Research Directions

Although the current study is compelling and insightful, it does have some shortcomings. The study begins by narrowing its focus and context to educational institutions in northern India. Secondly, the existing findings may vary across different contexts influenced by several factors, including the culture of the organization and its leadership style. Additionally, the restricted sample size could result in unreliable findings. The study could be broadened to include multiple areas across different settings. Alongside these variables, further variables could be explored. Furthermore, different factors, including job dissatisfaction and emotional dissonance, could act as moderators, and their impact on the relationship between OID and CWB can be evaluated. In the future, the analysis of the research may also involve systematic reviews and bibliometric analysis.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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