Designing an Counterproductivity Behavior Model Using Grounded Theory (Case Study of Monetary and Financial Organizations)

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Abstract

Counterproductive work behavior is a form of deviant behavior that leads to financial losses. Counterproductivity behaviors have varying impacts on organizations and harm public trust in them. Considering the importance of the topic, this research, conducted within a qualitative framework using grounded theory, aimed to design a model for counterproductivity behaviors in monetary and financial organizations. The present research is qualitative, fundamental in terms of purpose, and exploratory in nature. It was conducted using the systematic approach of Strauss and Corbin (1998) in grounded theory. The statistical population of the study included experts from monetary and financial organizations. Through non-probability purposive sampling (snowball technique) and based on the principle of theoretical saturation, 24 participants were selected as the sample. Data collection was carried out through semi-structured interviews, and the data were analyzed based on the Strauss and Corbin approach in the grounded theory model. For data coding, the three stages of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding were performed using NVivo software. A total of 108 initial codes, 36 concepts, and 17 categories were identified as findings of this study. The results of the study identified the lack of approval of laws and regulations and the absence of external oversight as contextual factors; lack of job commitment, lack of job attachment, lack of employee career development, and lack of job specialization as intervening factors; neglect of the physical environment, lack of managerial excellence, and lack of human resource development as causal factors. The core phenomenon was found to revolve around employees and the organization. Furthermore, lack of governance, lack of transparency development, lack of accountability, and lack of performance monitoring and evaluation were identified as strategies. The consequences were determined to impact the organization, employees, and customers.

Keywords: *Counterproductivity behaviors, financial organizations, monetary organizations, grounded theory*

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1. Introduction

Employees are the most significant assets of any organization. Among the various factors that serve as tools for managing an organization's activities, the role of human resources must be prioritized [1]. In today's competitive business world, organizations expect committed and loyal employees to enhance efficiency and performance. Employee work behaviors reflect their commitment, loyalty, and positive attitude. Variations in employee behavior lead to diverse organizational outcomes [2, 3]. Counterproductive work behavior (CWB) is defined as any deliberate action by an organizational member that appears to contradict the legitimate interests of the organization [4-6]. CWBs result in adverse consequences, such as financial losses (e.g., bribery, fraud) and damage to the organization's reputation (e.g., harassment or mocking a colleague) [7, 8].

Studies indicate that counterproductivity behaviors pose severe economic and social threats to organizations. The financial industry, currently customer-oriented, benefits from convenience, quality services, and innovative offerings. Bank employees play a crucial role in delivering high-quality services, yet these advancements create significant stress for those working in the banking sector [9]. Banking jobs are highly valued from social, financial, and economic perspectives. However, recent years have revealed the stressful and challenging nature of banking roles. The banking sector is considered one of the most demanding work environments, characterized by excessive workloads, ambiguity, limited job resources, and constant customer interaction [9-14].

Deliberate violations of standard procedures represent a form of destructive behavior. The cost of damage caused by such behavior can be substantial. Although its impact cannot be precisely measured in practice, understanding the factors influencing destructive behaviors remains critical [15]. Counterproductivity behavior is defined as actions that adversely affect organizations and their members. These behaviors range from overt actions, such as aggression and theft, to more passive behaviors, such as deliberately ignoring instructions or performing tasks improperly. CWBs encompass destructive behaviors that harm organizations and their members, including workplace sabotage, wasting time and materials, workplace pollution, and withdrawal behaviors [16].

Counterproductivity behaviors affect organizations in different ways. For instance, corruption, as one indicator of counterproductivity behavior, reduces overall employee morale and damages public trust in organizations. Similarly, information theft can pose significant liability risks, leading to legal disputes, penalties, and irreversible breaches of stakeholder trust. Time theft reduces productivity, profits, and overall employee morale. Fraud, embezzlement, and bribery can seriously damage corporate reputations, erode trust, and result in revenue loss [17]. Negative behaviors are deliberate actions intended to harm organizational reputation. These behaviors manifest in various forms, including fraud, theft, sabotage, cyber theft, absenteeism, tardiness, extended breaks, harassment, gossiping, substance abuse, carelessness, and deliberate slowness [15].

The core activities of monetary organizations revolve around money or money-like assets. These organizations, such as entities issuing currency, providing loans, or distributing bonds, significantly influence economic stability or instability. Financial organizations, by contrast, have a broader scope, involving not only monetary tools but also knowledge, technology, human resource training, advanced techniques, and investment strategies aimed at profitability. The distinction between monetary and financial organizations parallels the economic differentiation between "money" and "wealth," where money is a subset of wealth. Over time, as economic activities grow more complex and money alone proves insufficient for economic adjustments, financial institutions are deemed more effective in today's global economy [18-20].

Research by Jamali Roshet et al. (2022) identified nine categories of factors for preventing unethical behaviors in executive agencies [21]. Shamsi Nasari and Mohammadi (2022), in a study employing the Q-methodology to examine managers' mindsets about CWBs in Ilam banks, identified four mental models: destructive leadership, perceptions of injustice, weak administrative systems, and environmental incongruities. They concluded that destructive leadership has the greatest impact on CWBs among bank employees [22]. Shao, Zhang, and Zhang (2023) explored the mechanisms and causes of CWBs, focusing on organizational constraints, interpersonal conflicts, and organizational injustice [5]. Tariq (2021) found a positive relationship between job burnout and CWBs among Jordanian bank employees [6]. Aydinay et al. (2021) revealed that a lack of leadership competency, excessive authoritarianism, and favoritism increase organizational CWBs in the Turkish service sector [23].

Based on the presented literature, the primary objective of the present study is to design a model for counterproductivity behaviors using grounded theory, focusing on monetary and financial organizations.

2. Methodology

This research is a qualitative study, fundamental in terms of purpose and exploratory in nature. It was conducted using the systematic approach of Strauss and Corbin (1998) in grounded theory. This approach emphasizes the use of data analysis steps, including open, axial, and selective coding, to develop a logical model or a visual description of the generated theory. The process of coding and categorization employs constant comparison, which is an iterative process of induction and deduction. In this process, concepts are first generated by comparing indicators, and then the indicators are compared with emerging concepts to further define them. Categories are derived from these concepts through the same process. This process continues until no new concepts or categories emerge, achieving what is known as theoretical saturation.

Deep interviews, defined as purposeful bilateral dialogues aimed at eliciting detailed insights and important aspects for analysis, were the primary data collection tool in this study. According to Charmaz (2014), qualitative research data must be as focused and detailed as possible, reflecting the perspectives and perceptions of participants while revealing the context of the research. Access to knowledgeable, impactful, and relevant participants enhances the logical generalizability of the findings.

The statistical population of this study comprised experts in monetary and financial organizations. Using the snowball sampling method, 24 participants were selected as the sample. Interviews were halted after 24 participants because no new information emerged from interviews 22, 23, and 24 that could add to the existing data, indicating that theoretical saturation had been achieved. The initial list of experts was selected based on criteria such as academic qualifications, expertise, practical knowledge, managerial roles, and executive experience. Non-probability purposive sampling with maximum diversity or heterogeneity was used. The sample included five executive board members, six headquarters managers, eight heads of central departments, and five deputy heads of central departments.

Regarding validity and reliability, these concepts differ in qualitative research compared to quantitative studies. Therefore, most qualitative methodologists use terms such as transferability instead of validity and confirmability instead of reliability. Rich data descriptions and specific coding and analysis methods were employed to ensure transferability in this study. The processes of analysis and examination were meticulously documented, and evidence and records of activities and steps were maintained to ensure confirmability. Accordingly, in this study, transferability was achieved through systematic coding, and confirmability was ensured by archiving the various stages of coding, including initial stages, by the researcher.

3. Findings

Open coding is an analytical process through which concepts are identified, and their characteristics and dimensions are discovered in the data (Bannejad, Tabatabaei-Nasab, & Sadeghi, 2018, pp. 53–80). In this phase, the researcher analyzed the interview texts line by line, assigning codes to each text segment. After the initial coding of the interview texts, a total of 108 initial codes, 36 concepts, and 17 categories were extracted.

The purpose of axial coding is to establish relationships between the identified categories. In this phase, one category from the open coding phase is selected as the central category, which serves as the core of the process, linking causal conditions, strategies, contextual conditions, intervening conditions, and outcomes to it. The central phenomenon is the idea or concept that forms the basis of the process, with all other main categories connected to it and recurring throughout the data.

Selective coding is the process of integrating and refining the categories. In this phase, the model of coding counterproductivity behaviors in monetary and financial organizations was interpreted as follows:

Table 1. Categories and Concepts

Category	Concept	Row
Weakness in Laws and Regulations	Weakness in laws related to productivity	1
	Weakness in laws related to citizen rights	2
Weakness in Oversight	Lack of external oversight	3
	Weakness in legal supervision	4
Neglect of Physical Space	Inappropriate use of the physical environment	5
	Lack of appropriate tools and facilities	6
Lack of Managerial Excellence	Lack of managerial moderation	7

	Managerial incompetence	8
	Lack of ethical and cultural managerial competence	9
Lack of Human Resource Development	Insufficient development of required job knowledge	10
	Lack of meritocracy	11
Organization Negligence	Organizational negligence	12
	Sabotage and authoritarianism	13
Employee-Related Phenomena	Verbal bullying	14
	Non-verbal bullying	15
Lack of Employee Job Commitment	Lawbreaking	16
	Disorderliness	17
Lack of Employee Attachment	Lack of responsibility	18
	Lack of organizational loyalty	19
Lack of Career Development	Lack of risk-taking	20
	Lack of innovation	21
Lack of Expertise	Lack of necessary skills	22
	Lack of experience	23
Strategy-Related Issues	Lack of law governance	24
	Operational risk	25
	Lack of transparency in laws	26
	Lack of transparency in processes	27
	Lack of accountability	28
Outcomes Related to Employees	Lack of motivation	29
	Lack of job satisfaction	30
Organization-Related Outcomes	Reputational risk	31
	Lack of sustainability	32
Customer-Related Outcomes	Lack of customer trust	33
	Lack of customer satisfaction	34

Causal factors are conditions, events, and occurrences that influence the central phenomenon. In this study, causal factors included:

1. Neglect of the physical environment, encompassing inadequate utilization of the physical environment and tools, equipment, and resources.
2. Managerial underperformance, characterized by lack of moderation, incompetence, and absence of ethical and cultural qualifications among managers.
3. Inadequate human resource development, including insufficient development of necessary job knowledge and lack of meritocracy.

Contextual factors are elements essential for realizing a smart organization. In this study, contextual factors identified included:

1. Lack of enacted regulations, involving weak productivity-related laws and insufficient citizen rights protections.
2. Absence of external oversight, encompassing weak legal supervision and regulatory deficiencies.

These contextual factors were derived from abstract concepts identified during the interviews, collectively representing the contextual category of counterproductivity behaviors in monetary and financial organizations.

Intervening conditions modify the causal factors and influence the strategies, either facilitating or restricting them within a specific context. In this study, intervening factors included:

1. Lack of employee job commitment, including lawbreaking and disorderliness.
2. Absence of employee attachment to the organization, such as lack of responsibility and loyalty.
3. Lack of career development among employees, including risk aversion, lack of innovation, and lack of necessary expertise and experience.

Strategies are purposefully chosen to better address the central phenomenon within the existing context. Identified weak strategies included:

1. Lack of governance, involving legal violations and operational risks.
2. Lack of transparency development, such as opacity in laws, processes, and accountability.
3. Inadequate internal performance monitoring and evaluation, encompassing insufficient systemic supervision and qualitative and quantitative performance assessments.

Outcomes identified in this study included:

- Employee-related outcomes: lack of motivation and job dissatisfaction.
- Organization-related outcomes: reputational risks and instability.
- Customer-related outcomes: lack of customer trust and dissatisfaction.

The main phenomena linked to the organization were identified as organizational negligence, sabotage, and authoritarianism. Employee-related phenomena included verbal and non-verbal bullying.

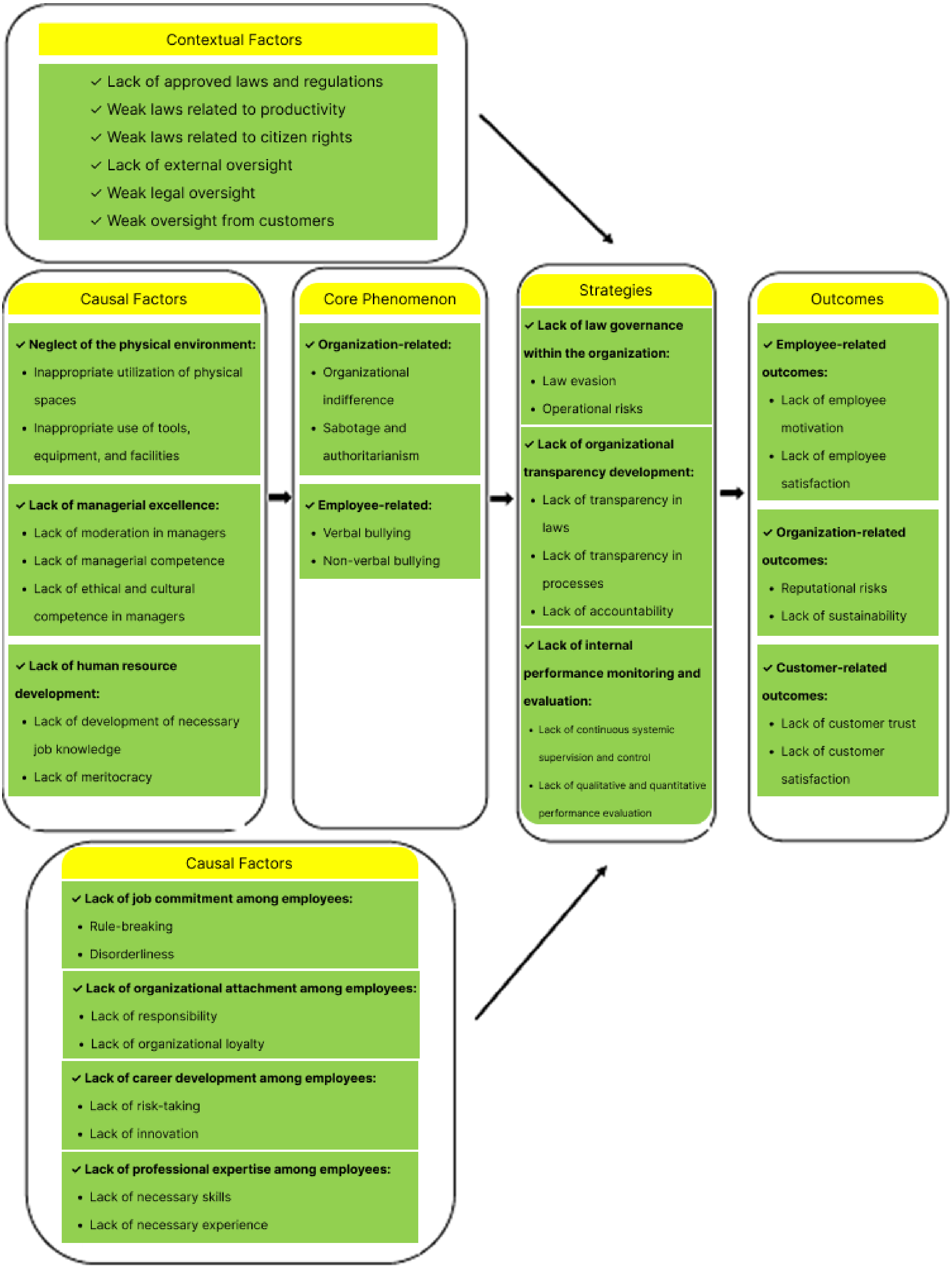

Figure 1. Conceptual Model of The Study

4. Discussion and Conclusion

Human resource productivity is one of the fundamental prerequisites for organizational productivity. Efforts toward achieving organizational productivity are meaningless without employee productivity [24]. Occasionally, employees in organizations engage in actions and behaviors that not only fail to align with the organization's objectives but also hinder its goal attainment [7]. The proliferation of ineffective behaviors among employees in organizations that must be trusted by the public damages public trust and disrupts the core functions of these organizations [25]. In this context, the present study aimed to provide a model of counterproductive behaviors in monetary and financial organizations. This qualitative research, fundamental in purpose and exploratory in method, utilized the systematic grounded theory approach of Strauss and Corbin. This approach involves data analysis steps, including open, axial, and selective coding, and the creation of a logical model or a visual description of the generated theory. Given the qualitative nature of this study, the findings are based on the qualitative phase. In this phase, the researcher examined interview texts line by line, assigning codes to each segment of text. The resulting model is presented narratively, derived from the data to provide a concise and insightful interpretation. In this regard, deep semi-structured interviews were conducted with 24 experts and specialists selected using non-probability purposive snowball sampling. After the initial coding of the interview texts, a total of 108 initial codes, 36 concepts, and 17 categories were extracted.

Contextual factors refer to elements in the surrounding environment that encourage individuals to engage in counterproductive behaviors. These factors include the lack of effective laws and regulations, with two components: weaknesses in productivity-related laws and weaknesses in citizen rights-related laws. Additionally, the lack of external oversight, including weak legal supervision and inadequate oversight from stakeholders, was emphasized. Understanding these factors and addressing them can enhance productivity and improve the performance of individuals and organizations. Governance, as Abdi (2009) argues, is established when there is the legitimate power to implement and enforce laws [26]. Scholars suggest that governance reflects a situation where individuals regulate their behavior according to accepted and binding general rules. Hence, contextual factors, as external components, can contribute to preventing counterproductive behaviors and improving productivity in monetary and financial organizations by establishing relevant laws, ensuring external oversight, and involving stakeholders and citizens in monitoring [27]. Conversely, ignoring economic and financial needs, disregarding public opinion and customer expectations, failing to enact relevant laws, and neglecting effective oversight can significantly reduce productivity in these organizations.

Causal factors exist within the organization and, if not properly managed, may lead to counterproductive behaviors. Neglect of the physical environment involves inadequate utilization of physical spaces, tools, and equipment. Employees interact continuously with their surroundings, and the design of the workspace significantly impacts comfort, motivation, job satisfaction, and productivity [28]. Lack of managerial excellence refers to deficiencies in moderation, competence, and ethical and cultural qualifications of managers. Managers play a pivotal role in shaping organizational culture and achieving effectiveness [29]. A dynamic and effective leader can be the distinguishing factor between successful and unsuccessful organizations. Inadequate human resource development includes the lack of job-related knowledge development, meritocracy, and fostering a suitable organizational culture. Human resource development enables employees to adapt to organizational changes, increasing their confidence, skills, and productivity [30].

Key phenomena identified from the qualitative data include employee-related phenomena, such as verbal and non-verbal bullying. Bullying is defined as repeated misconduct involving verbal abuse, intimidation, and physical threats or harm. In monetary and financial organizations, where services rely heavily on interpersonal interactions, bullying disrupts organizational harmony, reduces employee performance, and diminishes customer trust and satisfaction. Organization-related phenomena include organizational indifference, characterized by employees' apathy toward achieving organizational goals. This can lead to burnout, reduced productivity, and the eventual withdrawal of customers. Sabotage and authoritarianism also emerged as major organizational issues, reflecting excessive or insufficient control, self-interest, and neglect of organizational and customer rights.

Key strategies to address counterproductive behaviors include governance and transparency. This includes adherence to laws, transparency in processes and regulations, and organizational accountability. Transparency fosters trust, improves decision-making, and enhances the organization's credibility [27]. Internal performance monitoring and evaluation are also crucial. Effective performance evaluation provides a realistic understanding of current performance, enabling organizations to identify areas for improvement and develop strategies to address them [31].

The study identified three main outcomes of counterproductive behaviors. Employee-related outcomes include lack of motivation and dissatisfaction among employees, which lead to reduced productivity and increased counterproductive behaviors. Organization-related outcomes involve reputational risks and organizational instability due to repeated misconduct, which undermines trust and diminishes long-term viability. Customer-related outcomes consist of a decline in customer trust and satisfaction, resulting in customer attrition and potential loss of market share to competitors.

Intervening factors include a lack of job commitment (lawbreaking, disorder), lack of job attachment (irresponsibility, disloyalty), absence of career development (risk aversion, lack of innovation), and insufficient job expertise (lack of skills and experience). Committed employees align with organizational goals, contributing to organizational growth and productivity. Addressing these factors can mitigate counterproductive behaviors. Counterproductive behaviors in monetary and financial organizations are influenced by contextual, causal, and intervening factors. Effective policies, external oversight, and strategies like governance, transparency, and human resource development can manage these factors. By fostering job commitment, attachment, development, and expertise among employees, organizations can prevent counterproductive behaviors, enhance productivity, and achieve long-term sustainability. The findings underscore the importance of prioritizing human resources and aligning organizational strategies with employee needs and market demands.

The limitations of this research stem from challenges commonly associated with qualitative studies. Obtaining accurate and unbiased data from interviews was a notable difficulty, as biases can arise during data collection and interpretation. Additionally, the busy schedules of participants, compounded by the sensitivity and complexity of the topics under investigation, limited access to experts and specialists. There was also skepticism among participants about the relevance and impact of research findings on organizational change, which further hindered their willingness to cooperate fully and share valuable insights. Finally, the competitive nature and confidentiality of monetary and financial organizations posed obstacles to gaining access to relevant experiences, knowledge, and data.

Future research should focus on a deeper exploration of the factors influencing the prevention of counterproductive behaviors in monetary and financial organizations. Studies could examine societal perceptions of these factors, offering a broader understanding of their impact. Further investigation of macro-level drivers, capacity-building mechanisms, and enabling factors through scenario-based research approaches is also recommended. Researchers should also design and compare prevention models across different organizational contexts to develop a comprehensive framework for mitigating counterproductive behaviors. Expanding these studies to various sectors will enhance the applicability and robustness of proposed solutions.

For practical implications, policymakers should incorporate productivity-focused initiatives and counterproductive behavior prevention strategies into higher-level organizational policies. Regulatory authorities must establish clear performance evaluation standards and enforce transparent oversight mechanisms to ensure accountability. Organizations should promote ethical behavior through professional ethics training, foster workplace spirituality, and implement cultural programs that reinforce positive behavioral norms. Establishing national awards for high-performing organizations and using modern technologies, such as big data governance and comprehensive quality management systems, can further drive productivity improvements. Finally, monetary and financial organizations should invest in leadership development and innovative approaches to empower employees, enhance organizational culture, and build trust and satisfaction among customers.

Authors' Contributions

Authors equally contributed to this article.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethical Considerations

All procedures performed in this study were under the ethical standards.

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