Chapter 3
Exploring the Interplay Between Deviance and Loneliness at Work

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ABSTRACT

Deviance and loneliness at work are two constructs, the public interpretation of which locates them as social and economic problems that risk wellbeing and productivity at work. In line with the dominant framing of these two concepts, the authors first examine the overlap between them, explicating how and why deviance and loneliness may be similar. Through exploration of academic evidence and framing of both concepts, they provide a typology of deviance and loneliness that flesh out both destructive and constructive interpretations of the two concepts with a view to identify behavioral patterns at their intersection.

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### INTRODUCTION

Dynamic and unpredictable environmental conditions which lead to transformation of societies do not only reshape physical borders but they also alter our psychological boundaries. The desire to change something with ourselves has become an essential way of life for many of us. We move homes, leave our jobs, and make new friends more often than before and we consume frantically more than what we individually are able to produce. The ephemeral and fleeting nature of our life choices and chances induce anxieties of catching up with what is going around us. The term *liquid modernity* which was firstly used by Bauman (2013) explains the condition of the ‘modern’ world. Bauman explains the conditions of liquid modernity as “all agreements are temporary, fleeting, and valid only until further notice” (p. 14). In such a fleeting world, what we consider as human condition in the context of society such as inclusion, exclusion, deviance, fitting in, togetherness and loneliness emerge as significant social, economic and political concerns (Bodanki & Tziner, 2009; Brady, Brown, & Liang, 2017). In response to changing demands of work and social life, governments and organizations are compelled to consider fleeting and enduring aspects of human conditions, such as deviance and loneliness, at work (Lam & Lau, 2012; Wright, Burt, & Strongman, 2006). For example in response to the upsurge in loneliness in society and its dire consequences on social and economic life the British government has formed the Ministry of Loneliness in 2017. The ministry of loneliness examines the causes, processes and outcomes of loneliness and advises on ways to combat its possible negative consequences for the UK.

While our preferences on interactions with people, consumption habits, and our intentions to fit with social norms or to stand outside them change, our pursuit of meaning of life and personal identity is also dynamically changing. Research shows that the rise of individualism and narcissism in society, the need for self-actualisation, and desire to acquire power may pave the way for loneliness got individuals (Jones, 1990; Promsri, 2018). Similarly, these conditions are often cited as antecedents of deviance as well (Edralin, 2005; Judge, LePine, & Rich, 2006). Although deviant behaviors in organizations cause economic, social and psychological losses (Dagher & Junaid, 2011; Griffin & Lopez, 2005; Michel & Bowling, 2013), there is evidence to suggests that deviance may not only have destructive consequences, deviance may even increase creativity, innovation, and resultantly improve organizational performance and competitiveness (Bodankin, & Tziner, 2009; Kuo, Wu, & Lin, 2018; Zhang & Arvey, 2009). Similarly, loneliness have both a destructive and constructive consequences, depending on whether loneliness is congruent with individual desires or not. We show that there is a significant interplay between constructs of deviance and...
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