

DOES CONTAMINATION EXIST IN ORGANIZATIONAL SETTINGS?

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[dx.doi.org/10.18374/EJM-21-1.3](https://doi.org/10.18374/EJM-21-1.3)

ABSTRACT

In this study, the concept of extended-self has been tried to introduce to the organizational behavior literature. We also try to find answers to the questions of “Does contamination exist in organizational settings?” If so, “What are the underlying causes of contaminative behavior?” Since academic profession is an occupation which has a higher degree of sense of ownership through their work outcomes it would be easier to see the presence and forms of contamination in academia compared to other work environments and professions, we have chosen to interview with academicians. 6 pairs and 18 individual – a total of 30 interviews were conducted with participants working in the field of social sciences. The findings explain the existence of the concept of contamination in the organizational context, the reasons for which it occurred. In addition, managerial contributions have been mentioned in the discussion part.

Keywords: Contamination, self, extended-self

1. INTRODUCTION

From the past to the present, one's self and existence has been a source of great interest. While the concept of extended self is examined in general in the field of marketing, this paper intends to bring this concept to management and especially to organizational behavior literature.

Belk (1989), in his work, stated that consumers have an extended core self, which later includes elements that will become part of the extended-self. Individuals see other people, places and what they feel connected to as a part of their extended selves.

There have been several studies showing similarities to this concept like psychological ownership, but at some point, they differ from each other. Contamination is discussed within the concept of extended-self and is considered as one of the tactics for extending self.

Through contamination, one can impose one's own self on one another and as a result, make others part of his or her extended-self. The aim of this paper is to analyze the reasons of contamination in organizational settings.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Self

Concept of self has emerged in many disciplines - philosophy, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and even religious studies. Hence it can be said that it is an issue of concern since Ancient Greek. Many philosophers have argued on physical and non-physical aspects of human behavior in terms of self. To explain self, we might consider studying different point of views such as sociological, psychoanalytical or psychological.

While the other disciplines debate self as a major concern, for sociology this topic was generally secondary. Classical sociologists, Comte, Durkheim and Saint-Simon, thought the concept of self was out of category to put effort on. With the paradigm change in sociology, led by Weber, self became important to understand. Symbolist interactionism is considered as “sociology's dominant approach to self” (Callero, 2003, p.116). Later on, self was added to identity debates but at last, sociologists like Derrida and Foucault started to