

Understanding the Drivers of Whistleblowing Intention among Civil Servants in Johor Bahru

*Nor Hamimah Mastor¹, Muhammad Afiq bin Mursid²

¹Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Malaysia

²Eamst & Young, Johor Bahru, Malaysia

*Corresponding author: m-amimah@utm.my

ABSTRACT

Whistleblowing has been accepted as an important tool of enhancing governance, accountability, and integrity in both the public and the private institutions. It can help prevent unethical practices since it allows individuals to disclose the information on irregularities to the correct parties. To safeguard the whistleblowers, the Malaysian government enacted the Whistleblower Protection Act 2010, intended to encourage disclosure by protecting whistleblowers' identities and confidentiality. However, its function is far from optimal. To bridge this gap, the present study adopts the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) as its underlying framework to examine the determinants of whistleblowing intention among civil servants in Johor Bahru. TPB posits that intention is shaped by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. In the whistleblowing context, education is associated with perceived behavioural control, organizational culture reflects the influence of subjective norms, and perceived personal costs capture aspects of attitude. Using a quantitative approach, a convenience sampling was utilized to collect 188 civil servants in Johor Bahru. Data were analyzed using SPSS. The findings indicate that education and supportive organizational cultures significantly enhance whistleblowing intention, while perceived personal costs failed to influence the likelihood of disclosure. The study concludes that strengthening educational whistleblowing programs while improving organizational support systems are essential to fostering ethical reporting behaviours in the Malaysian public sector. This research outlines its limitations and offers practical and theoretical recommendations.

Keywords

Whistleblowing; Theory of planned behaviour; Education; Organizational culture; Perceived personal costs

Introduction

Whistleblowing has been accepted as an important tool of enhancing governance, accountability, and integrity in both the public and the private institutions. It can help prevent misconduct, corruption, fraud, and other unethical practices since it allows individuals to disclose the information on irregularities that would be otherwise concealed. Whistleblowing remains a sensitive matter, given that only a limited number of individuals have the courage to disclose wrongdoing. The role of civil servants is central to whistleblowing since they operate within systems where ethical breaches can directly affect public trust. In addition, civil servants hold a special status in the public sector as insiders with access to policy-making, resource distribution, and processes of service delivery. Their readiness to raise eyebrows on misconduct is thus needed in upholding the integrity and credibility of government institutions in Malaysia.

The protection of the whistleblowers is one of the underdeveloped areas despite the significance of whistleblowing. The Whistleblower Protection Act (WPA) 2010 was introduced in order to avail a legal avenue to promote disclosure of information in good faith by protecting whistleblowers against retaliation, harassment, or termination. Nonetheless, many officials do not yet have the courage to become whistleblowers. The sensitivity of whistleblowing in Malaysia is evident from the relatively low number of disclosures which only about 1,482 cases were reported to enforcement agencies under the Whistleblower Protection Act 2010 from 2020 to 2024. (Tan, Yunus & Gimino, 2025). Despite various efforts to promote whistleblowing, including monetary rewards and formal recognition, the number of disclosures remains low. As of 2024, 514 civil servants had received rewards, with the highest amount reaching RM100,000 (Ahmad, 2025) which may be attributed to the sensitive nature of whistleblowing and requires strong

personal integrity and courage. Thus, individual characteristics, together with certain contextual factors, play a crucial role in promoting whistleblowing behaviour.

This paper attempts to shed light on the influence of education, organizational culture, and perceived personal cost, to represent perceived behavioural control, subjective norms, and attitude in the TPB, on the intention to whistleblow among civil servants in Johor Bahru. Thus, this study aims to enhance understanding of whistleblowing at the micro level by exploring how individual factors, such as education and attitude, interact with contextual elements like organizational culture to motivate whistleblowing. The findings are expected to provide useful insights for organizations to promote ethical behaviour and reinforce whistleblowing systems.

Literature Review

Whistleblowing has been widely examined in academic literature as a critical mechanism for promoting accountability, integrity, and ethical conduct in organizations (Cho & Song, 2023). Near and Miceli (1985) provided one of the earliest and most widely cited definitions of whistleblowing, conceptualizing it as the disclosure by organizational members of illegal, immoral, or illegitimate practices to parties capable of taking corrective action. This conceptualization positions whistleblowing as a form of “organizational dissidence” and laid the groundwork for subsequent research exploring the psychological, organizational, and legal factors that influence an individual’s decision to report wrongdoing.

To understand the psychological underpinnings of whistleblowing intention, Ajzen’s TPB (1991) has been adopted extensively in the literature (Park and Blenkinsopp (2009); Park, Bjørkelo, and Blenkinsopp (2020); Vandekerchove, 2023; Lee, Kang & Kim, 2021; Wahyuni et al., 2021). Building on this theoretical perspective, Park and Blenkinsopp (2009) were among the first to apply TPB to whistleblowing, demonstrating that attitudes, organizational culture, and social influences significantly affect the likelihood of reporting misconduct. Their findings highlighted the predictive value of TPB in understanding whistleblowing intention and provided a framework for analyzing how organizational and cultural contexts shape disclosure behaviour. Park, Bjørkelo, and Blenkinsopp (2020) extended this line of inquiry by examining external whistleblowers’ experiences of workplace bullying and retaliation, underscoring the continued relevance of organizational culture and psychological safety in whistleblowing research. More recently, prior researchers (Zhang et al., 2024; Munap et al., 2025) indicate that the decision to report wrongdoing is not spontaneous but rather the outcome of a deliberate cognitive process shaped by individual, organizational, and situational factors.

The TPB posits that behavioural intention is shaped by three key components: attitude toward the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. Intention is defined as a conscious decision or motivation to perform a specific action, reflecting a person’s commitment to enacting a behaviour. Ajzen (2023) argues that intention is a key predictor of planned behaviour, serving as the motivational force that drives individuals to translate their goals into actions. According to Ajzen (2020), individual intention or the propensity to exhibit a particular behaviour can be used to characterize an individual’s actual actions. In a similar vein, Fishbein and Cappella (2023) also highlight that a strong intention to act significantly increases the likelihood of actual behaviour execution, underscoring its central role in various behavioural theories. In addition, Wahyuni et al. (2021) claimed that TPB is more appropriate to propose whistleblowing as an intention because it is challenging to accept whistleblowing as a real behaviour.

Perceived behavioural control reflects an individual’s perception of having sufficient resources and opportunities to carry out the intended action (Ajzen, 1991). Although perceived behavioural control may vary across situations and behaviours, its core assumption posits that individuals’ intentions or actions are influenced by their assessment of potential benefits, risks, and their perceived capability to perform the behaviour (Zhang et al., 2024). Within the context of whistleblowing, these components align closely with factors such as individuals’ education. When individuals feel adequately informed and trained such as through ethics education or organizational training, they are more likely to perceive that they have control over the whistleblowing process. Education on whistleblowing is designed to instil an understanding of its principles, significance, and procedures, thereby equipping individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to identify and report unethical practices which include training on identifying unethical conduct, understanding the legal and organizational protections available, and developing the moral courage to report wrongdoing. As a result, higher education or ethics-related training can enhance individuals’ perceived behavioural control by equipping individuals with the confidence, skills, and resources needed, which in turn increases their intention to report unethical behaviour. Educating employees on whistleblowing not only enhances their knowledge

but also shapes moral identity which in turn create a positive attitude towards reporting misconduct, thereby fostering a supportive organizational environment that encourages ethical behaviour and accountability (Aslam et al, 2023). By providing comprehensive training, organizations can empower potential whistleblowers with the knowledge and skills needed to act responsibly and ethically when faced with organizational misconduct. In addition, a well-informed workforce is more likely to adhere to ethical standards and report any deviations, thereby strengthening the organization's ethical framework. Thus, the study hypothesizes that:

H1: Education are positively associated with whistleblowing intention.

Another determinant of intention is attitude. According to the TPB (Ajzen, 1991), attitude is defined as the degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation or appraisal of the behaviour in question. Attitude toward whistleblowing reflects an individual's evaluation of the act, such as whether reporting misconduct is perceived as ethical, beneficial to the organization, or personally risky. Positive attitudes are more likely to strengthen the intention to report (Park, Bjørkeli, and Blenkinsopp, 2020) which in this case involves navigating barriers such as fear of retaliation, lack of organizational support, or uncertainty regarding legal protection (Park, Bjørkeli, and Blenkinsopp, 2020). Strong perceptions of control enhance the intention to act, even in high-risk situations (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005). It conforms to the notion of Perceived Personal Cost (PPC) wherein the case of whistleblowing, the term PPC is the negative implications associated with whistleblowing that individuals believe they are likely to face such as retaliation, loss of career or social stigma. The higher the expected risks and obstacles, the lower the individual's perceived ability to carry out the behaviour which is the act of whistleblowing. Given the significant impact of PPC on whistleblowing decisions, it is hypothesized that PPC will negatively and significantly influence whistleblowing intention (Cho & Song, 2023). In other words, higher perceived risks deter individuals from reporting misconduct, while supportive environments and legal protections can alleviate these fears. By addressing and mitigating PPC, organizations can foster a culture of transparency and accountability, encouraging employees to report unethical behaviour without fear of adverse consequences. PPC emerges as the strongest factor influencing whistleblowing intention, as evidenced by a study on government employees in Aceh Province, which found that higher PPC significantly reduced the likelihood of whistleblowing even in the presence of strong organizational support (Indriani, Nadirsyah, & Dinaroe, 2022). Consequently, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

H2: Perceived Personal Cost are negatively associated with whistleblowing intention.

TPB also posits that subjective norms serve as an antecedent to behavioural intention. Subjective norms capture the perceived social pressures influencing the decision to blow the whistle. If employees believe that important referent persons such as colleagues, supervisors, or society at large expect them to report misconduct, their likelihood of doing so increases (Park and Blenkinsopp, 2009). Subjective norms are consistently found to be significant predictors of whistleblowing intentions across various contexts. For instance, in a study involving public officials in Indonesia (Zakaria et al, 2020), subjective norms were significant predictors of both internal and external whistleblowing intentions. Similarly, in the Malaysian banking sector, subjective norms positively influenced whistleblowing intentions (Munap et al, 2025). In this current study, organizational culture which encompasses the shared values, beliefs, and practices that guide how members of an organization interact and collaborate (Puiu, 2021) represent subjective norms in TPB. Employees' intention to report wrongdoing is strongly influenced by the perceived expectations and approval of significant others in the workplace. According to Kim and Lee (2023), an individual's intention to blow the whistle is significantly influenced by the presence of a supportive organizational culture. Organ and Moorman (1993) emphasized the vital role of organizational culture, which comprises two key dimensions namely organizational support and organizational protection, as a foundation for developing perceptions of organizational justice. Organizational support, characterized by employees helping one another and demonstrating strong organizational commitment, fosters an environment in which ethical behaviour is encouraged and valued (Morzani, 2024; Smaili, 2023). In parallel, organizational protection, involving the safeguarding of whistleblowers from retaliation and arbitrary actions, ensures employees feel secure in reporting misconduct. Recent empirical studies in Malaysia reaffirm these dynamics: Morzani (2024) highlights organizational support's role in enhancing whistleblowing intention; Nuraini et al. (2025) demonstrate how supportive culture and systems reduce fraud; Rozali et al. (2025) show how organizational support influences whistleblowing in the halal sector; and Johari et al. (2024) revealed that societal and cultural pressures shape whistleblowing intentions in public service contexts.

To this end, the study posits that:

H3: Organizational culture is positively associated with whistleblowing intention.

In summary, the more the employees perceived that the consequences of whistleblowing are important, the more the key referents support whistleblowing, and the more the protections for whistleblowers are available, the more likely are their intentions to disclose wrongdoings and then actually engage in whistleblowing behaviour (Lee, Kang & Kim, 2021). Cho and Song (2015) found that the perception of personal costs weakens whistleblowing intention, whereas education strengthens. In addition, organizational support and protection enhance whistleblowing intention by reducing perceived personal costs. A study in Norwegian Municipalities also found that a perceived sense of self, workplace recognition, and a notion of being heard were considered more desirable and possibly related to altruism and high vocational ethical standards, compared to the monetary rewards in the context of whistleblowing. The notion of accepting a monetary reward was considered immoral by several people, a continuation of the wrongdoing itself, and somewhat contradictory to being a responsible public servant (Sørensen, Gaup & Magnussen, 2020).

Drawing upon the preceding arguments and reviewed literatures, the theoretical framework of this study can be illustrated in the following Figure 1.

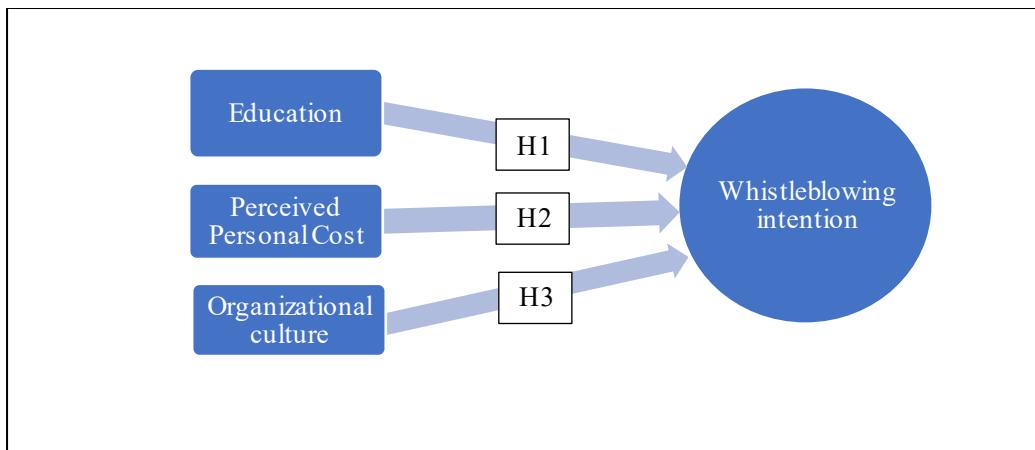


Figure 1. Theoretical framework

Methods

The study employed quantitative research and uses numerical data to describe research topics and phenomena (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This method is suitable for examining hypotheses and quantifying respondents' attitudes and behaviours towards specific issues. In other words, the study used quantitative methods to measure education, organizational culture, and perceived personal costs, and its relationship with whistleblowing intention. To improve the representativeness of the research findings, a cluster sampling method was employed. The sample was drawn from the population of 4,499 civil servants employed in the Johor State Administration at Kota Iskandar (Sunuhanjaya Perkhidmatan Awam Johor, 2024). Subsequently, a convenience sampling method was employed to invite civil servants to participate in the study. According to the sample size determination table by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), the appropriate sample size for a population of 4,499 is 354. In this study, 188 usable responses were obtained, accounting for 53% of the required sample. Respondents completed the questionnaire via a Google Form accessible through a provided QR code. Data collection was conducted over a two-month period between May and June 2024.

The questionnaire administered was structured into multiple sections. The first section is dedicated to collecting fundamental demographic data, including gender, age, ethnicity, education level, period of service, and monthly salary. This demographic data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, such as frequency and percentage, providing a comprehensive overview of the respondents' profiles. The questionnaire items were adopted from Cho and Song (2015), as their constructs closely align with the objectives and contextual focus of the present study involving civil servants. All questionnaire items were measured using a Likert scale to assess respondents' levels of agreement or

likelihood. For Sections two to four, respondents rate their agreement with various statements on a scale from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). Section five assesses the general likelihood of whistleblowing, with responses ranging from Very Unlikely(1) to Very Likely (5). Table 1 displays the 16 questionnaire items together with the mean, standard deviation, and value of Cronbach alpha for each variable.

Table 1 Questionnaire items

Code	Items	Cronbach alpha (>0.70)	Mean	Standard deviation
EW1	My organization has educated me about the purpose of the whistleblowing policy	0.909	4.02	1.133
EW2	My organization has educated me about the Whistleblower Protection Act.		3.99	1.165
EW3	My organization has educated me about how I can anonymously disclose wrongdoing.		3.71	1.305
EW4	My organization has educated me about my rights if I disclose wrongdoing.		3.84	1.164
OC1	My organization protects employees against revenge for whistleblowing	0.753	3.68	1.106
OC2	My organization protects employees from revenge for filing a grievance, complaint, or appeal		3.73	1.056
OC3	My organization protects employees from unfair treatment		3.76	1.082
OC4	My organization encourages employees to report wrongdoing		3.93	1.107
OC5	If I reported any wrongdoing, I would be protected at work.		3.72	1.089
OC6	I feel I can report any wrongdoing without fear it will make my life harder.		3.55	1.129
PPC	If you saw a health or safety danger, illegal activity, fraud, waste, or abuse, how would the following factors affect your decision to report it?	0.853	3.73	
PPC1	Concern that management might become less tolerant of my small mistakes		3.44	0.954
PPC2	Concern that management might be less willing to grant me optional favors		3.36	0.923
PPC3	The overall harm in completing this action would be small.		3.54	0.921
3.45				
WI	How likely would you be to “blow the whistle” when the wrongdoer is:	0.911		
WI1	Your supervisor or higher -level supervisor		3.57	1.119
WI2	A coworker (e.g., worker in your work group, your colleague, friend).		3.71	0.966
WI3	A relative in your organization		3.46	1.071
			3.58	

Legend:

EW –Education on Whistleblowing; OC - Organizational culture; PPC - Perceived Personal Costs; WI - Whistleblowing intention

Based on the reliability test performed using SPSS software as shown in Table 1, the Cronbach's alpha reliability value for each construct is in the range of 0.7–0.9 similar to the value proposed by Tavakol and Dennick (2011). These results show that the instruments used are reliable. The participants' mean scores for whistleblowing intention, education on whistleblowing, organizational culture and PPC were 3.58, 3.89, 3.73 and 3.45, respectively, reflecting moderate levels of agreeableness. Factor analysis, subjected to Principal Components Analysis (PCA) was carried out. Construct validity was verified evidenced by each of the items in the questionnaire has a factor loading above 0.4 on one construct (Tabachnick and Fidell,2001). The Kaiser-Meyer-Oklin value was 0.842, exceedingly the recommended value of 0.6 (Pallant, 2005) and the Barlett's Test of Sphericity less than 0.001 reached statistical significance, supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix. Principal Components Analysis revealed the presence of four components with eigenvalues exceeding 1, explaining 29.845%, 20.692%, 16.267% and 14.621% of the variance respectively. Table 2 presents factor loading value for each variable in the study.

Table 2 Factor loading for each component

Item	EW	OC	PPC	WI
EW1	0.069	0.931	0.086	0.103
EW2	0.266	0.859	0.065	0.064
EW3	0.304	0.774	0.058	0.142
EW4	0.463	0.778	-0.010	0.111
OC1	0.795	0.386	-0.107	0.257
OC2	0.829	0.365	-0.100	0.195
OC3	0.852	0.199	-0.170	0.072
OC4	0.777	0.218	-0.089	0.361
OC5	0.801	0.177	-0.164	0.354
OC6	0.782	0.144	-0.010	0.247
PPC1	-0.056	0.121	0.940	-0.040
PPC2	-0.089	0.075	0.912	-0.100
PPC3	-0.182	-0.031	0.879	-0.034
WI1	0.438	0.163	-0.085	0.771
WI2	0.475	0.165	-0.059	0.696
WI3	0.171	0.073	-0.064	0.880
% of variance explained	29.845	20.692	16.267	14.621

Descriptive data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize the essential characteristics of the demographic data and the primary survey responses. In this section, descriptive methods, specifically frequency and percentage distribution, are utilized to discuss and examine the demographic profile of the respondents. Table 3 presents the detailed demographic information including respondents' gender, age, ethnicity, education, period of service, and monthly salary.

Table 3 Descriptive analysis of respondent

Category	Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	52	27.7
	Female	136	72.3
Age	18 – 20	2	1.1
	21 – 23	44	23.4
	24 – 26	8	4.3
	27 and above	134	71.3
Ethnicity	Malay	186	98.9
	Chinese	0	0
	Indian	0	0
	Other	2	1.1
Education Level	Diploma	22	11.7
	Bachelor	118	62.8
	Master	30	16.0
	PhD	4	2.1
	Other	36	7.4
Period of Service	Less than 1 year	40	21.3
	1 to 3 years	14	7.4
	4 to 5 years	8	4.3
	5 years and above	126	67
Monthly Salary	1500 to 2500	40	21.3
	2501 to 3500	22	11.7
	3501 to 4500	26	13.8
	4501 to 5500	6	3.2
	5501 and above	94	50

As presented in Table 3, the majority of respondents in this study were female (72.3%), while only 27.7% were male. Given the focus on civil servants, the ethnic composition of respondents was predominantly Malay, with only two respondents (1.1%) identified as others (Bumiputera). This skewed distribution reflects the broader demographic trend in which Malays form the majority within the Malaysian civil service. Table 2 further indicates that most respondents hold a bachelor's degree, while a smaller proportion had pursued postgraduate studies, with 16% holding a master's degree and 2.1% a doctoral degree (PhD). In terms of work experience, a substantial proportion (67%) had served as civil servants for more than five years. Nevertheless, a notable proportion had less than one year of service, with the remaining respondents reporting between one to five years of tenure. Regarding monthly income, half (50%) of the respondents earned more than RM5,501. Conversely, the smallest group, comprising only 3.2%, reported earnings between RM4,501 and RM5,500.

Results

Inferential analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among the selected variables. Particularly to achieve the research objectives, Pearson's correlation analysis was employed to investigate the relationships between education, organizational culture, perceived personal cost, and whistleblowing intention. While Table 4 shows Pearson guidelines to classify the strength of the variables' influence on whistleblowing intention as low, moderate, or high based on Cohen's (1988), the Table 5 summarizes the results of the correlation analysis conducted using Pearson's correlation.

Table 4 Cohen Pearson Correlation

R-Value	Interpretation
0.10 to 0.29/ -0.10 to -0.29	Low Correlation
0.30 to 0.49/ -0.30 to -0.49	Moderate Correlation
0.50 to 1.00/ -0.50 to -1.00	High Correlation

Table 5 Correlation analysis result

Variables	Education on Whistleblowing (EW)	Organizational Culture (OC)	Perceived Personal Cost (PPC)
Dependent Variable: Whistleblowing Intention (WI)	Pearson's Correlation	0.370**	0.667**
	Sig. (2-Tailed), p	<0.001	<0.001
			0.685

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The correlation analysis indicates a moderate positive relationship between whistleblowing intention and the education on whistleblowing ($r = 0.370$). The strength of this relationship, while not very strong, is statistically significant, indicating that EW is a meaningful predictor of intention. The positive correlation between intention and EW observed aligns well with existing research in organizational behaviour and ethics. Research by Park, Bjørkelo, and Blenkinsopp (2020) and Aslam et al (2023) supports this finding by demonstrating that educational programs and awareness campaigns about whistleblowing can significantly reduce the fear and uncertainty associated with reporting misconduct. These programs often include information about legal protections, reporting channels, and the importance of whistleblowing, collectively empowering employees to act when they observe unethical behaviour. The knowledge established and safe procedures for reporting, coupled with an understanding of the protections in place, boosts employees' confidence in their decision to whistleblow.

Furthermore, whistleblowing intention has a high positive correlation with organizational culture ($r = 0.667$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that higher levels of organizational culture in terms of support and protection are associated with significantly higher levels of intention to whistleblow. The result demonstrates a similar to the findings of Johari et al. (2024), Morzani (2024) and Smaili (2023). This alignment underscores the importance of cultivating an ethical and supportive work place to promote whistleblowing behaviour. In contrast, whistleblowing intention shows no significant relationship with perceived personal cost ($r = 0.030$, $p = 0.685$), indicating that perceived personal costs do not influence individual's decision to blow. In a case study among banking employees in Indonesia, Mutaqin (2022)

also reached the same result where perceived personal cost was found to exert no influence on whistleblowing intention. Accordingly, the study's findings support H1 and H2, whereas H3 is not supported.

In summary, the findings underscore the importance of education and organizational culture to foster whistleblowing intention among civil servants in Johor Bahru. Among the variables, organizational culture shows the highest correlation, suggesting that ensuring an ethical organizational culture with a protection mechanism is the most critical factor in enhancing whistleblowing intention.

Discussions

The findings of this study revealed that education on whistleblowing exert a moderate influence on whistleblowing intention among civil servants, suggesting that while individuals with greater knowledge and awareness of whistleblowing procedures are more inclined to report wrongdoing, this factor alone is insufficient to strongly drive reporting behaviours. Organizational culture, which emerged as the most influential factor, exerting a strong effect on whistleblowing intention. This indicates that civil servants are more likely to disclose misconduct when they perceive their organizational environment to be supportive, ethical, and protective of whistleblowers. This is consistent with the Theory of Planned Behaviour, where subjective norms shaped by peer support, leadership commitment, and organizational justice play a decisive role in shaping behavioural intention. The result underscores the importance of fostering organizational climates that encourage openness and protect employees who voice concerns.

Conversely, PPC did not significantly influence whistleblowing intention. This contrasts with several earlier findings (e.g., Mirma, Nadirsyah, & Dinaroe, 2022) which reported that higher anticipated costs discouraged disclosure. One possible explanation is the introduction of the Whistleblower Protection (Amendment) Bill 2025, which may have reduced concerns about retaliation among civil servants, thereby diminishing the salience of personal cost in decision-making. Another explanation may lie in cultural shifts within the civil service, where organizational norms outweigh individual cost-benefit calculations. Perceived personal cost would also be less applicable to civil servants as their services are safeguarded by highly developed legal systems, tenure-based employment, and formal reporting systems.

Taken together, these findings suggest that while education was important, they must be complemented by strong organizational cultures to normalize whistleblowing practices. Furthermore, the limited role of personal cost highlights the need for policymakers to focus beyond personal cost. Since personal cost is less influential, policymakers should focus resources on building trust, a awareness, and supportive culture rather than solely emphasizing protection from retaliation. Policies could include training programs that enhance employees' sense of self-efficacy and confidence to act ethically, focusing less on threat mitigation and more on ethical empowerment.

Conclusion

These results suggest that while PPC is often seen as a barrier to whistleblowing, its impact may be absent in environments with strong protections and supportive organizational cultures that actively motivate reporting among civil servants with a adequate level of knowledge on whistleblowing. The findings align with the TPB, showing that strong subjective norms such as organizational support and protection, have the strongest impact on whistleblowing intention. Organizations can enhance whistleblowing behaviour by fostering supportive cultures and ensuring psychological safety for employees. From a theoretical standpoint, Perceived Behavioural Control which captures the education level of civil servants in this study, have a moderate effect on the decision to blow the whistle.

This study has both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, it contributes to the fields of public administration and business and corporate governance studies. The applicability of the TPB to whistleblowing research lies in its ability to capture both individual and contextual determinants that influence one's intention to disclose misconduct. From a practical viewpoint, it also identifies problem areas, possibly helping government bodies to focus further on the importance of anti-corruption work and whistleblowing processes within organizations as well as to ensure that their employees have the support they need. These findings offer important implications for the government, particularly in formulating policies that encourage ethical reporting practices by fostering positive whistleblowing norms and strengthening workers' confidence to speak up in psychologically safe environments.

Limitations and Future Studies

This is not a limitation-free study. To begin with, the area of study was confined to civil servants in Johor Bahru only, which may limit the generalizability of the results to employees in institutions in the private sector or government bodies in other states. Secondly, the research mainly looked at the intention and not the actual whistleblowing action, thus, the findings might not represent the actual actions that people take in real life. Thirdly, the framework did not incorporate many variables, as the primary emphasis was made on education, the organizational culture, and PPC only. Finally, the use of self-reported survey has attracted social desirability bias in that the respondents may have given answers that portray moral social behaviour instead of their own intentions.

It is expected that future research will look into the whistleblowing intention from other perspectives such as private sector employees or self-employed persons. Furthermore, future researchers can be extended to look for possible pertinent factors such as personality, religiosity, or other external factors that could provide more knowledge in the case they are integrated into future studies. Future research may expand the geographic scope to include areas outside Johor.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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