Job Burnout and Personality as Predictors of Workplace Deviance

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ABSTRACT

The study examined job burnout and personality as predictors of workplace deviance among staff of intafact beverages limited Onitsha. A total of 216 employees comprised of 142 males and 74 females aged ranged from 24-58 years with the mean age of 33.07 years were used in the study. Three sets of instrument were used for the study: the big five inventory (BFI); Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) and measures of workplace deviance (MDW). Two hypotheses were tested in the study, which found that job burnout had a significant negative relationship with workplace deviance at r = (-.172) at p < 0.05. Also, the dimensions of personality traits were significantly negative (openness to experience, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism) while, conscientious was positively. This tends to show that both predictor variables are significant predictors of workplace deviance. Hence, the study recommends that organization should ensure good employer-employee relationship because it's only the negative effect that may result in workplace deviant behaviours.

KEYWORDS: Job Burnout, Personality and Workplace Deviance

INTRODUCTION

In any work organization, managing behavior of employees is a major concern to stakeholders. Specifically, organizations wish to have employees who will carry out the tasks, duties and responsibilities of their positions and who will not engage in action which will harm the organization, its other employees or its customers in any way. Such behaviour which causes harm is undesirable and is considered to be deviant. Research however, has shown that deviant behavior in the workplace is fairly prevalent. For example, a Society for Human Resource Management study (1993) surveyed 479 human resource professionals about violence in their organizations. Results indicate that the organizations in which respondents worked reported incidents involving fistfights (74.8%), shootings (17%), stabbings (7.5%), and rape/sexual assault (6.5%). Other research has surveyed employees with regard to their involvement in deviant behavior in the workplace. One such study reported that seventy-five percent of employees had stolen from their employers at least once (McGurn, 1988). Another study reported that 62 percent of fast food restaurant workers and 42 percent of supermarket workers reported some type of cash or property theft from their employers (Slora, 1989).

Workplace deviance has become an increasingly important issue upon which managers must have to pay attention. Bennett & Robinson (2003) defines workplace deviance as a purposeful negative behavior by employees that violates significant organizational norms, policies or rules and in so doing threatens the well-being of the organization, its employees or both.

Workplace deviance has been studied under different terminologies such as organizational behaviour, organizational misbehavior, employee vice, workplace aggression, counterproductive work behaviour, non-compliant behaviour, antisocial behaviour and organizational delinquency. Deviant behaviour in the workplace is not only responsible for destroying the organizations but also negatively affecting employees in the organization. These anti-social behaviours are detrimental to organizations and may arise as aspect of negative interchange where employees intentionally adopt deviance as a way of revenge towards corporate treatment. In other words, the maxim "an eye for an eye" is a concept that some employees strongly feel is the most suitable approach to their problem. Deviance in the workplace covers various behavioural ranges of act from major to minor behaviours such as taking longer lunch breaks to criminal acts such as theft and violence, cyber loafing, abusive supervision, etc. Other examples include; breach of psychological contract, employee silence, co-worker back stabbing, sabotage, verbal abuse, sexual harassment, kickbacks, incivility, lateness, absenteeism, undermining person's ability to work efficiently, passive hostility such as withholding efforts, production deviance such as poor quality of work, working slowly etc. These behaviours usually go unnoticed, unreported or both. Some of these deviance acts have

enormous costs to employers. For example the direct costs of theft, sabotage and other such actions and the indirect costs which results from such behavior such as loss of productivity, loss of reputation and even loss of customers (Bennett and Robinson, 2003).

Due to the prevalence of workplace deviance, it has attracted an overwhelming interest on organizations and people inside the organizations. Research in the areas of deviant behaviour in the workplace has been pursued for decades in a variety of forms. Many studies have aimed to determine the base rates of such behaviours and have attempted to predict these behaviours. For example, Harper (1990) found that 33 of 75% workers have engaged in behavior such as vandalism, sabotage, unwarranted absenteeism and theft. Caruana, Ramaseshan & Ewing (2001) found that behaviours such as unfair treatment, organizational culture and climate as well as supervisory behavior has its own impact as well. Brown and Mitchell (2010) in their study reported that in the U.S., it was estimated that approximately $6 to $200 billion loss annually occur due to employee workplace deviant. Beside financial loss, Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdelr (KPMG) Malaysia fraud, bribery and corruption survey 2013 reported almost 70% of employee lost their morale and productivity due to unethical behaviour that occur in their workplace. Hence, behavior is considered deviant when employees have a deliberate or intentional desire to cause harm to an organization and such behavior impedes the vision, welfare and organizational standards.

Today in Nigeria, workplace deviance has become an important concern for organization and a topic of increasing research attention. Employee theft, fraud and sabotage, as well as playing pranks, acting rudely and arguing have been suspected to be the fastest growing deviance workplace behaviour among Nigerian workgroups in recent times (Fagbohungbe, Akinbode &, Ayodeji, 2012). Many antecedents, internal and external factors, were found to have an influence on employee workplace deviant behavior. The impact of these factors are mostly external (Maslach and Leiter, 1999) and results in prolonged occupational stress when job demands exceeds the person's adaptive resources. This leads to physical and emotional exhaustion, cynicism detachment, and feeling of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment among the employees. This syndrome is conceptualized as burnout. It does not happen suddenly; you do not wake up one morning and all of a sudden "have burnout". Its nature is much more insidious, creeping up on indivudals over time like a slow leak, which makes it much harder to recognize. The cynicism, depression and lethargy of burnout can occur when you are not in control of how to carry out your job, when you are working towards goals that do not resonate with you and when you lack social support. (Amazue,Onyishi & Amazue, 2014).

However, a repeated question is why individuals under the same working condition experience burnout whereas others show no symptoms at all? This shows that in as much as the primary trigger of burnout lies in the environment of the individual, some factors within the individual also influence burnout. In other words, an alternative of burnout is associated with personality (Buhler and Land, 2003).

This present study will attempt to provide answers to the following questions:

1. Will job burnout significantly predict workplace deviant behaviour?
2. Will personality disposition be a significant predictor of workplace deviant behaviour?

REVIEW OF LITRATURE

Many studies have been carried out on workplace deviance and relationship with job burnout and personality. For instance, according to Bolton, Harvey, Grawitch and Barber (2012) investigated the relationship between job burnout (using the dimension of depersonalization) and counterproductive work behaviors. They found that depersonalization significantly influenced CWB. They concluded that the finding was consistent with the conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989), which argued that in a state of depleted emotional resources, heightened depersonalization increased the likelihood of counterproductive work behaviour occurring. Monnastes (2010) obtained data from 235 white collar workers to investigate the relationship between perceived organizational support and behaviors that impact negatively on the organization. They found that perceived organizational support correlated negatively with employee-oriented counterproductive work behaviour and organization-oriented counterproductive work behaviour. The finding implies that employees' were more likely to exhibit harmful behaviors if they perceived the organization as not supportive, while favorable perception of organizational support was less likely to be associated with CWB.

Liang and Hsieh (2007) found that of the three dimensions of job burnout, only depersonalization significantly predicted CWB measured as work-place deviance, among a sample made up of 303 Taiwanese flight attendants. In a related study conducted in Nigeria in recent time, Fagbo-hungbe et al (2012), found significant correlation between what they termed 'organizational reaction variables' (such as supervision, co-workers, physical work conditions, financial rewards) and behaviors that were considered deviant in organization.

Theoretical Framework
Social Exchange Theory

SET is an influential paradigm in examination of any exchange relationship, which posits that interaction based on the proposition that people expect rewards and cost from social exchange to be equitable. Its basic propositions as propounded by Homans (1958) are that people tend to repeat actions that were rewarded in the past, and the more often a particular behavior has resulted in a reward the more likely it is that a person will implement it. Social learning theory provides a good link between Job burnout and employee personality with workplace deviant. A social learning perspective is one type of framework which has been proposed for understanding deviant behavior in the workplace such as aggression and violence (O'Leary-Kelly, Griffin, & Glew, 1996).

Social learning theory suggests that people can learn from experiencing certain outcomes as a result of behaviors in which they have engaged, that is to say, people can learn from the behavior and the outcomes of the behaviors of others. Therefore, employees may see other employees engaging in deviant behaviors in the workplace, and gaining

some rewards (e.g., the benefit of money stolen from the employer) as a result of these behaviors. If the individuals who are engaging in the deviant behavior are not punished, other employees who are viewing the situation will learn that this could also be the case if they chose to engage in deviant behavior. If this is true, individuals who hadn't previously engaged in deviant employee behavior may chose to engage in deviant behavior. If the organization effectively attempt to reduce or eliminate deviant behavior in the workplace by making it clear that punishment will occur for deviance and then insuring that the punishment is actually carried out to offenders, then social learning theory indicates that there will be less deviant behavior in the workplace. For example, if someone sees a fellow employee steal from the cash register, but then also sees that the employee is fired as a result, the observer is less likely to steal from the register thereafter.

METHOD

Sample: Sample for the study were Two hundred and sixteen (216) (142 males; 74 females) staff of Intafact beverages limited Onitsha; Anambra state. Their age ranged from 24 to 58 years with a mean age of 33.07 years. Their educational qualification ranged from ordinary national diploma (OND) to Master's Degree and their years of experience ranged from 1 to 28 years. Information on their marital status was also obtained. a convenient sampling technique was used sampling the participants individually from all department.

Measurement: **The Big Five Inventory (BFI)** which consisted of 44 items was designed by John, Donahue & Kentle (1991) to assess and measure personality from a five dimensional perspective. This study adapted 20 items from the original scale. Items 1 to 4 measure extraversion; items 5 to 8 measure agreeableness; items 9 to 12 measure conscientiousness; items 13 to 15 measure neuroticism; items 16 to 20 measure openness to experience The coefficients of reliability provided by John, Donahue and Kentle (1991) reported a Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.80 and by a month test retest coefficient=0.85.

Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) is a 22 item inventory, one column, frequency and a 6-point response format designed by Maslach C. (1986) to assess burnout syndrome

(BOS) which is a state of physical and emotional depletion resulting from the conditions of work. Maslach provided the original psychometric properties for American sample with cronbach alpha of .71 - .90, a test-retest after (one month) at .60 - .80, convergent validity coefficients ranging from .20 - .56 by correlating while Coker (1999) provided for Nigerians sample with cronbach alpha at .86, spit-half = .57, odd-even = .92 and a concurrent validity coefficient in the range of .01 - .36

Measures of Workplace Deviance (MDW) developed by Bennett and Robinson (2000) designed to assess workplace deviant behaviours among workers It is a 28-items scale, which comprises of 12 –items for organizational deviance (deviant behaviours directed to the organization), and a 16 – items for interpersonal deviant scale (deviant directly harmful to other individuals within the organization). The authors (Bennett & Robinson, 2000) reported a coefficient of internal reliabilities of .81 and .78 respectively.

Design/Statistics: A cross-sectional survey design was used for the study design while multiple regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis. Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version16.0 was employed in the data analyses

RESULTS

The analysis of the correlation matrix of the predictor variables (job burnout and personality traits) on workplace deviance (table 1) showed that all dimension of personality traits has inverse significant relationship with job burnout except conscientiousness that was found to have a positive significant correlation with job burnout ($r = 0.176$, $p < 0.01$). Job burnout had a significant negative relationship with workplace deviance ($r = -.172$, $p < 0.05$). Agreeableness was also related to workplace deviance ($r = -.213$, $p < 0.01$). The result of regression analysis in table 2 showed that the interaction between the two variables were statistically significant in their predictive effect on workplace deviance. The standardized regression coefficient showed that job burnout $\beta = -.169$, openness to experience $\beta = .024$, conscientiousness $\beta = -.087$, extroversion $\beta = -.127$ and agreeableness $\beta = -.243$ was significant in predicting workplace deviance. These variables have negative significant impacts on workplace deviance according to their beta values except openness to experience. Table 2 also revealed that $F = 3.93$, $p < .001$ and $R^2 = .101$, $p < .001$.

Table1: Correlation matrix of job burnout and employees personality on workplace deviance with their mean and standard deviation

	M	SD	JB	O	C	E	A	N	WD
JB	66.54	17.93	1	–.054	.176**	–.021	–.046	–.075	–.172*
O	15.93	2.50	–.054	1	–.082	.122	.128	–.163*	–.006
C	15.47	2.47	.176**	–.082	1	–.019	–.071	–.196**	–.099
E	14.60	3.40	–.021	.122	–.019	1	–.095	–.080	–.095
A	15.89	2.59	–.046	.128	–.071	–.095	1	–.289**	–.213**
N	9.92	3.75	–.075	–.163*	–.192**	–.080	–.289**	1	.106
WD	59.95	28.04	–.172	–.006	–.099	–.095	–.213**	.106	1

Notes: ** = P < 0.01; * = P < 0.05

Table 2: Regression analysis result

	B	Beta	T	Sig	R²	F
					.101	3.933
JB	−.265	−.169	−2.532	.012		
O	.272	.024	.359	.720		
C	−.989	−.087	−1.269	.206		
E	−1.044	−.127	−1.892	.060		
A	−2.628	−.243	−3.464	.001		
N	.000	.000	−.002	.999		

Note: P < 0.001

DISCUSSION

The study investigated the extent to which job burnout and personality interacts to predict workplace deviant behaviour among staff of IBL. It was hypothesized that job burnout would significantly correlate to predict workplace deviance. The findings showed that there was a significant relationship between job burnout and employee personality. Though some of the personality traits were significantly negative (openness to experience, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism) while, conscientious was positively significant. The result of the present study supported the findings of previous researches finding of Esmaeili Givi (2013), Magnano, Paolillo and Barano (2015), and Alarcon et al. (2009) which showed a relationship between job burnout and personality.

The study also found out that job burnout had significant influence on workplace deviance. When employee exert efforts to express unfelt emotions in order to comply with the organizations demands, they may seem likely to engage in workplace deviant behaviours in order to retaliates against the organization and by so doing alleviate their negative emotions. This implied that employees who experienced increased level of job burnout were more likely to display workplace deviant behavior. The results of the present study corroborated previous findings that reported positive relationship between job burnout and workplace deviant behavior across occupations (Bolton et al., 2012; Liang & Hsieh, 2007).

The result also revealed that age and years of experience significantly predicted workplace deviant behaviour. This implied that the older and the more years of experience an employee has increases, the more the tendency to engage in workplace deviance.

IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

There are several implications of the findings of this present study. First, the study indicated that job burnout is a strong predictor of workplace deviance. employees are more likely to engage in workplace deviance within the organization when they experiences emotional dissonance as a result of discrepancy between expressions of positive affective display and inner feeling that may lead to emotional exhaustion.. This suggests organization should ensure good employer-employee relationship because it's only the negative effect that may result in workplace deviant behaviours.

In addition, good reward processes may mitigate these negative feelings. It is possible that when positive behaviours that are consistent with organizational work ethics are reinforced, employees will have emotional boost and thus feel accomplished. This may go a long way to

alleviate negative emotion but when the reverse is the case, they may be more likely to engage in workplace deviant behaviours in order to retaliate against the organization.

Another implication of this study showed that selecting employees on the basis of the personality traits especially conscientiousness and agreeableness is likely to reduce the frequency and severity of deviant behavior that occurs in the organization. Specifically, one contribution of our results is that they show that conscientious individuals are likely to exert more effort and to sustain a high level of effort even when they hold unfavorable perceptions of the situation at work.

Limitation

This study has practical limitation. The sample size for this study was limited. Large sample size may be necessary to allow for more generalization and possible conclusions. Another limitation of this research is the level of understanding of the participants and seriousness towards the questionnaire filing pattern.

Suggestion for Further Research

The replication of this study has to be within certain bounds, some factors obviously manifested themselves as problems during the process of the study. These factors were sufficient to jeopardize and limit the external validity of the result if proper care was not taken. Therefore, interested researchers in this area should make sure that the participants that were given the questionnaire are properly identified for easy collection. Finally future studies can explore other work setting such as health, education and law enforcement agencies to see if similar results are obtainable there, while proper caution should be taken on issues such as socio economic status, shift or non-shift works to make sure that these variables did not co-predict the outcomes.

Conclusion

Workplace deviance is a serious and costly problem for organizations. There are numerous variables that increased the likelihood of employees engaging in deviant behaviour. Therefore, organization should be wary of provoking employees to behave defiantly, especially since most employees already believe they are entitled to participate in deviant behaviour to some extent.

In order to reduce or eliminate workplace deviance to enhance business security, managers need to consider the employees reactions to organisational policies and practice, as well as the views members hold and what attract them most to the organisation. If the member's reaction to organisational practices is positive, they will be likely attracted by the harmonious relationships maintained in the workgroup. Consequently, group members may engage in

deviant behaviour as a way to ventilate their dissatisfaction with the organisation or simply to retaliate upon their peers. In order to avoid this situation, managers need to build a trusting environment. When group members show high positive reactions to their organisations they tend to perform their jobs better with little or no supervision, as suggested by our findings.

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