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# The effect of workplace deviance behaviour on employee performance

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### ABSTRACT

The study investigated the effect of workplace deviance on employee performance with reference to Unilever Manufacturing, Nigeria Plc. Lagos, Nigeria. The objective of the study is to determine whether organizational deviance and interpersonal deviance jointly affect employee performance and also to ascertain the association between workplace deviance behavior variable and employee performance. The study employed survey research. Primary data was used for the study with questionnaire as research instrument. The subjects were two hundred and twenty employees of Unilever Manufacturing, Nigeria Plc. The six hypotheses formulated for this study were tested using multiple regression and Pearson's Correlation. The finding revealed that organizational deviance and interpersonal deviance jointly and individually predict employee performance, the result also indicated association between workplace deviance behavior variables adopted and business performance.

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### Introduction

Deviant workplace behaviour refers to voluntary behavior that violates significant organizational norms, and so is perceived as threat to the wellbeing of the organization and/or its members (Benneth & Robinson, 2000). Such behaviours include late resumption at work without permission, stealing company's property, harassing others at work. Workplace deviance is fast gaining serious attention among professionals and the academia as a result of its negative implication to the workplace and the society at large, thus efforts are being made through research to unravel the remote causes. Efforts are being made to associate deviance with human resource practices (Arthur, 2011). The workplace is an avenue for expression of differing opinions and exhibition of different behaviours which would have different consequence on individuals that constitute the organization. These behaviours fall within the constructs of the norms of the organization.

Organizational norms are a group of "expected behaviours, languages, principles and postulations that allow the workplace to perform at a suitable pace" (Coccia, 1998). Behaviourists tend to want to reduce deviant behavior because of its descriptive consequence on employees (Khatri, 2000). Deviance is a reaction to frustrating organizational stressors, such as financial, social and working condition (Chen, Scott, Bishop, 2003). Increased tension in organizations resulting from economic changes, increasing global competitive and trends towards downsizing and restructuring has led to high level of deviance (Chen 2003), however Coccia, (1998), argues that when normal work behaviour goes outside the norms of the organization, its consequences are far-reaching and affects all levels of the organization and permeating all functional areas. This deviant behavior has been given different names such as workplace deviance (Benneth and Robinson, 2003), counterproductive behaviour (Mangione and Quenn, 1975), antisocial behavior (Giacolone and Greenberg, 1997).

Behaviour is deemed deviant, when organization's customs, policies or internal regulations are violated by individual or group that may jeopardize the well-being of the organization or its citizens (Robinson & Benett, 1995). Deviance can be

negative or unethical. Negative deals with the violation of significant organizational norms, while unethical deviance deal with the breaking of societal rules (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004)

### Statement of the problem

The growing interest in the study of deviance is in informed by upward surge in this behavior at workplace and the cost implication of the behaviour (Peterson, 2002).

Bollin (2001) clarified sources of deviance at workplace as intent to quit, dissatisfaction, company contempt, absenteeism, substance abuse, privilege abuse, theft and theft approval and this has affect workplace and thereby affecting individual in the workgroups.

The incessant effect include low productivity, substandard products, and delay in production all in the industry.

### Objectives & Hypothesis

The objectives of the study are as follows as obtained in the hypotheses.

1. Organizational deviance and interpersonal deviance will jointly and independently predict employee performance.
2. There will be a significant relationship between organizational deviance and employee performance.
3. There will be a significant relationship between interpersonal deviance and employee performance.
4. There will be main and interactive of organizational deviance and interpersonal deviance on employee performance.
5. There will be a significant difference between organizational deviance and employee performance.
6. There will be significant difference between interpersonal deviance and employee performance.

### Significance

This study is so significant, as it will assist managers to implement Human Resource & Programmes are implemented in such a way that are not detrimental to the workers behavior. It will also assist in making the work environment a more conducive atmosphere.

It will also assist behaviourists in monitoring behaviours of staff at work place while helping managers to adopt measures that will help to minimize deviant behavior at work place.

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### Literature review and theoretical framework

Workplace is a forum for expressing varieties of behaviour which have different consequences on individuals within the organization as well as the entire organization. These behaviours fall within the constructs of the norms of the organization. Organizational norms are a grouping of “expected behaviours, languages, principles and postulations that allow the workplace to perform at a suitable pace” (Coccia 1998). However, when normal work behaviour goes outside the norms of the organization, its consequences are far-reaching as it affect all levels of the organization including decision making process, productivity and financial costs (Coccia 1998). This is behavior that is tagged work place deviance. Workplace deviance can adversely affect the workplace performance as it involve various negative deviant behaviours such as sexual harassment, vandalism, rumor mongering, corporate sabotage. Negative deviant behaviour also include such employee delinquencies like: not following the manager’s instructions, intentionally slowing down the work cycle, arriving late to work, committing petty theft as well as not treating co-workers with respect and acting rudely to co-workers (Galperin, 2002).

Spreitzer and Sonenshein (2004) contend that research on deviance at workplace overlooks how establishment and their affiliate exhibit positive sets of behaviour not merely negative ones.

Literature on positive deviance is almost exclusively zeroed-in on the negative aspects of workplace deviance e.g. Sagarin (1975) arrived at 40 different definitions of deviance and only two are non-negative. Dodge (1985) broadened the discipline of organizational behaviour by coining the term positive deviance, but was antagonized by scholars such as Sagarin (1975) who argued against the validity of the term.

Positive deviance is “intentional behaviours that depart from the norms of a referent group in honourable ways” (Spreitzer and Sonenshein, 2003). Thus, positive deviance must be praise worthy and focus on actions with honourable intentions, irrespective of the outcomes. It often comprise behaviours that organizations do not authorize or approve of, but help the organization reach its financial and economic goals i.e. such innovative behaviour, non-compliant and dysfunctional directives, criticizing incompetent superior (Galperin 2002).

### Impact of Deviant Behaviour at Workplace

The impetus for growing interest in deviant behavior is the increasing prevalence of this type of behavior and the enormous costs associated with such behavior (Peterson, 2002). The financial impact and other anti-social deviant behaviours within respective organization (Henle et al, 2005) such financially nauseating deviant behaviours like theft, computer fraud, embezzlement, etc. (Robinson & Beneth, 1995). It is also observed that victims of deviance at workplace are more likely to suffer from stress-induced problems and show a relatively low level of productivity; lost work time and a relatively high turnover rate (Henle et al, 2005). As a result of this organizations usually device various strategies aimed at preventing or discouraging deviance at work.

### Conditions Underlying Workplace Deviance

Causes of deviant behaviour have been studied on many levels i.e. individual groups. On individual level, deviant behaviour cannot be attributed to personality trait alone. It is an amalgam of personality variables and the nature of workplace situation (Peterson, 2002). In addition to factors above motioned, other factors include: unfair treatment, organizational culture and climate, as well as supervisory behaviour (Caruana 2001).

A strong link also exists between frustration and workplace aggression. The psychological state of frustration was predicted in Robinson and Bennett (2000) study which was associated with various forms of interpersonal deviance (i.e. spreading rumors or act of aggression) and organizational deviance such as vandalizing, theft and sabotage.

Machiavellianism is another trait to be linked to the likelihood of deviant behaviour within individuals and groups. This refers to person’s strategy in dealing with co-workers by seeking to manipulate others into completing extraneous tasks within the workplace (Robinson & Bennett, 2000). Such manipulation can often lead to unethical practices for the overall financial benefit of the firm, while sacrificing moral norms. Bolin and Heatherly (2001) argue that there are four sources of deviance at workplace. These include theft approval, intent to quit, dissatisfaction as well as contempt and symptoms manifests can be in absenteeism, substance abuse, abuse of employment privileges, theft etc. Although work place deviance is most often destructive in nature, it may have a positive aspect to it, e.g. it may provide such things as a safety value, it allows workgroup to know of each other’s common interest, and could provide warning signals to organizations.

Several other factors may influence deviance at workplace. Production and property deviance may likely influence young and new employees, low paying positions (Baucus and Near, 1991). According to Appel bacum et. al., (2005), demographic factors, like gender (male tending to be more aggressive in behavior than female at work), tenure of work, level of education (the more educated, the less likely to commit), age (olders are likely to be more honest than youngers). Sims (2002) concluded that employees who report high level of job and organizational satisfaction also reported lower levels of likelihood of ethical rule breaking within the organization. This concept is explained by the fact that individuals who have grown more, attached to their job and organizations as a whole, are more likely to follow the rules set forth by their workplace, which preside over ethical decision making (Sims 2002).

Commitment is another factor in assessing the likelihood of engaging in unethical or deviant behaviour (Hirschi, 1969).

Employees that are most loyal and passionate about their work are, on average, least likely to consider quitting. Consequently, such employee will most likely not engaged in unlawful business practices.

Conversely, Sims (2002) discovered that: “increased feelings of continuance commitment” would actually be positively related to the likelihood of deviant behavior”. Furthermore, Liao et al, (2004) showed that organizational commitment was inversely related to interpersonal and organizational deviance. To them, co-worker satisfaction was also inversely related to interpersonal and organizational deviance.

Multitude of ethnic differences among workers in an organization was inversely related to likelihood of deviance (Liao et al 2004). Osgood et. al., (1996) provide evidence to suggest that company task structure is a major determinant for the likelihood of workplace deviance. Structured activities will seldom offer opportunities to engage in deviant activities. Therefore, it may be postulated that keeping workers occupied with tasks that they will be asked to take responsibility for, will often lead to a lower likelihood that such employee’s engage in deviant behaviours. It has been shown in the literature that employees with high status and that possess numerous reference groups are more likely to engage in positive deviant behaviours than those without (Galperin, 2002). A likely explanation for

this behavior is that employees exposed to multiple outside reference groups are more likely to face a relatively broader range of varying perspectives and viewpoints (Galperin, 2002) which if integrated can aid employee problem-solving skills, a precursor to forward – thinking ideas which may lead to increased workplace creativity and eventually lead to motivation, a type of positive workplace deviance.

**Organization Justice:** Research findings shows that workplace deviance is a response to being treated inequitably at work. Equity theory supports the claim, as it hypothesize that employees compare their ration of outcomes (pay, promotion and other incentives) to inputs (i.e. skills, training, education and efforts) (Henle, 2005). When employees experience similar outcomes in response to inputs as compared to other co-workers, they are experiencing equity. Conversely, when there is discrepancy between their inputs against output ratio, the employee experience inequity, which often make them to resort to deviance.

More so, when wrongful act is exercised by leaders within an organisation, a powerful signal about organizational norms is sent to others (Trevino & Brown, 2005) and when employees act in an accepted manner and perform allotted task without trouble, they seek approval from their superiors.

In summary, receiving reward or positive acknowledgement for constructive deviant behavior or, on the other hand, being punished for breaking the rules is of utmost importance in today's corporate entities (Trevino & Brown, 2005). Leaders have the responsibility to provide reward or punishment when it is needed, even if such recourses need not be so direct and explicit in nature.

#### Data Presentation and Analysis

**Table 1: Analysis of demographic information**

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Male	118	53.6	53.6	53.6
Female	102	46.4	46.4	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	
Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
26 – 35	34	15.5	15.5	15.5
36 – 45	138	62.7	62.7	78.2
46 and above	48	21.8	21.8	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	
Marital status	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Single	41	18.6	50.5	18.6
Married	134	60.9	32.3	79.5
Separated	45	20.5	17.3	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	
Qualification	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Post graduate	111	50.5	50.5	50.5
BSc/ HND	71	32.3	32.3	82.7
OND/ NCE	38	17.3	17.3	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	
Cadre	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Management staff	35	15.9	15.9	15.9
Senior staff	112	50.9	50.9	66.8
Junior staff	73	33.2	33.2	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	
Department	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Sales	33	15.0	15.0	15.0
Marketing	40	18.2	18.2	33.2
Personnel	53	24.1	24.1	57.3
Accounting	38	17.3	17.3	74.3
Production	56	25.5	25.5	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Source: Field survey, 2013

Table 1 shows the response of respondents based on their gender. Result reveals that out of 220 respondents, 118 (53.6%) of them are of the respondent are male while 102 (48.4%) of them are females based on the result, there were male than female who responded to the questionnaire.

The table also shows the distribution of the respondents by age, 34 (15.5%) of the respondent from between 26-35 years, 138 (62.7%) are age range of 36 – 45 years, while 48(21.8%) 138(62.7%) are age range of 46 years and above. Based on the result, majority of the respondents ages range are between 36 – 45 years.

In addition, the table shows the distribution of respondents according to their marital status 41(18.6%) of the respondents are single, 134, (60.9%) are married, while 45 (20.5%) of the respondents are separated. Based on the result gathered, majority of the respondent are married.

Further more, the table shows the education qualification of the respondents. Result shows that 111 (50.5%) of the respondents have post graduate certificate, 71 (32.3%) of the respondents have B.sc or HND certificates, while only 38 (17.3%) has OND or NCE certificate. Based on the result gathered, majority of the respondents have post graduate certificate.

From the cadre of the respondents, it appears that 35(15.9%) of the respondents are management staff, 112(50.9%) of the respondents are senior staff, while 73(32.2%) of the respondents are junior staff. Based on the result gathered, majority of the respondents are senior staff.

The table also analysed the distribution of respondents based on their department. 33(15.0%) of the respondents are in sales department, 40(18.2%) are in marketing department. 53(24.1%) are in personnel department, 38(17.3%) of the respondents are in accounting department while only 56(25.5%) of the respondents fall in the production department. Based on the result gathered, majority of the respondents are in production department.

#### Testing of research hypotheses

In order to examine the impact of customer orientation, innovation, differentiation and market differentiation on organizational performance, six(6) hypothesis were formulated and tested.

H1: Organizational deviance and interpersonal deviance will jointly and independently predict employees performance.

**Table 2. Showing multiple regression of organizational deviance and interpersonal deviance and employees performance**

Variable	F Ratio	Sig of p	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj R <sup>2</sup>	B	t	P
Organizational deviance	7.673	.001	.555	.308	.301	.015	2.560	.006
Interpersonal deviance						.116	2.567	.019

Source: Field survey, 2013

Table above showed that the **linear combination** of organizational deviance, and interpersonal deviance and employees performance was significant. **F= 7.673**, **R=.555**, **R<sup>2</sup>.308**, **Adj.R<sup>2</sup>= .301**, **P<01**. The independent predictor variable jointly accounted for a variation of about 30.8% in employees performance. The following shows the various **relative contribution** and levels of significance of the independent variables. Organizational deviance ( $\beta = -.015$ ,  $P<05$ ), interpersonal deviance ( $\beta = -.116$ ,  $P<05$ ) respectively and are negativity related to employee performance.

It can be concluded that all impendent variables, organizational deviance and interpersonal deviance will jointly

and will independently predict employees performance. The alternative hypothesis (H1) is accepted.

#### Hypothesis 2

**H1:** There will be a significant relationship between organizational deviance and employees performance.

**Table 3 showing Pearson's correlation between organizational deviance and employee's performance**

Variable	means	Std. Dev.	N	R	P	Remark
Employees performance	4.5614	.27487	220	.714	.042	Sig
Organizational deviance	2.7803	1.1729				

Sig. at 0.5 level

Source: Field survey, 2013.

It is shown in the above table that there is a significant relationship between interpersonal deviance and employee performance ( $r = -.650^*$ ,  $n = 220$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Hence, it could be deduced that interpersonal deviance influence employee performance in the study. The alternative hypothesis (H1) is accepted.

#### Hypothesis 4

**H1:** There will be main and interactive of organization deviance, and interpersonal deviance on employees performance.

**Table 4: Showing person's correlation between interpersonal deviance and organizational deviance**

Variable	F Ratio	Sig of p	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj R <sup>2</sup>	B	t	P
Organizational deviance	7.673	.000	.555	.308	.301	-.015	-2.560	.006
Interpersonal deviance						-.116	2.567	.019

Source: Field survey, 2013

The above table displays the result of the analysis of the main and interactive of organizational deviance, and interpersonal deviance on employees performance. The analysis reveals that both of organizational deviance, and interpersonal deviances have a negative effect on employee performance. Interpersonal deviance ( $B = -.116$ ,  $t = 2.567$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ), organizational deviance ( $B = -.015$ ,  $t = -2.560$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ), with these, it can be concluded that there will be main and interactive effect of organizational deviance and interpersonal deviance on employees performance. The alternative hypothesis (H1) is accepted.

#### Hypothesis 5

**H1:** There will be a significant difference between organizational deviance and employees performance.

**Table 5: Showing Pearson's correlation between organizational deviance and employees performance.**

Variables	T	Df	Sig. of P	Mean difference	95% confidence interval of the differences	
					Lower	upper
Employees performance	246.135	219	.000	4.56136	4.5248	4.5979
Organizational deviance	35.160	219	.000	2.78030	2.62446	2.9362

Source: field survey, 2013.

The above table displays the result of the t-test analysis of the difference between organizational deviance and employees performance. The analysis reveal that employees performance ( $t = 246.135$ ,  $P = .000$ ,  $N = 4.56136$ ) is different from organisational deviance ( $t = 35.160$ ,  $P = .000$ ,  $N = 2.7803$ ) are significant at 1% level of significance.

With this result, we can conclude that there is significant difference between organizational deviance and employees performance. The alternative hypothesis (H1) is accepted.

#### Hypothesis 6

**H1:** There will be a significant difference between interpersonal deviance and employees performance.

Above hypothesis is tested with Pearson's correlation

**Table 6: Showing Pearson's correlation between interpersonal deviance and employees performance.**

Variables	T	Df	Sig. of P	Mean difference	95% confidence interval of the differences	
					Lower	upper
Employees performance	246.133	219	.000	4.56136	4.5248	4.5979
Interpersonal deviance	210.705	219	.000	4.15341	4.11456	4.19226

Source: Field survey, 2013

The above table displays the result of the t-test analysis of the difference between interpersonal deviance and employees performance. The analysis reveal that employees performance ( $t = 246.135$ ,  $P = .000$ ,  $M = 4.56136$ ) is different from interpersonal deviance ( $t = 210.705$ ,  $P = .000$ ,  $M = 4.15341$ ) are significant at 10% level of significance with this result, we can conclude that there is significant difference between interpersonal deviance and employees performance, hence, we accept the hypothesis (H1).

#### Conclusion & Recommendation

The study examined the effect of workplace deviance behaviours on employee performance using Unilever Nig. PLC, a multinational manufacturing outfit in Lagos as a case study.

The instruments used for measurement were valid and reliable which can also be used to test the time dimension of workplace deviance behavior.

Several deductions were made from the testing of the hypothesis:

- That organizational deviance and interpersonal deviance jointly and independence predict employee performance.
- That there was significant relationship between organizational deviance and employees performance.
- That there was a significant relationship between interpersonal deviance and employee performance.
- That there was main and interactive of organizational deviance and interpersonal deviance on employee performance.
- That there was significant difference between organizational deviance and employee performance.
- That there was significant difference between interpersonal deviance and employee performance.

The case study reveals that work place behavior variables in this study are applicable in practice, which can be used by companies to improve employees performance and achieve organizational goals and objectives.

It was recommended that organizations should be proactive rather than reactive in order to promptly and effectively deal with changes taking place in the complex business environment and also improve their performance.

There should be room for interactions in order to continually review workplace unionism among employees in order to curb workplace deviance

Finally, indebt study should be conducted in organizations to gain more insight into factors causing deviance in workplace.

Environmental influences on the business should be critically studied to know the impact on the business by unraveling their strengths and weaknesses as they affect employee performance

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