WORKING STATUS, TEACHING EXPERIENCES AND WORKPLACE DEVIANT BEHAVIORS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN ENUGU STATE NIGERIA

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Abstract

This is a cross-sectional study that studied working status, teaching experiences, and workplace deviant behaviors using 254 primary school teachers in Enugu State Nigeria. Responses were elicited using a self-report scale titled "Work Deviance Behaviour Scale". Data collected were analyzed using cross-tabulation converted to bar charts, ANOVA, and bivariate statistical analyses. Given the outcomes of this research, we finally suggest that teachers at lower cadres deliberately violate workplace deviant behaviour compared to those at middle and upper cadres. The results showed that working status and years of experience do not correlate with workplace deviance behaviours. However, there was no significant correlation between working status and workplace deviant behaviours. For this reason, occupational health professionals and school management authorities should reform staff policy, improve communication, and set up mechanisms that could checkmate activities and dispute negative personal value systems responsible for workplace deviant behaviours.

Keywords: Working Status; Teaching Experiences; Workplace Deviant Behaviors; Primary School Teachers

1 INTRODUCTION

It may not be a surprise that organizational deviance is gaining global attention among researchers in the field of occupational health, career counseling, and education (Ibrahim & Iqbal, 2015). It could be due to the current incessant misbehaviors among workers in educational institutions and settings that have become a very serious trend. Organizational deviance could be seen as destructive or constructive intentions to counter organizational aim and objective by the organizational member(s) (O'Neill and Hastings, 2011). Constructive workplace deviance is actions consciously expressed through emotions and behaviors by a member of an organization to oppose programs that are not in favor of organizational philosophies and the welfare of the members. On the other hand, destructive workplace deviance is intentional acts to counter and shatter the positive and constructive dreams of an organization (Galperin, 2002). Unfortunately, most workplace deviant behaviors are destructive, targeting to destroy the organizational well-being (Galperin, 2002; O'Neill & Hastings, 2011). Given this reason, more attention has been shifted to destructive workplace deviant behaviors among researchers (O'Neill & Hastings, 2011).

Destructive workplace deviant behaviors occur when a member of an educational institution intentionally absent himself from official duties delegated to him by the organizational leadership. It does not limit to members that are at lower cadre but also to upper cadre. Even those in leadership structure are found in schemes of organization embezzlement. That is to say that stealing, theft, and absenteeism are workplace deviant behaviors. In as much as it is counterproductive to ethical conducts guiding an organization (O'Neill and Hastings, 2011). Workplace deviance frustrates and weakens the rates of productivity in a workplace. It declines the level of commitment in the workforce. In this study, destructive workplace deviance is regarded as workplace deviant behaviors.

Understanding how workplace deviant behaviors negatively impact overtly or covertly is very important. To that point, it affects the school and teachers or workers (Sarwar, Awan, Alam, & Anwar, 2010). Almost all the teachers' deviant behaviors significantly impact on vision and missions of the school (Unal, 2012). Currently, teachers' absenteeism is a growing phenomenon in Nigerian educational settings and lasted for barely twenty to thirty years (Ugoani, 2016). This is as a result of irregular payment of salaries (SASPSFORD; TZANNATOS, 1993). Possibly, teachers are unsatisfied and thus lead them to the exhibition of misconducts in their workplaces. In addition, the process that brought some teachers into practice is corruption, consequently, leading to misbehaviors among teachers (Ugoani, 2016). Cases of teachers' deviance have been reported in previous studies. For instance, Ogbonnaya (2012) cited Ebonyi state government report where teachers were suspended as a result of absenteeism. In the report, out of the 37 teachers on the payroll, only 19 people attend to their official duties daily. In fact, the current frequent absenteeism among teachers is becoming more pervasive than ever in recent times

and it has a serious destructive and sustained negative impact on the quality of education in Nigeria (Ogbonnaya, 2012). Consequently, researchers have recommended studies to investigate possible factors influencing increased rates of workplace deviant behaviors (Aksu, Gucer & Orcan, 2015).

Besides the corruption in the educational system in Nigeria, classic sociological experts stated that employees in the lower cadre are evaluated austerely compared to higher status actors (Bowles & Gelfand, 2010). In the same vein, empirical literature documented that workplace deviance is more prevalent among those in authority and higher cadre (Bettencourt, Charlton, Dorr, & Hume, 2001). Possibly, because of ingroup favoritism practice among themselves, serving as an incentive to preserve their social hierarchies (Bettencourt, Charlton, Dorr, & Hume, 2001). Recently, Bowles and Gelfand (2010) subjected mere opinion of classical sociological theorists to empirical examination and found that workers in the higher positions in the workplace engage in organizational misbehaviors compared to those of lower status (Bowles & Gelfand, 2010). Psychologically, being a subordinate and associated experiences are enough for a worker to comply with institutional rules and regulations (Galinsky, Magee, Gruenfeld, Whitson, & Liljenquist, 2008; Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003).

In terms of working experience, working experience has been reported to influence workers' behaviours in the technology industry (Rani & Sowdamini, 2020). This implies that more years of working experience the less deviant behaviors at the workplace (Rani & Sowdamini, 2020). Given the previous research outcomes and debates, little empirical attention is given in the Nigerian context. Thus, future studies are recommended to investigate to take necessary countermeasures (Unal, 2012). This concern was raised as the available studies on workplace deviant behaviors are not yet enough and have fully addressed issues relating to organizational misbehaviors (Unal, 2012). The available study showed that the problem of workplace deviance is highly prevalent among primary school teachers and higher compared to other educational institutions. This infers that there is a need for further studies. Moreover, several studies seemed to have overlooked possible predictors of deviant behaviours. As a result, environmental and personal factors that lead to workplace deviant behaviours are yet to be studied (Martinko et al. 2002). Given these reasons, this study aimed at filling the gaps. With all these worries in mind, the present researchers investigated the working status, teaching experiences, and workplace deviant behaviors of primary school teachers in Enugu State Nigeria.

2   METHODS

2.1   Ethical Consideration

After approving this study by the Research and Ethics Committee, Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, oral consent was given by the respondents. The research team explained to them the objectives of the study, informing them that if any wishes to withdraw he/she is free to do so. Issues related to potential harm and risks were also explained to them. They were made to understand that there were no associated harms and risks if they wish to participate in the study. They were assured about how their privacy would be protected during and after the study.

2.2   Participants

The respondents were 254 primary school teachers in Enugu North Senatorial Zone in Enugu State Nigeria. They were recruited based on their oral permission that showed their willingness to participate in the study. All those that responded to the questionnaire were used as we applied a convenient sampling technique. A non-probability sampling method as reports showed that the respondents have absenteeism problems. A greater number of the respondents were female, 177(69.7%) and 77(30.3%) were male teachers.

2.3   Deign

This is cross-sectional research.

2.4   Measures

Work Deviance Behaviour Scale (WDBS) developed by Bennet and Robinson (2000) was used in this study. WDBS is a self-report questionnaire that assesses workplace misbehaviors among organizational members. WDBS has 28 items and it specifically measures organizational deviance (OD) and interpersonal deviance (ID). The self-report scale has 7 point-rating Likert ranges from 1 (never engaging in the behavior) to 7 (engaging in the behavior daily), indicating the greater score implies higher involvement in workplace deviant behavior and a low score depicts less involvement. Unit average of OD

and ID scale scores was used to compute the overall workplace deviance among teachers. The internal consistency of WDBS was α=0.81 for the organizational deviance items, and 0.78 for the interpersonal deviance items respectively. Furthermore, Berry, et al (2007) confirmed the internal consistency showing that the scale was reliable. In the context of this study and considering that different populations from Nigeria were used, we also confirmed the reliability (0.80α) of WDBS.

2.5 Procedure

A self-report pencil-and-paper questionnaire was distributed administered. Participants completed the questionnaires and returned them to the researchers or their research assistants when completed.

✦ *Data Analysis*

Data collected were analyzed using cross-tabulation converted to bar charts, ANOVA, and bivariate statistical analyses.
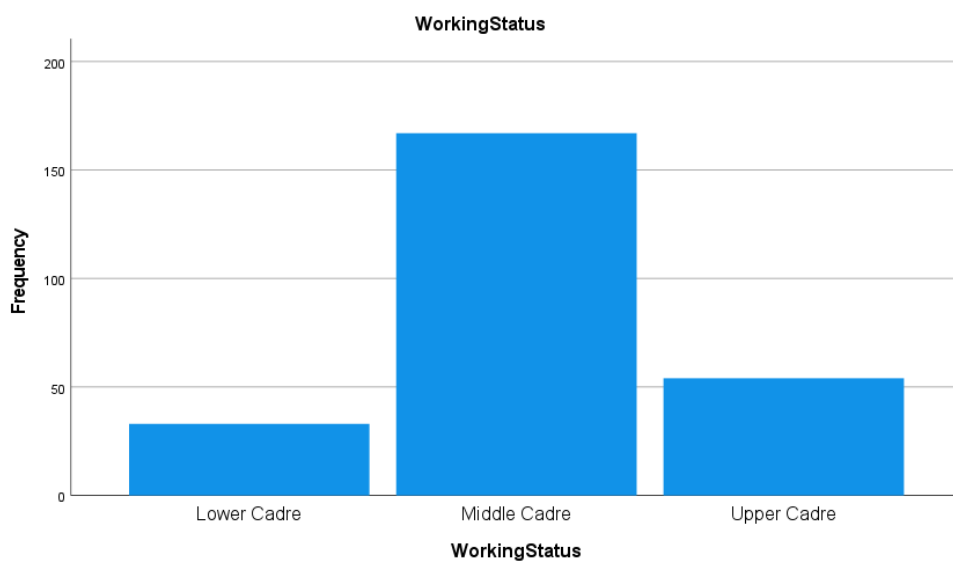
3 RESULTS

Figure 1: Bar chart of the participants' working status.

Figure 1 shows that majority of the participants are the middle cadre primary school teachers followed by those who are at the upper cadre.
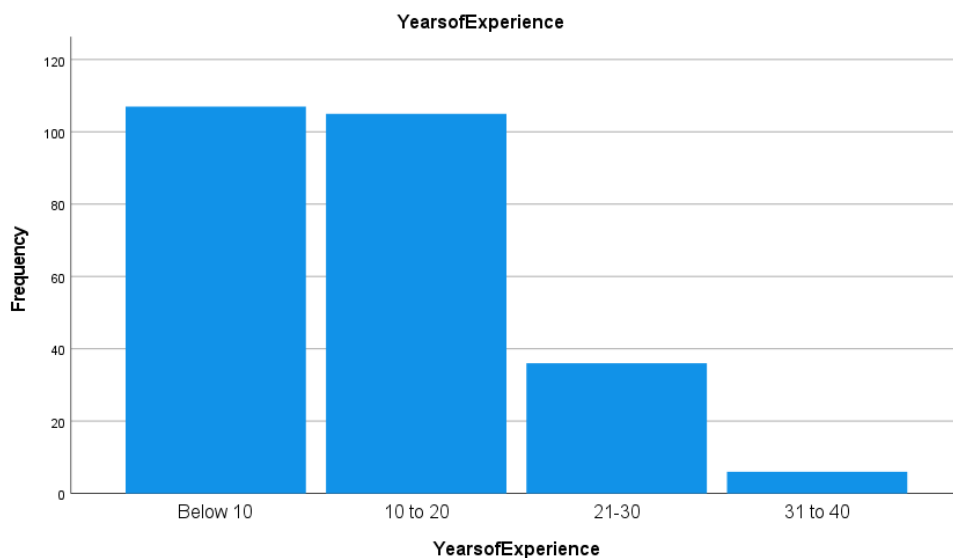

Figure 2: Bar chart of the participants' Years of Experience.

Figure 2 shows that there was a higher percentage of the primary school teachers below 10 and 10 to 20 years of teaching experience compared to others.

Table 1: ANOVA analysis of the working status, years of experience, and workplace deviance.

Variable	Mean±SD	Df	F	Sig.
Working Status				
Lower Cadre	73.27±48.32			
Middle Cadre	61.15±31.24	2	3.429	.034
Upper Cadre	53.67±31.10			
Years of Experience				
Below 10	74.27±38.62			
10 to 20	53.35±26.80	3	11.836	.001
21-30	43.29±23.99			
31 to 40	70.23±34.95			

Table 1 shows the workplace deviance behaviour scale scores per working status, years of experience. The results show a significant difference between mean scores of teachers at lower cadre, middle, and upper cadres. Indicating that a lower cadre score (73.27±48.32) on workplace deviant behaviour is higher than middle and upper cadre (61.15±31.24; 53.67±31.10). The result showed that there was a significant difference (p>.034) between lower cadre, middle, and upper cadre regarding workplace deviant behaviours. This implies that workplace deviant behaviour is more prevalent among workers at a lower level.

The results also show no significant difference (p<.001) between mean scores of teachers below 10 (74.27±38.62), with 10 to 20 (53.35±26.80), 21-30 (43.29±23.99), and 31 to 40 (70.23±34.95) years of experience

Table 2: Bivariate Analysis of working status, years of experience, and workplace deviance.

		Working Status	Years of experience	WDBS
Working Status	Pearson Correlation	1	.436[**]	-.160[*]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.011
	N	254	254	254
Years of experience	Pearson Correlation	.436[**]	1	-.288[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	254	254	254
WDBS	Pearson Correlation	-.160[*]	-.288[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011	.000	
	N	254	254	254

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

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 shows the bivariate analysis of the working status, years of experience, and workplace deviance. the results show that working status and years of experience do not correlate with workplace deviance behaviours, r=-.160[*]; r=-.288[**]. On the other hand, there was no significant correlation (p>.011) between working status and workplace deviant behaviours.

4   DISCUSSION

The results showed a significant difference between mean scores of teachers at lower cadre, middle, and upper cadres. Indicating that a lower cadre score on workplace deviant behaviour is higher than middle and upper cadre. This implies that workplace deviant behaviour is more prevalent among workers at a lower level. The results showed that working status and years of experience do not correlate with workplace deviance behaviours. On the other hand, there was no significant correlation between

working status and workplace deviant behaviours. In collaboration with the present results, past demonstrated that staff category could increase the level of workplace deviance behaviour (Anwar, Sarwar, Riffat-un-Nisa, & Arif, 2011). Similarly, Sackett et al. (2006) reported that demographic information such as working status and career years has a significant predictive influence on occupational misbehaviours among workers. This has increased the prevalent rates of workplace deviance in organizational settings (Sackett et al. (2006). Also, our result supports Bjorkqvist, Osterman, and Lagerspetz (1994) that staff status could be associated with general workplace deviance. It is noteworthy to understand that several past studies agreed that there are higher prevalence rates of workplace deviant behaviours among employees (e. g. Adekola, 2010; Kalejaiye & Adeyemi 2013; Ukertor, 2011).

Years of experience in work could improve competencies. Such competence accrued from experiences mediates the correlation between workplace discrimination and workplace deviance (Olasupo, & Fagbenro, 2018). Past researchers recognized that organisations that de-emphasize less bureaucratic cultures increase in the level of deviance was higher in the case of (Stamper & Van Dyne 2001). Interestingly, the current study has confirmed that workplace deviance is predicted by personal and demographic characteristics (Načinović Braje, Aleksić & Rašić Jelavić, 2020).

The implications of the consistent findings showed that primary school management authority should not neglect the level of workplace deviant behaviours rolling and turning the goals of education down. There should be advanced technological mechanisms that checkmate the activities of the teachers. School administrators should ensure that there is an adequate flow of communication between the upper and lower cadre in school settings. Therefore, every school stakeholder should seek ways of engaging primary teachers and perhaps in other sectors in workforce development (Načinović Braje, Aleksić & Rašić Jelavić, 2020).

Besides, occupational health professionals could also adopt psychoeducational models that would be beneficial in altering erroneous personal feelings, thoughts, and behaviours contributing to the incessant workplace deviance (see Abiogu et al 2020; Ede et al 2021a; Nwokeoma, et al 2019). We assumed that if teachers with workplace deviance tendencies are exposed to such occupational health therapy, prevalent rates could reduce to a minimal level. All in all, the high level of occurrence could be prevented if administrators and other relevant bodies regulating the activities of educational settings could reform policy related to criteria for recruitment of teachers, socialization, education, and training (Načinović Braje, Aleksić & Rašić Jelavić, 2020). The claim was also in line with past studies that changing negative personal value systems and irrational beliefs workers to better ones could improve the quality of performance (Načinović Braje, Aleksić & Rašić Jelavić, 2020), increased outputs, and quality of work-life (Agu et al 2021; Ede et al 2021b). This suggests that teacher disciplinary policy should be reviewed thereby creating a sound organizational culture and ethical practice that could instill acceptable workplace constructive behaviours in workers.

5 CONCLUSION

Given the outcomes of this research, we finally suggest that teachers at lower cadres deliberately violate workplace deviant behaviour compared to those at middle and upper cadres. The results showed that working status and years of experience do not correlate with workplace deviance behaviours. On the other hand, there was no significant correlation between working status and workplace deviant behaviours. For this reason, occupational health professionals and school management authorities should reform staff policy, improve communication, and set up mechanisms that could checkmate activities and dispute negative personal value systems responsible for workplace deviant behaviours.

6 LIMITATION

Like other quantitative studies, the present study has some notable methodological flaws, although, those limitations do not adversely affect the outcomes of this study. Firstly, the only quantitative measure was used in this study instead of including qualitative methods. If we had added the qualitative method, responses provided by the participants would have been more detailed than quantitative methods. Besides this, the second limitation is the inability of this study to measure the personality traits and organizational factors underlying workplace deviant behaviours. Thirdly, we regret that a wider sample was used to ensure adequate representation of the teachers' population in Nigeria. We, therefore, added and recommend that subsequent studies should fill the possible methodological gaps this study may have created.

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