

Empirical Reflection on Workplace Spirituality and Employees Deviant Behaviour in Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract: This study examined the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee deviant behaviour in Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State. Employee deviant behavior was operationalised through property deviance, personal deviance and production deviance. The study adopted the cross-sectional survey in its investigation of the variables and the primary source of data was generated through questionnaire. The population of this study consists of 202 staff of Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt and a sample size of 134 based on Taro Yamane sampling formula. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. Data generated were analyzed and presented using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The hypotheses were tested using Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Statistics. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance. The results revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between workplace spirituality and employee deviant behaviour in Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State. The study thus recommends that Management of Deposit Money Banks should encourage transcendence in order to reduce property deviance. Management of Deposit Money Banks should advocate sense making as a means of reducing production deviance.

Keywords: Workplace Spirituality, Deviant Behaviour, Property deviance, personal deviance, production deviance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Employees are the drivers of the organizations' progress – their continued effort spurs the organization towards its targets and enables its survival. However, where the workers deviate from the norms, standards and values of the organization, the consequences may be unfavourable and ultimately lead to the demise of the organization.

Waseem (2016) describes employee deviant behaviour as that which substantially departs from the norm or expectations of the organization. Deviance denotes an aggressive stance against the management and the organization as a whole. Where deviance is confrontational, it could affect relationships and result in the damaging of the organizations' assets or properties. Narayanan and Murphy (2017) also observe that deviance could also be subtle and by that, go unseen or unnoticed for a period of time until its effects are felt or observed. Three forms of employee deviant behavior is identified in the literatures – property deviance, production deviance and personal deviance (Waseem, 2016; Narayanan & Murphy, 2017).

The expression of deviance within the workplace is considered a problem for organizations given its implications for the efficiency and effectiveness of organizations (Michel, Newness & Duniewicz, 2015). Deviance according to Muafi (2015) results in low productivity, poor performance and the loss of resources. However, as noted by Afsar *et al.*, (2016) the

practice of spirituality is such that is aimed at uplifting and raising the workers being and consciousness above their present conditions or the turmoil of their environment. Thus spirituality elevates and enables a more controlled emotional approach towards relationships which could be beneficial to the property and production wellbeing of the organization as well as the personal wellbeing of the worker.

Workplace spirituality describes the organizations' values and conditioning of relationships in such a way that encourages and accommodates workers' practices and involvement in transcendence and other spirituality-based practices (Bansal, 2015). Although an individual-level construct, scholars agree that it begins with the organizations' authorization and support for such, given its link with the organization. Some scholars however consider the link unnecessary, suggesting that spirituality is highly subjective and may not rely on formal time, or physical act, or practice but rather could emanate from the values and inner workings of their life and consciousness. Nonetheless, one could argue that since its expression and manifestation is linked to the organization, it has to follow and toe the line of what is considered as accepted and accommodated within the organization.

studies have tended to prescribe external solutions to the challenge of deviance and as such presented the employee as solely motivated and driven by tangible factors. This noted focus on the external presents a gap in knowledge in terms of the employees' internal motivations and the influence of such on their tendency for employee deviant behaviour. This is as literature also appears to be scanty in line with content addressing intrinsic and self-motivating factors useful, imperative, or often adopted in addressing deviance within the workplace. One of such intrinsic approaches is workplace spirituality.

In view of the noted gap in knowledge owing to the paucity of content addressing internal and self-motivated actions geared towards self-control and self-betterment; as possible antecedents of employee deviant behaviour, this paper discussed the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee deviant behaviour. Thus, this study investigated the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee deviant work behaviour in Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State. The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee deviant behaviour in Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State

The following research questions served as a guide for this study:

What is the relationship between Workplace Spirituality and Employee Deviant Behavior in Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State?

The following hypotheses were put forward in line with the operationalized relationship between the variables of the study:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between Workplace Spirituality and Employees Deviant behavior in Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation; In investigating the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee deviant behaviour, this study adopts the self-determination theory which according to Deci, Olafsen and Ryan (2017) focuses on the internal and behavioural changes attainable where individuals or employees, in this case, draw from their values and sense of fulfilment in their activities or actions. This theory was proposed by Deci and Ryan in the mid-80s (Deci *et al.*, 2017). They sought to build knowledge on the internal motivation of individuals in line with engaging in actions and behaviour primarily for the satisfaction derived from such. The theory of self-determination identifies the individual as having the capacity for self-motivation and control of emotions outside the influence of other external influences or factors. This follows the core tenets of the self-determination theory in advancing improved behaviour through the focus on internal strengths and motivation rather than external stimuli. Gagné *et al.*, (2017) argue that self-determination can be encouraged through the structuring of organizational settings and culture which emphasize self-reliance.

Empirical Review

Schutte (2016) argues that more and more organizations are increasingly adopting and accommodating spirituality practices. This comes with the observed growth in organizational policies that focus on diversity management as well as

the recognition of the rights to individual beliefs and ways of life. Schutte (2016) opines that spirituality is also an aspect of the identity of the worker and should be recognized as important in building their self-esteem and sense of placement. This way the author posits that organizations should be more supportive and integrative; enabling improved and increased levels of autonomy where workers are allowed to express themselves, their ideas, creativity and also their spirituality in the organization. This is essential to stabilizing and enhancing relations within the organization and also enriching the workers' experience.

Michel *et al.*, (2015) argue that employee deviant behaviour can be devastating to the organization as it is retrogressive, wasteful and weighs in on its harmony and level of cohesion. Deviance stifles the optimal application of the organizations' resources and thus militates against its competitiveness and ability to thrive and grow. Balogun, Oluyemi and Afolabi (2018) opine that deviance can be traced to employee's frustrations with the organization and the extent to which their expectations are not met or fulfilled. Thus, they act out their frustrations through actions targeted at the source of their anger – the organization itself. Balogun *et al.*, (2018) further argued that employees in some cases consider their actions as justified on the basis that their sense of hurt is transferred to the organization as well.

The expression of deviance according to Muafi (2015) is noted to be most evident within organizations that are high on competition and thus in most cases place the workers under enormous pressure and stress. This according to Kargi (2011) aggravates worker's feelings of estrangement and could as such lead to their expressions of deviance at the workplace. This according to Aremu, Suberu and Oke (2010) is most common within Nigerian banks where workers are often tasked with meeting up with highly demanding targets within short deadlines and time limits. Dietrich and Wanzenried (2011) argue that most industries in their growth and advancements over the years have failed to consider the emotional and mental concerns of their staff. This according to Kargi (2011) is occasioned by the rising unemployment rates within the country and persisting labour market disparities that have altogether favoured the employers – thus delimiting employees' bargaining positions over the years. Such changes appear beyond the control of the worker, who in turn feels out of place, exploited and unappreciated may indulge in employee deviant behaviour.

Asawo (2009) reveals that it is vital for improved relations, especially between leaders and their subordinates. Ahiauzu and Asawo (2009) posit that spirituality is an emerging concept and one which within the workplace, applies to various features and facets of relationships and interactions across the various levels and units of the organization. This position agrees with that of Gatling (2016) who identified spirituality as necessitating the bonding and level of mutual value between members or constituents of the organization. Workplace spirituality is therefore imperative for improved work relations and enhanced levels of collaboration within any social context. Asawo (2009) observe that through the expressions of spirituality values such as altruistic love and unwavering hope, the leadership of the organization could stimulate worker's commitment and resilience towards the goals of the organization.

Novalein (2017) in a study reviewed that a major factor of employee deviant behaviour was brought about by workplace ethics and environmental culture. This study concurs with the findings of the study engaged by Yassin (2011), that environmental ethics, job satisfaction and self-esteem are some of the major factors affecting the increase of employee deviant behaviour in the workplace. Another study found that workplace employee deviant behaviour influenced performance that employee with a high level of workplace employee deviant behaviour has a low level of performance while employees with a low level of performance have a high level of performance (Muafi, 2011).

Zigarmi, Houson and Diehl (2011) state that when an employee has passion for a job, he or she will create productively, energized and loyal employees and at the same time become a valuable asset for the organization with the required capabilities that the company needs but apathetic employees will become a financial burden to the organization and break the morale which will in turn decrease productivity and may sometimes result to employee deviant behaviour in the workplace. Aryati, Sudiro, Hadiwidjaja and Noermijati (2017) conducted a study and found out that there exists a negative relationship between leadership ethics and employee deviant behaviour and he further states that the study showed that ethical leadership can encourage and reduce the incident of employee deviant behaviour occurring in the workplace. Gils, Quaquebeke, Knippenberg, Dijike and Cremer (2013) further explain that low ethical leadership can encourage employee deviant behaviour in the workplace with low-performing employees. Ahmad and Omar (2014) propose that workplace spirituality can be an element for the reduction of employee deviant behaviour occurring in the workplace through job satisfaction.

Radzali (2015) asserts that the fundamentals of workplace spirituality and employee deviant behaviour show that workplace spirituality takes part in an aspect of employee deviant behaviour. Workplace Spirituality is regarded as a personal effort to understand the meaning in life and its goal (Gørill *et al.*, 2011; Mohsen and Faraji 2015). Workplace Spirituality includes vital quality of life resources such as hope, self-transcendence, and meaning (Gørill *et al.*, 2016). Those who are committed to their job in the workplace are very much certain about the future and hope to stay longer. They do not give in to quitting their job. According to Reinhoudt (2004), those who return to work after a long break like the festive season expect positive outcomes and tend to see the best in a bad situation; they are likely to demonstrate more proactive coping behaviours. There is evidence that workplace spirituality is an important factor to general well-being and reduced workplace employee deviant behaviour.

According to Wainana *et al.*, (2014), if employees are allowed to conduct spirituality in the workplace, it will greatly help in giving motivation, improving performance, making ethical judgments and decisions that are morally right. Contrarily, if they are not allowed, it will result in various problems such as low morale factor, labour turnover, low performance towards productivity, and no commitment to an organization. Rahman *et al.*, (2014) state that the employees who have high spirituality levels will show less workplace employee deviant behaviour. Another research in this area was conducted on workplace spirituality and its relationship with workplace employee deviant behaviour by Ahmad and Omar (2014). The research suggested that workplace spirituality can be a potential element to reduce employee deviant behaviour through job satisfaction. Moreover, Ahmad & Omar (2014), Rahim *et al.*, (2014) discovered that there is a negative correlation between workplace spirituality and employee deviant behaviours.

Previous studies (Bansal, 2015; Charoensukmongkol *et al.*, 2015), point to the implications of workplace spirituality for character development and thus, improved workplace relations and collaboration. Workplace spirituality is as such necessary for promoting enriched exchange and interaction outcomes which facilitate enhanced levels of cooperation, social as well as task support which at the end contribute towards the overall operations of the organization. While having an organizational level impact, workplace spirituality can also be described as having an individual level impact as well – moderating the behaviour and actions of workers in ways that allow for improved interpersonal tendencies and relations with co-workers and with their superiors within the work environment. This aligns with the views of Belwalker and Vohra (2016) that workplace spirituality, although self-fulfilling, invariably plays out on the overall content and structuring of relations within the work environment

3. METHODOLOGY

This study is a correlation study as it examined the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee deviant behaviour. However, the relationship between the variables is based on a non-contrived setting and as such quasi-experimental in nature. Gills and Johnson (2010) observed that in assessing variables that are social or behavioural and as such operational within natural settings and at a particular time, the correlation research design is considered as most suitable and adequate. This view is shared by Creswell (2012) who stated that the correlation design is cost-effective, convenient and as a descriptive approach is most effective in generating data from numerous cases within a specific point in time in assessing or addressing the relationship between two or more variables at a particular or specified time. Thus, this research was designed as a correlation study in its investigation of the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee deviant work behaviour. The population for this study was made up of 202 staff of 18 Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State

4. RESULTS

The bivariate hypothetical statement for the study refers to the inferential statistics for the test of Hypothesis using the Spearman's rank order correlation coefficient. The Spearman is adopted as the correlation tool as a result of its non-parametric features (normality of distribution, homogeneity of variance for the variables) and its suitability for data which is either scaled on the interval or ordinal level of scaling. The Spearman's rank order correlation also allows for the assessment of the assumptions of ranking in the effect and associations between the variables. Hypotheses are tested using the 95% confidence interval as is advocated in the social and behavioural sciences, as such the 0.05 level of significance is adopted as the threshold for the assessment of the significance of effects. Hence a $P < 0.05$ indicates a significant relationship between the variables, while a $P > 0.05$ indicates an insignificant relationship.

Table 1: Relationship between Workplace Spirituality and the Measures of Employee Deviant Behaviour

			Workplace Spirituality	Property Deviance	Production Deviance	Personal Deviance
Spearman's rho	Spirituality	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.626**	0.814**	0.720**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	117	117	117	117
Property Deviance	Property Deviance	Correlation Coefficient	0.626**	0.868**	1.000	0.779**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	117	117	117	117
Production Deviance	Production Deviance	Correlation Coefficient	0.814**	1.000	0.868**	0.853**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	117	117	117	117
Personal Deviance	Personal Deviance	Correlation Coefficient	0.720**	0.853**	0.779**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	117	117	117	117

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

Source: Research data, 2021

What is the relationship between Workplace Spirituality (WPS) and Employee Deviant Behaviour in Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State?

Evidence on the relationship between Workplace Spirituality and the measures of employee deviant behaviour is reflected in table 1 with the correlation coefficient (rho) values used to answer the research question as shown below:

- i. With a rho of 0.626, WPS is revealed to have a strong positive relationship with property deviance and the relationship is significant with p at $0.000 < 0.05$.
- ii. With a rho of 0.814, WPS is revealed to have a strong positive relationship with production deviance and the relationship is significant with p at $0.000 < 0.05$.
- iii. With a rho of 0.720, WPS is revealed to have a strong positive relationship with personal deviance and the relationship is significant with p at $0.000 < 0.05$.

The p-value of the study will enable us accept or reject hypothesis 1, 2 and 3; and generalize our findings to the population.

Based on this empirical finding that WPS is revealed to have a strong positive relationship with employee deviant behaviour and the relationship is significant with p at $0.000 < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected. The result indicates that WPS is a significant predictor of the extent to which employees within the Deposit Money Banks are willing to engage in behaviour such as property deviance, production deviance and personal deviance.

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result reveals that there is a positive relationship between workplace spirituality and employee deviant behaviour in Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State, and the relationship is said to be significant. Research constantly shows that individual behaviour in the workplace is affected by perception of workplace spirituality. That is, if employees perceive the outcomes of their evaluations to be fair or perceive the process by which outcome allocation decisions are made to be

fair, they will reciprocate by performing behaviours to benefit their organization that goes beyond the in-role performance of their jobs (Adim, Tamunomeibi, Akintokunbo & Adubasim, 2018). The actions and behaviour of individuals within the workplace has certain and serious implications on the behaviour and outcome of the organization (Charoensukmongkol *et al.*, 2015; Hunsaker & Nam, 2017).

While organizations, through human resource efforts, drive for change and development through the structuring of policies and frameworks patterned towards controlling and coordinating behaviour within the organization; it is yet expected that employees focus on their personal development and the inculcation of characters and traits that not only advance their wellbeing within the workplaces but that of co-workers and the organization as well. Workplace spirituality offers a pathway through which employees can build themselves emotionally, mentally and physically. This is because workplace spirituality creates a sense of duty and obligation to others within the same workplace and facilitates improved levels of communication and cooperation between co-workers in the organization. This is as Walt (2018) argues that workplace spirituality promotes inner peace and stability – distancing the worker emotionally from the stress and enabling them a healthier approach towards functions and role performance.

Studies similar to this have found evidence which supports the relationship between dimensions of workplace spirituality perceptions and various forms of employee deviant behaviours. Balogun and Komolafe, 2016; Abdullah and Marican, 2017; Rai and Agarwal, 2018 in previous studies on employee deviant behaviour have towed a dominant path with antecedents such as work environment, compensation, employer-employee relationship and human resource policies. However, these emphasize more on the external and suggest deviance based on experiences and as such an overly extrinsic and materialistic perspective. These studies have tended to prescribe external solutions to the challenge of deviance and as such presented the employee as solely motivated and driven by tangible factors. This noted focus on the external presents a gap in knowledge in terms of the employees' internal motivations and the influence of such on their tendency for employee deviant behaviour. This is as literature also appears to be scanty in line with content addressing intrinsic and self-motivating factors useful, imperative, or often adopted in addressing deviance within the workplace. One of such intrinsic approaches is workplace spirituality. But none of the study is done in the context of Nigeria, particularly as it relates to Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State. As such, this finding offers a validating position for the findings of previous studies.

6. CONCLUSION

This study has made conclusion by disclosing that Workplace spirituality is significantly related with employee deviant behaviour. When the dimensions of workplace spirituality are evident and positive such that the framework of organizational values that supports and encourages the employees' practice of transcendence and consciousness equally align with their responsibilities that enhances their relationships and sense of fulfillment within the organization.

Workplace spirituality is well characterized in the Deposit Money Banks in the forms of transcendence, sense-making and mindfulness. Transcendence is the perceived capacity of the individual to consciously rise and raise themselves above certain factors or situations or events and addressing such situations from a more advanced and heightened point of view. Sense-making involves actions of apportioning or giving meaning to situations, relationships, or events based on internalized experiences, awareness, interpretations and personal values and beliefs. Mindfulness is the condition of consciousness and awareness of oneself, actions and conduct towards significant others as well as work, as a way of controlling and checking one's behaviour and actions. These workplace spirituality dimensions all have significant effects on the measures of employee deviant behaviour as revealed by the analysis.

This research contributes to developing theory on the relationships between workplace spirituality and employee deviant behaviour.. It confirms the feasibility of a higher-order overall spirituality measurement. Transcendence facets are better predictors of employees' attitudes and behaviours when compared to sense-making and mindfulness. The study also clarifies the differential effect of the three dimensions of organizational spirituality and the three measures of employee deviant behaviour in the present investigation. The study thus recommends that Management of Deposit Money Banks should encourage transcendence in order to reduce property deviance. Management of Deposit Money Banks should advocate sense making as a means of reducing production deviance

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International Journal of Novel Research in Marketing Management and Economics

Vol. 8, Issue 3, pp: (24-32), Month: September - December 2021, Available at: www.noveltyjournals.com

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