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WORKPLACE DEVIANT BEHAVIOUR IN NIGERIAN ORGANIZATIONS: ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE, LEADERSHIP STYLES AND DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS AS PREDICTORS

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ABSTRACT

Workplace deviant behavior (WPB) remains a significant challenge in Nigerian organizations, negatively impacting productivity, employee well-being, and overall organizational effectiveness. Acts of workplace deviance, such as theft, sabotage, absenteeism, and insubordination, disrupt organizational harmony and hinder operational efficiency. This study examined the influence of organizational justice (distributive, procedural, and interactional), leadership styles (transformational, autocratic, and laissez-faire), and demographic factors (gender, marital status, family type, religion, and educational qualification) on workplace deviant behavior (WPB) in selected Nigerian organizations. A total of 310 employees participated in the study, comprising 160 males (51.6%), 147 females (47.4%), and 3 respondents (1.0%) who did not indicate their gender. Standardized instruments were used to assess leadership styles, organizational justice, and WPB. Findings from multiple regression analysis showed that organizational justice significantly predicted WPB, accounting for 13.7% of the variance ($R^2 = .137$, $p < .001$). Distributive, procedural, and interactional justice independently influenced WPB, with interactional justice showing the strongest effect ($\beta = -.228$, $p < .05$). Leadership styles also significantly predicted WPB, accounting for 37.1% of the variance ($R^2 = .371$, $p < .001$). Transformational leadership negatively predicted WPB ($\beta = -.377$, $p < .001$), while laissez-faire leadership had a positive effect ($\beta = .456$, $p < .001$). Autocratic leadership did not significantly influence WPB ($p > .05$). However, univariate analysis of variance revealed that demographic factors did not have a significant independent or joint effect on WPB. These findings highlight the critical role of organizational justice and leadership styles in shaping workplace behaviors. Organizations should promote fair treatment and adopt effective leadership approaches to mitigate deviant behaviors.

Keywords: Workplace deviant behavior, organizational justice, leadership styles, demographic factors, Nigerian organizations

INTRODUCTION

Workplace deviant behaviour (WDB) is a major concern for organizations worldwide, particularly in developing economies like Nigeria, where ethical challenges and management inefficiencies often contribute to workplace misconduct (Akinbode & Fagbohunde, 2022). Workplace deviance refers to voluntary behaviours that violate organizational norms and can harm the organization or its members (Bennett & Robinson, 2021). More so, workplace deviant behaviour is defined as voluntary actions by employees that violate organizational norms and threaten the well-being of the organization or its members (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Likewise, workplace deviant behaviours (WDBs) represent different kinds of employee behaviour that impair the organization's genuine benefits, jeopardizing its members (Sackett et al., 2006; Kalemci et al., 2019; Adekanmbi & Ukpere, 2021). These behaviours range from minor infractions like lateness and reduced work effort to severe misconduct such as fraud, theft, sabotage, and workplace aggression (Appelbaum et al., 2020). The prevalence of WDB in Nigeria is alarming. According to Transparency International (2023), workplace fraud and misconduct cost Nigerian businesses over ₦250 billion annually. Similarly, a study by the Nigerian Institute of Management (NIM, 2023) reported that over 45% of employees admitted to engaging in some form of workplace deviance, highlighting the need for urgent interventions. Existing literature suggests that organizational justice, leadership styles, and demographic factors significantly influence WDB (Colquitt et al., 2021; Okonkwo & Edeh, 2021).

Organizational justice, which refers to employees' perceptions of fairness in workplace procedures, rewards, and interpersonal interactions, has been linked to ethical conduct and job satisfaction (Greenberg, 1987). Specifically, organizational justice is concerned with the ways in which employees determine if they have been treated fairly in their jobs and the ways in which those determinations influence other work-related variables (Afolabi et al., 2022). When employees perceive injustice, they may resort to deviant behaviours such as absenteeism, theft, and sabotage as a form of retaliation or coping mechanism (Robbins et al., 2022). Also, when employees perceive injustice, they may retaliate with deviant behaviours that harm the organization (Akinbode et al., 2022). Organizational justice theory, as proposed by Greenberg (1987), suggests that employees evaluate their workplace experiences based on distributive justice (fairness in rewards and outcomes), procedural justice (fairness in decision-making processes), and interactional justice (fairness in interpersonal treatment). When employees perceive injustice in these dimensions, they may retaliate through workplace deviance (Colquitt et al., 2021). Empirical evidence has shown a strong relationship between perceived organizational injustice and deviant behaviours in Nigerian workplaces (Akinbode et al., 2022). Further studies have shown that when employees perceive unfair treatment, they are more likely to engage in workplace deviance (Akinbode et al., 2022). For example, employees who feel underpaid or unfairly treated in promotions may engage in counterproductive behaviours such as theft or reduced work effort (Okonkwo et al., 2021).

Leadership styles also play a crucial role in shaping employee behaviour, and refers to the behaviour and approach employed by a leader to influence, motivate, guide, and manage their team to achieve organizational goals. Likewise, leadership style encompasses the methods and techniques leaders use to communicate, make decisions, and interact with subordinates to achieve organizational mandates (Egwunyenga, 2010). In the Nigerian organizations, the dominant leadership styles and their impact on WDB have been explored, with findings suggesting that transformational leaders, who inspire (Bass & Avolio, 1994) and motivate their employees (De Hoogh et al., 2022), are found to reduce workplace deviance by fostering an environment of trust (Podsakoff et al., 1990; Nguyen et al., 2022). In contrast, transactional leaders, who focus on rewards and punishments (Ezeh et al., 2021), may inadvertently encourage deviant behaviour if employees feel overly controlled or underappreciated (Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Nguyen et al., 2022). On the other hand, studies indicate that autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles contribute to higher levels of workplace deviance, while transformational leadership reduces such behaviours (Bennett & Robinson, 2021). In Nigerian organizations, where leadership is often influenced by political and hierarchical structures, leadership style plays a crucial role in shaping employee behaviour.

Additionally, demographic factors such as age, gender, education level, and marital status influence how employees react to workplace stressors and organizational policies (Agwu, 2022). Similarly, demographic factors have been found to influence workplace behaviour (Ezeh & Nwankwo, 2023). For instance, younger employees may exhibit more deviant behaviours due to career uncertainty and job dissatisfaction, while older employees may engage less in deviant acts due to greater job stability (Agwu, 2022). As well, gender differences have been observed, with some studies indicating that men engage in more overt workplace deviance than women (Bennett & Robinson, 2021). Despite the increasing concerns about workplace deviance in Nigeria, there is limited empirical research exploring the combined effects of organizational justice, leadership styles, and demographic factors in predicting WDB. Understanding these predictors is essential for improving workplace policies, promoting ethical behavior, and fostering organizational integrity.

Statement of the Problem

Workplace deviant behavior (WPB) has become a growing concern in Nigerian organizations, posing significant challenges to productivity, employee morale, and overall organizational effectiveness. Deviant behaviors such as absenteeism, fraud, sabotage, insubordination, and

workplace aggression undermine organizational goals and create a toxic work environment. The persistence of these behaviors suggests the need for a deeper understanding of the factors that contribute to their occurrence. Despite the efforts of regulatory bodies like the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), cases of fraud, corruption, and workplace misconduct remain widespread (Transparency International, 2023), and Nigerian organizations continue to suffer from unethical practices, and leadership inefficiencies (Transparency International, 2023).

The rise of workplace deviance in Nigerian organizations can be attributed to weak organizational policies, lack of fair treatment, poor leadership, and employee dissatisfaction (Agwu, 2022). Reports from the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC, 2023) indicate that workplace misconduct is responsible for at least 30% of employee dismissals annually, while studies suggest that over 60% of Nigerian employees have witnessed unethical behaviours in their workplaces, with 25% actively engaging in acts of deviance (NIM, 2023), yet existing policies have failed to address the root causes of such behaviours.

While studies have explored the relationship between organizational justice and workplace deviance (Colquitt et al., 2021; Akinbode et al., 2022) and the influence of leadership styles on employee behaviour (Ezeh & Nwankwo, 2023), few have examined how these variables interact with demographic factors to predict workplace deviance in Nigerian organizations. While previous studies have explored organizational justice as a predictor of workplace deviance (Colquitt et al., 2021; Akinbode et al., 2022), and others have examined demographic factors in isolation (Ezeh & Nwankwo, 2023), few have analyzed the joint influence of these factors on workplace deviance in Nigerian organizations. In spite of these insights, there is a gap in research exploring the combined effects of organizational justice, leadership styles and demographic factors on workplace deviant behaviour in Nigerian organizations. This study, therefore, seeks to examine the extent to which organizational justice, leadership styles, and demographic factors predict WPB in Nigerian organizations.

Research Question

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the organizational justice (distributive, procedural, and interactional justice) prediction in workplace deviant behaviour in Nigerian organizations?
2. To what extent leadership styles (transformational, autocratic, and laissez-faire) influence workplace deviant behaviour in Nigerian organizations?
3. What is the combined effect gender, age, marital status, level of education, income, job status, job tenure, types of employment, and family type in workplace deviant behaviour in Nigerian organizations?

Hypotheses

The following alternative hypotheses (H_1) will be tested based on the dimensionality of the variables at 0.05 level of significance:

- i. Organizational justice (distributive, procedural, and interactional justice) will significantly predict workplace deviant behaviour in Nigerian organizations.
- ii. Leadership styles (transformational, autocratic, and laissez-faire) will significantly and positively influence workplace deviant behaviour in Nigerian organizations.
- iii. Demographic factors (gender, age, marital status, level of education, income, job status, job tenure, type of employment, and family type) will independently and jointly predicts workplace deviant behavior in Nigerian organizations.

Significance of the study

The study on Workplace Deviant Behaviour in Nigerian Organizations: The Interplay of Organizational Justice, Leadership Styles, and Demographic Factors as Predictors holds significant theoretical, practical, and policy implications. Therefore, this study will expand the body

of knowledge on workplace deviant behaviour by integrating organizational justice, leadership styles, and demographic factors, thus providing a more holistic understanding of its predictors. In addition, the study will test existing theories such as the Equity Theory, Social Exchange Theory, and the General Strain Theory in the Nigerian organizational context, thereby confirming their relevance or suggesting modifications. Moreover, by focusing on workplace deviance in Nigeria, the study will address gaps in literature, especially concerning the combined influence of organizational justice, leadership styles, and demographic characteristics. Furthermore, findings from this study will help organizational leaders understand how perceptions of fairness in procedures, distributions, and interpersonal interactions influence deviant behaviour, leading to better policies on justice and equity in the workplace. Insights into how different leadership styles impact workplace deviance can guide managers in adopting leadership approaches that minimize counterproductive work behaviour while fostering employee commitment. Organizations can use the findings to design targeted interventions, such as employee training, ethical leadership development, and workplace culture improvement, to mitigate deviant behaviours. By identifying key predictors of deviant behaviour, this study will provide practical recommendations for improving employee morale, reducing counterproductive behaviour, and ultimately enhancing organizational efficiency. The study's findings can inform the development of workplace policies that promote justice, ethical leadership, and an inclusive work environment, reducing the likelihood of deviant workplace behaviour. By examining demographic factors, this research can help policymakers and HR professionals design workplace interventions tailored to different employee groups, ensuring inclusivity and fairness. As workplace deviant behaviour often contributes to larger societal issues such as corruption and unethical practices, this study's findings can aid in curbing these vices within Nigerian organizations.

Conceptual Clarifications/Literature Review

This section provides the conceptual clarifications of the major variables, as well as a theoretical and empirical review of related studies, in order to situate the present research within existing scholarship.

Concept of Workplace Deviant Behaviour

Workplace deviant behavior refers to voluntary actions by employees that violate significant organizational norms, thereby threatening the well-being of the organization, its members, or both. Robinson and Bennett (1995) define it as "voluntary behavior that violates significant organizational norms and, in so doing, threatens the well-being of an organization, its members, or both. Workplace deviant behaviors are prevalent across various sectors and can lead to significant organizational losses, including decreased employee morale, increased turnover, and loss of legitimacy among stakeholders. For instance, a study among non-academic staff in universities in South-South Nigeria identified behaviors such as vandalism, manipulation of records, abuse of office, wastage of resources, and aggression towards colleagues as common deviant behaviors.

Robinson and Bennett (1995) developed a typology of workplace deviance based on two dimensions: the target of the deviant behavior (organization vs. individuals) and the severity of the behavior (minor vs. serious). This framework identifies four categories: Production Deviance: Minor violations targeting the organization, such as intentionally working slowly or taking excessive breaks. Property Deviance: Serious violations targeting the organization's assets, including theft, sabotage, or vandalism. Political Deviance: Minor violations targeting individuals, like favoritism, gossiping, or spreading rumors. Personal Aggression: Serious violations targeting individuals, such as harassment, verbal abuse, or physical violence.

Several factors contribute to workplace deviance, which can be broadly categorized into individual-related, interpersonal, and organizational factors: Individual-related Factors: Job stress, personality traits, emotional intelligence, and moral deviation can influence an employee's likelihood to engage in deviant behavior. Interpersonal Factors: Group norms and behaviors, as

well as the quality of relationships among colleagues, can impact the occurrence of deviant behaviors. Organizational Factors: Perceived organizational support, ethical climate, organizational justice, supervisory support, job demands, and organizational trust are significant predictors of workplace deviance.

Concept of Organizational Justice

The concept of organizational justice was introduced in 1987 by Greenberg. It is concerned with how an employee judges the behavior of the organization as well as the resultant attitude and behavior of the employee. It simply refers to the extent of employee perception of fairness in the workplace. Organizational justice has been widely studied in the majors of management, psychology and organizational behavior (Parker & Kohlmeyer, 2005). Similarly, organizational justice is the expression of workers view about fair treatment in the organization and a building block for strong tied between worker and management of the organization (Greenberg, 2017). It deals with how workers perceived they are been treated, which, if positive, leads to commitment and loyalty to their job tasks, duties and organizational goals, but if negative leads to employee absenteeism, turnover. Cohen-charash and Spector (2011) have posited that areas of concern in organizational justice include; performance, commitment, loyalty, job satisfaction, citizenship behaviour, employee turnover, employee theft and alienation. Organizational justice is the measurement of an organization's conduct towards its workers by taking into account the general ethical and moral norms (Rahman, Haque, Elahi, & Miah, 2015). Syarifah (2016) has viewed organizational justice as the fair treatment to employees which is divided into three types: distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice.

Specifically, organizational justice is concerned with the ways in which employees determine if they have been treated fairly in their jobs and the ways in which those determinations influence other work-related variables (Moorman, 1991). Organizational justice can help explain why employees retaliate against inequitable outcomes or inappropriate processes and interactions (Alsalem & Alhaiani, 2007). Employee's perceptions relate to three dimensions of organizational justice: distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice.

Distributive justice refers to the perceived fairness of the outcomes that an individual receives from organization. Outcomes may be distributed on the basis of equality, need or contribution and individuals determine the fairness of distribution through comparison with others (Alsalem & Alhaiani, 2007). Perceptions of an unfair distribution of work rewards relative to work inputs create tension within an individual and the individual is motivated to resolve the tension (Adams, 1963), However, with the finding that the procedures used to determine outcomes can be more influential than the outcomes itself, the emphasis has gradually shifted from distributive to procedural justice.

Procedural justice refers to participants' perceptions about the fairness of the rules and procedures that regulate a process (Nabatchi, et al., 2007). Whereas distributive justice suggests that satisfaction is a function of outcome, procedural justice suggests that satisfaction is a function of process. Among the traditional principles of procedural justice are impartiality, voice or opportunity to be heard, and grounds for decisions (Bayles, 1990). Procedural issues such as neutrality of the process (Tyler & Lind, 1992), treatment of the participants (Bies & Moag, 1986; Lind & Tyler, 1988), and the trustworthiness of the decision making authority (Tyler & Bies, 1990) are important to enhancing perceptions of procedural justice. Extensive literature supports procedural justice theories of satisfaction. In general, research suggests that if organizational processes and procedures are perceived to be fair, then participants will be more satisfied, more willing to accept the resolution of that procedure, and more likely to form positive attitudes about the organization (Bingham, 1997; Tyler et al., 1992)

Interactional justice, defined as the quality of interpersonal treatment received during the enactment of organizational procedures (Bies & Moag, 1986). In general, interactional justice

reflects concerns about the fairness of the non-procedurally dictated aspects of interaction; however, research has identified two subcategories of interactional justice: informational justice and interpersonal justice (Folger & Cropanzano, 1998). These two subcategories of informational and interpersonal justice overlap considerably; however, research suggests that they should be considered separately, as each has differential effects on justice perceptions (Colquitt, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2001). Interactional justice includes various actions displaying social sensitivity, such as when supervisors treat employees with respect and dignity. Mikula et al. (1990) reported that a considerable proportion of perceived injustices did not concern distributional or procedural issues in the narrow sense, but instead referred to the manner in which people were treated interpersonally during interactions and encounters

Concept of Leadership Styles

Harris, Leithwood, Day, Sammons and Hopkins (2007) postulated that leadership style is the kind of relationship that is used by an individual to make people work together for a common goal or objective. According to Mitonga-Monga, Coetzee and Cilliers (2012), leadership is the pattern associated with managerial behavior, which is designed to integrate the organizational or personal interests and effects for achieving particular objectives. Different styles of leadership adopt different methods of leading subordinates and therefore, produce different results. It is against this backdrop, that this section tends to review different types of leadership styles and how they influence subordinates to yield desired results.

The transformational leadership concept was formulated by Burns (1978), who described the transformation of leadership as a process where "leaders and followers gain higher levels of morality and motivation." Later, leadership author Bass (1985), whose theory of transformational leadership was based upon Burns' earlier ideas, with several modifications or elaborations. According to him, transformational leadership is defined in terms of the leader's effect on followers: they feel trust, admiration, loyalty, respect toward the leader, and they are motivated to do more than they initially expected to do (Mullins, 2010; Robbins & Judge, 2016).

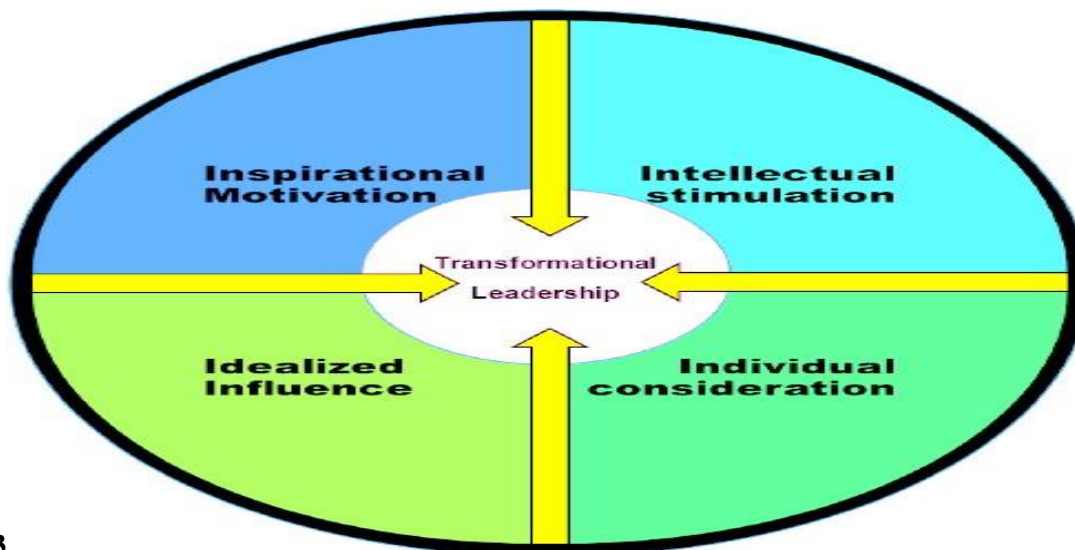
In addition, transformational leadership is the process of transforming virtually everything of an organization including organizational behaviour, cultures, employees and other involved parties. It is also comprising of the practice that makes the leaders to transform themselves as well (Baldwin 1995; Eden et al., 2002). According to Bass and Riggio (2006) "Transformational leadership involves inspiring followers to commit to a shared vision and goals for an organization or unit, challenging them to be innovative problem solvers, and developing followers' leadership capacity via coaching, monitoring and provision of both challenge and support".

A closer look at those definitions and interpretations reveals the fact that transformational leadership is all about bringing changes according to the time and situations and positively motivate and instigate work forces for reducing shoddy practice and producing more output. It is a philosophy that urges leaders to make the employees accepting changes and come out of traditional ideas. It also directed towards motivating people for initiating new mechanisms thorough innovative experiments (Gronn, 1995).

Podsakoff, MacKenzie and Bommer (1996) opined that there is an increase in the level of performance, satisfaction and commitment to the goals of an organization, as a result of transformational leadership style. Bass (1990) proposed four components of transformational leadership to include Idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individual consideration (Obiwuru et al. 2011), as presented in figure 1. *Idealized influence* is all about establishing trust and confidence in the heart of the followers. It enables a leader to establish himself as a role model and followers in every case is inclined to imitate him. According to Jyoti & Bhau (2015), the idealized and behavioral charisma of a transformational leader motivate the followers to identify with the leader. The personalized relationship developed by a transformational leader creates an environment in which the employees are happy and fulfilled. Hence, their overall performance is improved, which invariably increases productivity. *Inspirational motivation* involves creating such appealing atmosphere that motivates the

employees or followers to come out of traditional ideas and feel themselves as a big part of the organization and produce better results. It is more of related with charismatic leadership phenomenon. According to Obiwuru et al. (2011) is usually a companion of charisma and is concerned with a leader setting higher standards, thus becoming a sign of reference. Bass (1985) opined those followers look up to their inspirational leader as one providing emotional appeal to increase awareness and understanding of mutually desirable goals (Obiwuru et al. 2011). This is evident by the communication of high expectations and expressing relevant objectives in simple terms. The leader always talks optimistically about the future, speculating a compelling vision for the future and providing an exciting sense of organizational change (Bass & Avolio 1994). The leader encourages followers to envision attractive future states for the organization and themselves

Figure 1. Component of Transformational Leadership



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Source: Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber (2009)

Intellectual stimulation comprises of techniques and strategies that leaders use to encourage the followers to be innovative, creative and simultaneously directed towards changing the beliefs and assumptions of the employees. Intellectual stimulation, which according to Bass (1985) provides followers with challenging new ideas, and encourages them to break away from the old ways of thinking (Obiwuru et al. 2011). The leader is characterized as one encouraging intelligence, logical thinking, careful problem solving and methodical ability. Bass & Avolio (1994) stressed that the attributes include seeking different perspectives when solving problems, suggesting new ways of examining how to complete tasks and encouraging re-thinking of ideas that have not been questioned in the past (Obiwuru et al. 2011). The leader motivates the subordinates to be inquisitive by questioning assumptions, and to be creative by approaching old situations in new ways, and reframing problems. The *individualized consideration* involves developing followers by coaching and mentoring (Obiwuru et al. 2011). The leader carefully observes the inter-individual differences amongst the followers and acts as mentor to them. The leader coaches and helps others to discover and develop their strengths, as well as listens attentively to others' concerns (Bass & Avolio 1994). Bass (1985) stressed that followers are treated individually in order to raise their levels of maturity, and to enhance effective ways of addressing their goals and challenges (Obiwuru et al. 2011).

The autocratic leadership style is also known as authoritative leadership style. According to Mgbeze (2014), while some input is sought from subordinates, the leaders regard their influence

as the key element in any major decision or job outcome. Mgbeze (2014) further stressed that the authoritative leader accomplishes ends through imparting a clear, compelling vision, sees to it that the vision is built into strategic planning, and guides actions throughout the organization. The authoritarian sets clear directions, monitors progress closely and declares to subordinates the position they wish them to adopt by elucidating why certain things are expected, done or required and how individual actions adapt into the larger picture. Mgbeze (2014) opined that the feedback authoritarian offers may be positive or negative but clear, and treatment of subordinates tends to be firm but fair. It may shade over into a directive style when subordinates are given very little power or decision-making authority. Ebrahim (2018) stressed that autocratic leaders force their followers to execute the services and strategies according to the narrow way in their views. A study by Iqbal, Anwar, and Haider (2015) to determine the effect of leadership style on employee performance showed that autocratic leaders are lacking in creativity and only promote one-sided conversation, which greatly affects the motivation and satisfaction level of the employees. The autocratic leadership style is however effective in the short term. Autocratic leadership limits the workplace socialization and communication which is necessary for effective organizational performance. The autocratic leadership also enhances organizational conflicts, which negatively affect the overall performance (Iqbal et al., 2015). The study conducted by Bhargavi and Yaseen (2016) revealed that the autocratic leadership style has a positive impact on the organizational performance. According to Bhargavi et al., (2016), this leadership style is more suitable when projects are to be completed within provided deadlines. Igbaekemen and Odivwri (2015) conducted a study on the impact of leadership style on the performance of organizations; they concluded that an autocratic leader is the one who determines the activities, techniques and policies to the employees, and expects the employees to follow the same. They further stressed that such leaders do not have much faith on their followers.

Laissez-faire leadership, also known as delegative leadership, is a hands-off approach where leaders provide minimal supervision and delegate decision-making authority to their team members. This style empowers employees to take full ownership of their tasks, trusting them to manage their responsibilities and make decisions independently. Leaders intervene only when necessary, offering guidance or resources if requested by [the team](#).

Laissez-faire leadership is characterized by avoidance and inaction (Bass & Bass, 2008; Avolio, 2011). Laissez-faire leaders avoid making decisions, abdicate their responsibilities, delay actions, and refrain from using the authority associated with their roles (Bass & Bass, 2008). They also fail to provide feedback and recognition to subordinates (Hinkin & Schriesheim, 2008b), and they tend to ignore followers' needs, as they do not deal with work-related problems (Yukl, 2010). These leaders do not take sides in disputes and are disorganized in dealing with priorities (Bass, 1998). Based on their survey, Aasland et al. (2010) noted that 21% of employees had experienced laissez-faire behaviours from their leaders during the previous six months, making laissez-faire the most prevalent form of negative leadership. Neglecting one's responsibilities as a leader harm both the organization and the subordinates (Hinkin & Schriesheim, 2008a; Skogstad et al., 2007). Laissez-faire leadership is not only ineffective but also destructive (Aasland et al., 2010; Einarsen, Aasland, & Skogstad, 2007; Skogstad, Aasland, et al., 2014; Skogstad, Hetland, et al., 2014). Empirically, laissez-faire leadership has been found to be associated with reduced subordinate effort (Bass & Stogdill, 1990), performance (Yammarino et al., 1993), job satisfaction, perceived leader effectiveness, and satisfaction with the leader (Judge & Piccolo, 2004); increased stress and interpersonal conflicts (Skogstad et al., 2007); and more role ambiguity and role conflict (Skogstad et al., 2007). However, the inactivity characterizing laissez-faire leadership makes this style of leadership unique and distinct from other forms of negative leadership because its negative consequences result from the absence of constructive behaviours rather than from the presence of destructive ones (Kelloway, Mullen, & Francis, 2006).

Demographic Factors

Demographic factors refer to the statistical characteristics of a population that influence various aspects of individual and group behaviors, including economic, social, psychological, and organizational outcomes. These factors typically include age, gender, ethnicity, education level, employment status, marital status, income, and geographic location. Scholars have examined the role of demographic variables in shaping attitudes, behaviors, and decision-making processes in various fields, including psychology, sociology, economics, and organizational studies.

Additionally, demographic factors are measurable attributes of individuals that define populations and subpopulations. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), demographics encompass "the study of human populations in terms of size, density, location, age, gender, race, occupation, and other statistics." Similarly, Armstrong (2020) describes demographic factors as "individual characteristics that influence patterns of behavior, consumption, and societal interactions. Recent studies emphasize the significance of demographic factors in diverse settings: A study by OECD (2022) found that individuals with higher education levels have a 25% higher employment rate compared to those with only primary education. World Bank (2023) data indicates that gender disparities in income persist, with women earning 82 cents for every dollar earned by men in many countries. Research by Pew Research Center (2021) found that demographic shifts, such as increased urbanization, significantly impact political preferences and economic policies.

Empirical Review

This section provides the empirical review by examining findings from previous studies related to the variables under investigation, highlighting consistencies, contradictions, and gaps that inform the present study.

Organizational Justice and Workplace Deviant Behaviour

Organizational justice refers to employees' perceptions of fairness within an organization and has been identified as a crucial predictor of workplace behaviors, including workplace deviant behavior (WDB). Workplace deviant behavior is any voluntary action that violates organizational norms and can harm either the organization or its members (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). Therefore, different studies have established a strong link between organizational justice dimensions—distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice—and the occurrence of workplace deviance (Colquitt et al., 2001; Greenberg, 2011).

Distributive justice refers to employees' perceptions of fairness in outcome allocation (Adams, 1965). When employees perceive inequity in rewards, salaries, or promotions, they may engage in workplace deviant behaviors such as theft, withdrawal, and sabotage (Greenberg, 1990). Empirical studies have demonstrated a negative correlation between distributive justice and workplace deviant behavior. For example, Skarlicki and Folger (1997) found that employees who perceived unfair distribution of resources were more likely to engage in retaliatory behaviors, including absenteeism and sabotage. A study by Greenberg (1990) found that employees who perceived unfair pay cuts engaged in theft at a rate 50% higher than those who perceived fairness in salary reductions. Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001) conducted a meta-analysis of 190 studies and found that distributive and procedural justice together accounted for 37% of the variance in workplace deviant behavior.

Procedural justice pertains to the fairness of processes used in decision-making (Leventhal, 1980). Studies suggest that when employees perceive decision-making procedures as biased or unfair, they are more likely to exhibit counterproductive work behaviors (CWB) (Cropanzano et al., 2007). A meta-analysis by Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001) revealed that low procedural justice was significantly associated with increased workplace deviance. Similarly, Ambrose et al. (2002) found that employees who perceived procedural injustices were more likely to engage in covert deviant behaviors such as spreading rumors or withholding effort. Another study by Ambrose et al. (2002) indicated that 45% of employees experiencing low procedural justice engaged in workplace deviance, compared to only 20% of those with high procedural justice perceptions.

Interactional justice focuses on the fairness of interpersonal treatment employees receive from supervisors and colleagues (Bies & Moag, 1986). Studies indicate that employees who experience disrespect, humiliation, or lack of proper communication from their supervisors are more prone to deviant behaviors (Tepper, 2000). For instance, Aquino et al. (2001) found that employees who perceived low interactional justice were more likely to retaliate through workplace incivility and aggression. Research by Aryee et al. (2004) further showed that when supervisors fail to provide adequate explanations and respect, employees may retaliate through various forms of workplace deviance. Similar study by Tepper (2000) found that employees reporting high levels of abusive supervision (low interactional justice) were 60% more likely to engage in workplace aggression.

Leadership Styles and Workplace Deviant Behaviour

Leadership styles significantly influence employee behavior, including workplace deviant behavior (WDB). Three commonly studied leadership styles transformational, autocratic, and laissez-faire exhibit varying impacts on workplace deviance (Bass, 1985; Avolio & Bass, 2004). While transformational leadership is often associated with reducing deviant behaviors, autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles tend to have mixed or adverse effects (Eisenbeiss & Knippenberg, 2015).

Research suggests that transformational leaders mitigate workplace deviance by promoting ethical behavior, trust, and engagement (Podsakoff et al., 1990). A meta-analysis by Hoch et al. (2018) found that transformational leadership was negatively correlated with workplace deviant behavior (-0.42), suggesting that employees under transformational leaders are less likely to engage in counterproductive work behaviors. In a study by Effelsberg, Solga, and Gurt (2014), transformational leadership was found to reduce workplace deviance through its emphasis on ethical behavior and emotional intelligence. Similarly, Peng et al. (2016) established that transformational leadership significantly lowered both organizational and interpersonal deviance in Chinese manufacturing firms.

Autocratic leadership is a command-and-control leadership style that emphasizes authority, centralized decision-making, and minimal employee participation (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939). While some research suggests that autocratic leadership fosters discipline and order, others indicate that it can lead to workplace deviant behaviors due to increased stress and dissatisfaction (Martinko et al., 2002). A study by Aryee et al. (2007) found that employees under autocratic leadership were more likely to engage in retaliatory deviant behaviors due to perceived injustice. Similarly, De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2009) established that authoritarian leadership was positively correlated with counterproductive work behaviors, particularly in high-stress environments. A meta-analysis by Schyns and Schilling (2013) further confirmed that autocratic leadership increased workplace aggression, absenteeism, and passive deviance.

Laissez-faire leadership is a hands-off leadership style where leaders provide minimal guidance and avoid decision-making responsibilities (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Empirical research suggests that laissez-faire leadership can foster workplace deviance due to the lack of supervision, accountability, and motivation (Skogstad et al., 2007). In a study by Hinkin and Schriesheim (2008), laissez-faire leadership was found to be one of the strongest predictors of workplace deviant behavior, with employees displaying higher levels of theft, sabotage, and workplace incivility. Similarly, Tepper (2000) discovered that a lack of managerial oversight resulted in increased psychological distress and workplace deviance. Another study by Kelloway et al. (2005) indicated that laissez-faire leadership led to a 50% increase in workplace bullying and counterproductive work behaviors.

In light of the above, empirical evidence suggests that leadership style plays a crucial role in shaping workplace deviant behavior. Transformational leadership is associated with reducing workplace deviance by fostering ethical behavior and engagement. In contrast, autocratic leadership often exacerbates workplace deviance through stress and perceived injustice, while laissez-faire leadership creates an environment of neglect that facilitates workplace misconduct.

Demographic factors and Workplace Deviant Behaviour

Demographic factors play a significant role in shaping workplace behaviors, including deviant behaviors that can disrupt organizational functioning. Workplace deviant behavior (WDB) refers to intentional behaviors that violate organizational norms and can harm an organization or its members (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Empirical research suggests that demographic variables such as age, gender, education level, marital status, and employment status influence the likelihood and nature of workplace deviance (Appelbaum et al., 2007; O'Neill & Hastings, 2011). Research indicates that age is a significant predictor of workplace deviant behavior. Studies suggest that younger employees are more likely to engage in deviant behaviors such as absenteeism, theft, and counterproductive work behaviors (Henle et al., 2005). A study by Marcus and Schuler (2004) found that employees under 30 years old reported higher incidences of workplace deviance compared to their older counterparts. Similarly, a study by Sackett et al. (2006) found that 42% of workplace theft cases were reported among younger employees (aged 18-29), compared to 15% among employees over 40. This trend is attributed to differences in impulse control, work ethics, and organizational commitment. Furthermore, older employees tend to have higher job satisfaction and are more invested in maintaining a positive work environment (Ng & Feldman, 2010).

Gender differences have been widely studied in relation to workplace deviant behavior. Research by Lau et al. (2003) found that men are more likely to engage in aggressive and overt forms of workplace deviance, such as bullying, theft, and physical violence, whereas women are more likely to engage in passive deviance, such as withdrawal behaviors and gossiping. Similarly, a meta-analysis by Berry et al. (2007) concluded that males exhibit higher tendencies toward counterproductive workplace behaviors (CWBs) compared to females. A report by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM, 2021) indicated that male employees accounted for 60% of workplace aggression incidents, while female employees accounted for 40%. This difference is often linked to socialization patterns, personality traits, and ethical reasoning differences between genders (Sackett et al., 2006).

Several studies have explored the relationship between education level and workplace deviance. Employees with lower levels of education tend to engage in more workplace deviant behaviors due to lower organizational commitment and fewer career advancement opportunities (Greenberg, 2011). Likewise, research by Greenberg (2011) found that employees with a high school education were twice as likely to engage in absenteeism and workplace theft than those with a university degree. A study by Chappell and Di Martino (2006) found that employees with higher education levels are less likely to engage in deviant behaviors, as they have a greater awareness of ethical norms and workplace expectations. Conversely, workers with lower educational attainment may resort to deviant behaviors as a response to job dissatisfaction or workplace stress.

Marital status has also been linked to workplace deviant behavior. Married employees are generally found to engage in fewer workplace deviant behaviors compared to their single counterparts (Bowling & Eschleman, 2010). This is explained by the responsibility and stability associated with marriage, which often translates into more disciplined workplace behavior. A study by Salami (2010) found that married employees displayed lower levels of counterproductive work behaviors due to their commitment to family responsibilities and job security. However, a meta-analysis by Berry et al. (2007) found that married employees exhibited 30% fewer workplace deviant behaviors compared to their unmarried counterparts.

Employment status, including full-time versus part-time employment, also influences workplace deviant behaviors. Research by Johns (2013) found that part-time and temporary workers are more likely to engage in workplace deviance due to job insecurity, lack of organizational commitment, and perceived injustice. Further study by Johns (2013) indicated that 35% of part-time workers engaged in counterproductive work behaviors compared to 20% of full-time employees. Temporary workers may feel less obligated to adhere to organizational norms,

leading to behaviors such as tardiness, sabotage, and low productivity (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). Above empirical evidence supports the strong influence of organizational justice on workplace deviant behavior. Perceptions of unfairness in outcome distribution, procedural decision-making, and interpersonal interactions significantly increase the likelihood of workplace deviance.

METHODS

Research design

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey design. Cross-sectional survey is an observational study; it is the collection of information from respondents at a single period in time using questionnaire. The independent variables for this study are organizational justice, leadership styles and demographic factors, while workplace deviant behaviour is the dependent variable.

Participants, Sampling and Sampling Technique

Participants data were collected from 310 workers in various public and private organizations in Abuja, Nigeria. The organizations were in various industries (e.g. communication, financial, advertising, construction, energy, manufacturing, transportation and administration). Participants' demographic characteristics shows that 160 (51.6%) were male, 147(47.4%) were female, while 3(1.0%) did not indicate their gender. On their marital status, 114(36.8%) were single, 172(55.5%) were married, 16(5.2%) were divorced, 6(1.9%) were widow, and 2(0.6%) did not signal their marital status. The result further showed that 51.6% of the sampled respondents were from polygamous families, 42.9% were from monogamous while 5.5% did not indicate their family type. On their religious affiliations, the result showed that 61.3% were Islam, 37.1% were Christians, 0.6% were from other religions while 1.0% did not indicate their religion. Moreover, 56.5% of the respondents had postgraduate qualifications, 38.1% had first Degree/HND, 3.5% had OND/NCE, 0.3% had SSCE while 1.6% did not indicate their educational qualification.

Sampling and Sampling Technique

The participants for this study are employees from 6 public and private organizations located in Abuja, Nigeria. Given the sample's complex nature, we used multi-stage sampling method (three main stages). First simple random sampling to select 6 organizations out of 14, secondly proportionate sampling to select proportional sample from each of the selected organizations and finally since the organizationa are made up of departments, units, and sections proportionate sampling was used to select the representatives for the study, utilizing purposive sampling.

Instrument

The current study used a questionnaire to measure the study's variables, as some were adapted.

Section A: The first segment of the questionnaire dealt with respondents' demographic profile data (age, gender, religion, educational qualifications, marital status, job status, and work experience in years.

Section B: Leadership styles, a 36-item Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Scale by Bass and Avolio (1994, as adopted by Njabulo, 2013) was adapted to measure leadership styles. The Cronbach's alpha for the 36-item scale was 0.70. Also, the scale has a five-point Likert type format of Not at all (1), Once in a while (2), Sometimes (3), Fairly often (4) and Frequently if not always (5).

Section C: We utilized the Italian version (Giorgi & Mayer, 2005) of the Workplace Deviance Scale developed by Bennett and Robinson (2000). This instrument measures two broad dimensions of WDB in the workplace. The first scale consists of seven items that assess WDB that is directly harmful to other individuals within the organization (WDB-I). An example is: "Played a mean prank on someone at work." The second scale consists of 12 items that assess WDB that is directly harmful to the organization (WDB-O). An example of an item is: "Taken property without company permission". All participants rated themselves on the 19 items on a 7-point Likert scale:

from 1 = never to 7 = daily. Evidence presented by Bennett and Robinson (2000) showed that the two scales have acceptable internal reliabilities, and they also provided evidence from confirmatory analyses showing that a two-factor structure has acceptable fit. In this study, coefficients alpha for self-ratings were .78 and .80 for WDB-I and WDB-O, respectively. The reason for adopting this kind of scale is to ensure that the respondents can give their opinion on the subject matter without sitting on the fence. This is because questions asked relate to respondents' behaviour, perception and daily experiences at work hence employees cannot be neutral in their responses to questions relating to these variables. Also, this kind of scale facilitates easier interpretation.

Section D: Organisational Justice Scale is a 20-item measure to assess employees' perception of fairness in the distribution of resources, their perception of fairness in the procedures adopted by their organisation in the distribution of outcomes, and their perception of interpersonal treatment they receive from their employers (Niehoff & Moorman, 1993). Sample items include: "My work schedule is fair"; "My work schedule is fair"; and "I consider my workload to be quite fair". The items are scored on a 5-point-Likert response format ranging from 5 = strongly agree, to 1 = strongly disagree. Neihoff and Moorman (1993) reported a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.85 for procedural justice, 0.94 for interactional justice, 0.75 for distributive justice, and an overall value of 0.91 for the whole scale. The current study yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.82 for distributive justice, 0.91 for procedural justice, 0.85 for interactional justice, and an overall value of 0.89 for the whole measure.

Data Analysis and Procedure

We followed series of estimation procedures to arrive at valid and reliable results. In the first place, we screened the questionnaires and integrated the data from the three phases to become a complete dataset for each of the participants. Using excel sorting and data screening approach, we further crosschecked the data with the demographic characteristics of the participants reported at each phase of data collection. We also performed descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages to support the preliminary analysis. Secondly, we used STATA software version 15.0 to establish the consistency and stability of the data by calculating the coefficient of the fractal dimension. Thirdly, we used AMOS software version 22.0 to determine the validity and reliability of the scales by conducting confirmatory factor analyses (CFA), composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE). Fourthly, we performed correlation analysis to verify the association among the variables as a preliminary step to provide prior support for the hypotheses.

RESULTS

Table 1:
Frequency Table Representing Demographic Characteristics of Respondents.

S/No	Items	Group	Frequency	Percentage
1	Age	20 – 78	310	100.00
		Total	310	100.00
2	Sex	Male	160	51.6
		Female	147	47.4
		Missing	3	1.0
		Total	310	100.00

3	Marital Status	Single	114	36.8
		Married	172	55.5
		Divorced	16	5.2
		Widow	6	1.9
		Missing	2	0.6
		Total	310	100.00
4	Family Type	Polygamous	160	51.6
		Monogamous	133	42.9
		Missing	17	5.5
		Total	310	100.00
5	Religion	Islam	190	61.3
		Christianity	115	37.1
		Others	2	0.6
		Missing	3	1.0
		Total	310	100.00
6	Educational Qualification	Postgraduate	175	56.5
		First Degree/HND	118	38.1
		OND/NCE	11	3.5
		SSCE	1	0.3
		Missing	5	1.6
		Total	310	100.00
7	Job Tenure	2 – 10 years	117	37.7
		11 – 20 years	113	36.5
		21 years and above	61	19.7
		Missing	19	6.1
		Total	310	100.00
8	Job Status	Junior Staff	133	42.9
		Senior Employee	165	53.2
		Missing	12	3.9
		Total	310	100.00
9	Type of Employment	Permanent	238	76.8
		Temporary	41	13.2
		Contract	8	2.6
		Missing	23	7.4
		Total	310	100.00
10	Income	N10,000 – N50,000	45	15.5
		N60,000 – N150,000	103	33.2
		N200,000 – N400,000	119	38.4
		N400,000 and above	35	11.3
		Missing	5	1.6
		Total	310	100.00
11	Type of Organization	Public Organization	261	84.2
		Private Organization	44	14.2
		Missing	5	1.6
		Total	310	100.00

Hypothesis One

This hypothesis stated that organizational justice (distributive, procedural, and interactional) will significantly predict workplace deviant behaviour in Nigerian organizations. This was tested using multiple regression analysis, and the result is presented in table 2.

Table 2:

Summary of multiple regression showing the organizational justice prediction on workplace deviant behaviour in selected Nigerian organizations.

DV		Predictor(s)	R	R ²	F	df	β	T	p
Workplace Behaviour	Deviant	Constant	.370	.137	12.071**	4, 305			
		Distributive					-.209	-2.275	<.01
		Procedural					-.180	-2.500	<.01
		Interactional					-.228	-2.324	<.05

**** $p < .001$**

Result in table 2 shows that there organizational justice (distributive, procedural, and interactional) influence workplace deviant behaviour [$R = .370$; $R^2 = .137$; $F (4, 305) = 12.071$; $p < .001$]. Observation of coefficient of determination [$R^2 = .137$] shows that all the dimensions of organizational justice (distributive, procedural, and interactional) significantly and jointly accounted for 13.7% of the total variance observed in workplace deviant behaviour. Based on this result, hypothesis one which stated that organizational justice (distributive, procedural, and interactional) will predict workplace deviant behaviour in selected Nigerian organizations was therefore accepted. On the independent basis, the result showed that distributive justice [$\beta = -.209$, $t = -2.275$; $p < .01$], procedural justice [$\beta = -.180$, $t = -2.500$; $p < .001$] and interactional justice [$\beta = -.228$, $t = -2.324$; $p < .05$] significantly and independently influenced workplace deviant behaviour in selected organizations.

Hypothesis Two

This hypothesis stated that leadership styles (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire) will significantly predict workplace deviant behaviour in Nigerian organizations. This hypothesis was tested using multiple regression and the result is present in table 3.

Table 3:
Summary of multiple regression showing the relationship between leadership styles and workplace deviant behaviour

DV		Predictor(s)	R	R ²	F	df	β	T	p
Workplace Behaviour	Deviant	Constant	.609	.371	60.120**	3, 306			
		Transformational					-.377	-5.729	<.001
		Autocratic					.085	1.308	>.05
		Laissez-Faire					.456	9.748	<.001

**** $p < .001$**

Result in table 3 shows that leadership styles (transformational, autocratic, and laissez-faire) significantly predict workplace deviant behaviour in Nigerian organizations [$R = .606$; $R^2 = .371$; $F (3, 306) = 60.120$; $p < .001$]. Observation of coefficient of determination [$R^2 = .371$] shows that all the dimensions of leadership styles significantly and jointly accounted for 37.1% of the total variance observed in workplace deviance. Based on this result, hypothesis two which stated that leadership styles (transformational, autocratic, and laissez-faire) significantly predict workplace

deviant behaviour in Nigerian organizations', was therefore accepted. Independently, the result showed that only transformational leadership [$\beta = .377$, $t = -5.729$; $p < .001$] and laissez-faire [$\beta = .456$, $t = 9.748$; $p < .001$] influence workplace deviant behaviour, while autocratic leadership [$\beta = .085$, $t = 1.308$; $p > .05$] did not independently influence workplace behaviour in Nigerian organizations.

Hypothesis Three

This hypothesis stated that gender, marital status, family type, religion and educational qualification will independently and jointly have a significant effect on workplace deviant behaviour in Nigerian organizations'. This hypothesis was tested using univariate analysis of variance and the result is presented in table 4.

Table 4:
Summary of univariate analysis of variance showing demographic influence on workplace deviant behaviour

Source of Variation	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig	p
Sex	6.684	1	6.684	.412	.521	.002
Marital Status	118.340	3	39.447	2.433	.066	.030
Family Type	13.590	1	13.590	.838	.361	.004
Religion	40.496	3	13.499	.832	.477	.011
Educational Qualification	23.629	3	7.876	.486	.693	.006
Sex*Marital Status*Family Type*Religion*Educational Qualification	100.710	4	25.177	1.553	.188	.026
Error	3778.244	233	16.216			
Total	58638.000	286				

R Squared = .194 (Adjusted R Squared = .015)

Result in table 4 shows that there was no significant independent effect of gender [$F(1, 233) = .412$; $p > .05$], marital status [$F(3, 233) = 2.433$; $p > .05$], family type [$F(1, 233) = .838$; $p > .05$], religion [$F(3, 233) = .832$; $p > .05$] and educational qualification [$F(3, 233) = .486$; $p > .05$] on workplace deviant behaviour in Nigerian organizations. The result further showed that there was no significant joint effect of gender, marital status, family type, religion, and educational qualification on workplace deviant behaviour [$F(4, 233) = 1.553$, $p > .05$], reinforcing the idea that demographic factors alone do not adequately explain workplace deviance. As a result, hypothesis three which stated that 'gender, marital status, family type, religion and educational qualification will independently and jointly have a significant effect on workplace deviant behaviour in Nigerian organizations' was therefore rejected.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study aims to exploring the interplay of organizational justice, leadership styles, and demographic factors as predictor WDB. The findings from this study revealed that organizational justice, encompassing distributive, procedural, and interactional justice, significantly predicts workplace deviant behavior in selected Nigerian organizations. The regression analysis yielded an R-value of .370, indicating a moderate relationship between organizational justice and workplace deviant behavior. Additionally, the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = .137$) suggests

that 13.7% of the variation in workplace deviant behavior can be explained by the three dimensions of organizational justice. This result supports the hypothesis that organizational justice significantly predicts workplace deviant behaviour. The results align with Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), which suggests that employees reciprocate fair treatment with positive behaviors and respond to perceived injustice with negative behaviors. Additionally, the General Strain Theory (Agnew, 1992) provides insight into how perceptions of injustice create stress, which may manifest as workplace deviant behavior. Studies in organizational settings (Ambrose et al., 2013; Kwasi & Mensah, 2020) have consistently shown that when employees experience unfairness, they are more likely to engage in counterproductive work behaviors, absenteeism, and reduced commitment.

Furthermore, the findings presented in Table 3 indicate that leadership styles significantly predict workplace deviant behavior in Nigerian organizations. The multiple regression analysis results reveal that leadership styles (transformational, autocratic, and laissez-faire) jointly accounted for 37.1% of the variance in workplace deviance [$R^2=.371, F(3,306)=60.120, p<.001$]. This suggests that leadership styles play a crucial role in shaping workplace behaviors, either by mitigating or exacerbating deviant tendencies. The findings of this study align with the social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), which posits that employees model their behaviors after their leaders. Transformational leaders serve as ethical role models, encouraging employees to engage in constructive and prosocial behaviors, whereas laissez-faire leaders fail to provide guidance, allowing negative behaviors to thrive. Additionally, the results support the leader-member exchange (LMX) theory, which suggests that high-quality leader-follower relationships foster positive organizational behaviors, whereas low-quality exchanges contribute to workplace deviance (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Conversely, while the current findings align with numerous empirical studies, some scholars argue that the impact of leadership on deviant behaviors is context-dependent. For instance, some studies suggest that in highly bureaucratic organizations, laissez-faire leadership may not necessarily lead to workplace deviance due to the presence of strict policies and enforcement mechanisms (Eisenbein & Brodbeck, 2014). Similarly, the non-significance of autocratic leadership may be attributed to cultural factors in Nigerian organizations, where employees may be accustomed to hierarchical leadership styles and may not perceive them as overly negative (Hofstede, 2001).

Hypothesis three which stated that gender, marital status, family type, religion, and educational qualification would independently and jointly have a significant effect on workplace deviant behavior in Nigerian organizations. However, the results from the univariate analysis of variance, as presented in Table 4, indicate that none of these demographic variables had a statistically significant independent or joint effect on workplace deviant behavior. Specifically, gender [$F(1, 233) = .412; p>.05$], marital status [$F(3, 233) = 2.433; p>.05$], family type [$F(1, 233) = .838; p>.05$], religion [$F(3, 233) = .832; p>.05$], and educational qualification [$F(3, 233) = .486; p>.05$] did not significantly influence workplace deviant behavior. Furthermore, the combined effect of these demographic factors was also not statistically significant [$F(4, 233) = 1.553; p>.05$]. Consequently, therefore hypothesis three was rejected. One possible explanation for these results could be that workplace deviant behavior may be more strongly influenced by situational and organizational factors rather than individual demographic characteristics. Another potential reason could be that the sampled organizations may have implemented policies and organizational structures that mitigate the influence of personal demographics on workplace behavior. However, findings from this study is not consistent with previous studies who suggested that factors such as organizational culture, job stress, leadership style, and perceived organizational justice have a greater impact on workplace deviance than demographic variables

(Ogunleye & Osekita, 2022; Akinbode, 2021), and of course studies have shown that clear organizational policies, employee engagement strategies, and effective conflict resolution mechanisms can reduce deviant behaviors at work, making demographic differences less influential (Eze, 2021). Despite, these findings align with some studies who reported significant associations between demographic factors and workplace deviant behavior. For instance, Adebayo and Ojo (2019) found that marital status influenced workplace deviance, with married employees exhibiting lower levels of deviant behavior compared to their single counterparts. Additionally, gender differences in workplace deviance have been reported in some studies, with males being more likely to engage in counterproductive work behaviors than females (Ibrahim & Yusuf, 2021).

Conclusion

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the predictors of workplace deviant behavior in Nigerian organizations. In conclusion, the results indicate that organizational justice (distributive, procedural, and interactional) significantly predicts workplace deviant behavior, highlighting the importance of fairness in organizational practices. Similarly, leadership styles (transformational and laissez-faire) significantly influence workplace deviant behavior, with transformational leadership reducing deviant tendencies and laissez-faire leadership exacerbating them. However, autocratic leadership did not show a significant influence. Furthermore, demographic factors (gender, marital status, family type, religion, and educational qualification) did not independently or jointly influence workplace deviant behavior, suggesting that workplace deviance may be more driven by organizational and leadership factors rather than demographic characteristics.

Recommendations

Based on these findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

1. First and foremost, organizations should implement fair and transparent policies regarding resource distribution, decision-making processes, and interpersonal interactions to reduce workplace deviance.
2. In addition, organizations should invest in training programs that promote transformational leadership while minimizing laissez-faire leadership tendencies, as the former reduces deviance while the latter promotes it.
3. Furthermore, organizations should establish a strong ethical culture that discourages deviant behaviors through effective communication, role modeling, and reinforcement mechanisms.
4. Additionally, periodic assessments of employees' perceptions of justice and leadership should be conducted to identify potential triggers of deviant behavior and implement corrective measures.
5. Moreover, organizations should develop human resource policies that focus on behavioral interventions rather than relying on demographic attributes to predict deviant behaviors.

Implications for Theory and Practice

The findings have significant implications for both theory and practice: For instance, the findings from this study extends the application of Leadership Theories by highlighting the differential effects of transformational and laissez-faire leadership on workplace deviance. The study supports the Social Exchange Theory by demonstrating that employees' perceptions of fairness

influence their workplace behaviors. Specifically, the results challenge traditional demographic-based explanations of workplace deviance, suggesting that organizational and leadership factors play a more critical role. Practically, HR policies should be tailored to address organizational climate factors rather than demographic attributes in managing workplace deviance. Again, organizations should use this result to prioritize fairness and ethical leadership to mitigate workplace deviance. Overall, the study underscores the importance of organizational justice and leadership styles in shaping workplace behavior and offers actionable strategies for fostering a positive work environment in Nigerian organizations.

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