

Work Engagement as the Mediator of the Relationship between Workplace Civility and Workplace Deviant Behaviour among Employees of Tertiary Institutions in Zamfara State

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Abstract

This study explores the relationship between workplace civility, work engagement and workplace deviant behaviour, as well as the mediating role of work engagement in the relationship between workplace civility and workplace deviant behaviour. To this end, a survey was developed and administered to 424 employees across the selected tertiary institutions in Zamfara State, Nigeria. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to analyse the data collected. Results show that workplace civility has negative and significant effect on workplace deviant behaviour. Additionally, work engagement is also found to significantly mediate the relationship between workplace civility and workplace deviant behaviour. The study concluded that employers should promote a culture of workplace civility in order to maintain employee engagement and reduce workplace deviance. Furthermore, employers should also strive to foster an atmosphere of respect and appreciation among employees. The implications for further research on the topic are discussed

Keywords: Workplace civility, Workplace deviant behaviour, Work engagement, Social exchange theory

JEL Classification: P46, M54

1. Introduction

The education sector in Nigeria is well known for deviance behaviour resulting in malpractice and fraudulent activities (Bakare, 2021). Hardly, in tertiary institutions today do workers carry out their duties and responsibilities without requesting one form of inducement or the other from contractors, colleagues and students alike (Adeoye, 2014; Bakare, Salisu, Bugaje, & Abubakar, 2022). Moreover, incidences of sexual harassment as a form of workplace deviant behaviour are prevalent

among many academic and non-academic staff of tertiary institutions (Onoyase, 2019). This behaviour negates the code of conduct of any tertiary institution in Nigeria. As such, projects tertiary institutions in bad light. Furthermore, instances of poor work attitude, absenteeism, lateness to work, bullying, gender discrimination, aggression and antisocial behaviour have also been reported among employees of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Moreover, in Nigeria, the threat of workplace deviant behaviours such as impersonation, examination misconduct, admission fraud, record-keeping fraud, inconsistent attendance at classes and/or official events, theft, bribery, sex to earn grades, payment in exchange for higher scores, and others has been disclosed among staff (Igbe, Okpa & Aniah, 2017; Adeoti, Shamsudin & Mohammad, 2021). Some employees have been sacked as a result of these practices, while others have received jail term (Obalade & Mtembu, 2023). On the other hand, Akhigbe and Sunday (2017) posited that employee who are at the receiving end of workplace deviant behaviour are mostly like to experience burnout, decrease performance, loss of motivation and work time.

Workplace deviant behaviour is the term used to define employee practises that are harmful to the firm as well as outside the established norm for workplace regulations and conduct (Robinson & Bennet, 1995). When the action is focused at the organisation, it is a clog in the wheel of work flow and productivity, which could impact organisational profitability and undermine the company's credibility with other stakeholders (Scott, 2015). Employee deviant behaviour is a deliberate, self-inflicted behaviour that significantly transgresses the established norms and rules of the organisation and endangers its existence (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). It is also referred to as disruptive, disordered, unlawful behaviour, systemic misbehaviour, and counter-productive behaviour (Bakare, Umar, Bugaje, Abubakar, 2022). According to Ojeleye, Ojeleye, Bakare and Abdullahi (2021), work deviant behaviour refers to employees' intentional efforts to sabotage or damage the organisation. The causes and effects of workplace deviant conduct have been the subject of much investigation. Numerous studies contend that a variety of factors contribute to deviant workplace conduct (e.g., Nagib, El-said, & Zaki, 2021; Bakare et al., 2022; Barakat, Isabella, Boaventura & Mazzon 2016; Mawdsley & Somaya, 2016; Yan et al., 2020; Shafique, Qammar, Kalyar, Ahmad, & Mushtaq, 2020), organisational cynicism, abusive supervisor, uncivil co-workers and organisational politics, personality make-up (Guay et al., 2016), workplace constructs like poor justice system (Baig & Ullah, 2017), and firm-associated factors like abusive supervision (Low, Sambasivan & Ho, 2019), have been identified and discussed in prior studies as antecedents of workplace deviant behaviours. Deviant behaviours have therefore been noted as a significant cause of stress and danger in organisations around the world (Tarkang Mary & Ozturen, 2019; Crewe & Girardi, 2020). The widespread deviant workplace behaviour among tertiary institution employees has emerged as a crucial concern in both academic discourse and society at large. Therefore, efforts must be asserted to curb this growing evil (Guo, Qiu & Gan, 2022).

According to DiFabio and Gori (2016), workplace civility has traditionally received less attention in work and management literature as compared to workplace

incivility. Workplace incivility was described by Andersson and Pearson (1999) as low-intensity deviant activity that violates the mutual respect rules of the workplace and has an uncertain intention to damage the target. Instead, Ojeleye et al. (2021) define it as a form of workplace abuse or ill-treatment that is marked by violence, aggression, bullying, tyranny, deviance, harassment, and unfairness that is humiliating, disrespectful, and high-cost for both individuals and organisations. The emphasis on positive psychology is changing the trend, though, since it aims to enhance the quality of work-life balance and organisational effectiveness. Workplace civility is one area of positive psychology that is being researched (DiFabio & Gori, 2016). Civility has been defined in a variety of ways, practically all definitions concur that it is marked by consideration for others' rights, courtesy, and respect (DeFabio & Gori, 2016). Workplace civility, according to Daniel (2009), involves showing genuine concern for one's community and the planet as well as maintaining a constant awareness of people through maintaining a constructive relationship with them, reciprocating respect, and building good relationships. Similarly, Bock (2018) noted that civility pays. Because it involves doing small things like smiling, saying hello to someone with joy, or listening while they speak, it generates positive responses.

Furthermore, work engagement is characterised as a positive, affective motivational marked by intense vigor, dedication and absorption on work (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). Vigor is delineated by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working. Dedication refers to having a strong sense of fulfillment, inspiration, enthusiasm, pride, and challenge when working. Lastly, absorption is being contentedly engrossed and entirely focused on one's work (Decuyper & Schaufeli, 2019). In fact, if an organisation wants to obtain a competitive edge over competitors, it needs to employ work engagement as a tool (Anitha, 2014). This is accurate given that work engagement is described by optimal level of employee involvement, job satisfaction and commitment to the organisation (Ojeleye & Bakare, 2020). Karuppasamy and Prabakar (2016) termed work engagement as the emotional attachment that an employee has to the company that leads to the dedication and the utilization of voluntary effort. They added that an engaged employee will easily spread positive energy across the work environment because they are aware of the company's vision and objective. However, Katyayani and Rani (2018) believed that the commitment and emotional attachment extend beyond just the organisation to include other employees in the workplace. Cortina, Magley, Williams and Laughout (2010) noted that the summation of a series of little aggravating incidents (incivility) can build up to a threshold at which minor injustice can set off violent retaliation of catastrophic proportions. The study also suggests that an assortment of low-intensity civility, such as respect, smiles, love, courtesy, cordiality, warmth, kindness, and politeness, can encourage employee engagement (vigor, dedication, and absorption) and, as a result, discourage work deviant behaviour. Therefore, this study was carried out based on gap in literature as proposed by Ojeleye et al. (2021) that there are non-existence literatures employing work engagement mediating of the association between workplace civility and workplace deviant behaviour. As consequence, this study undertaken to fill this gap in literature by determining whether workplace civility has significant

effect on workplace deviant behaviour among employees of tertiary institutions in Zamfara State, and if work engagement does significantly mediate the relationship between workplace civility and workplace deviant behaviour among employees of tertiary institutions in Zamfara.

2. Literature Review

A lot of research efforts have been extended towards understanding the antecedents of work deviant behaviour in the workplace. Studies e.g., Jafri, Hafeez, Maenuddin, & Hamza, 2020; Sowe & Arslan, 2023; Abdullah, Nasruddin, & Mokhtar, 2021; Zahid & Nauman, 2023 have identified incivility as a significant predictor of workplace deviant behaviour. Jafri et al. (2020) explored the influence of workplace incivility and organisational injustice on workplace deviant behaviour among managerial level employees from sugar industry District Shaheed Benazirabad (Nawabshah). The study reported a positive significant influence of incivility and organisational injustice on workplace deviant behaviour. Similarly, Sowe and Arslan (2023) examined the intervening role of turnover intentions on the relationship between workplace incivility and workplace deviant behaviour in the context of The Gambia and Ghana. The study found that workplace incivility significantly drives workplace deviant behaviour in both countries. Additionally, the relationship was mediated by turnover intentions.

Although, the literature review placed a lot emphasis on workplace incivility, Ojeleye et al. (2021) proposed that instead of placing emphasis on negative psychological construct of workplace incivility, effort should be asserted towards positive psychological construct of workplace civility to reduce tendencies of deviant behaviour in the workplace. Consequently, this study asserted that since workplace incivility has been confirmed empirically to drive workplace deviant behaviour, workplace civility could also decrease workplace deviant behaviour. Therefore, the study proposed that:

Work Engagement as Mediator

Work engagement has been employed in plethora of studies a mediator serving as an intervening variable to week negative trends or to stimulate positive actions in the workplace (Ojeleye & Jada, 2022; Tricahyadinat, Hendryadi, Zainurossalamia, & Riadi, 2020). For instance, Fong-Yi, Hui-Chuan, Szu-Ch and Yu-Chin (2020) studied transformational leadership as a drivers of employee performance and work engagement. The study discovered that transformational leadership exert significant influence on employee performance. Furthermore, the relationship was mediated by work engagement.

Teo, Bentley and Nguyen (2020) investigated the relationship between psychosocial work environment, work engagement, and employee commitment. According to this study, work engagement mediates both the association between affective commitment and high-performance work systems as well as the relationship between affective commitment and perceived organisational support. Kim and Park (2017) examined the structural connections between creative work behaviour, information sharing, organisational procedural justice, and work engagement for sustainable companies. The study contributes to the body of knowledge by stating that information sharing, creative work behaviour, and

employee job engagement are all favourably and significantly associated. The association between employee knowledge-sharing and creative work behaviours is also somewhat influenced by work engagement.

Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory is a theoretical framework that seeks to explain social interactions and relationships based on the principles of exchange and reciprocity as propounded by (Homans, 1958). According to this thought, people connect with others in hopes of maximising benefits and minimising costs (Nunkoo, 2016). To put it another way, individuals are driven to participate in relationships that benefit them and to avoid those that place obligations on them. Moreover, social exchange theory emphasizes the role of reciprocity (Homans, 1961). Individuals expect a certain level of fairness and reciprocity in their relationships, meaning they anticipate that their contributions will be met with equivalent rewards (Corcoran, 2013). If the balance of rewards and costs becomes inequitable, feelings of dissatisfaction and resentment may arise, potentially leading to relationship dissatisfaction or even dissolution. As a consequence, this study posited that when the atmosphere in the workplace is civil and courteous, the employees are likely to reciprocate with citizenship behaviour vice-versa. Similarly, when the workplace is civil, the study posits that it will result in them displaying vigour, dedication and absorption which will in turn reduce their tendency of engaging workplace behaviours. Overall, social exchange theory offers a useful framework for comprehending the dynamics of social connections. It highlights the importance of evaluating the rewards and costs associated with a relationship and emphasizes the role of reciprocity and fairness. By examining these factors, researchers and practitioners can gain insights into how relationships are formed, maintained, and potentially improved.

Conceptual Framework

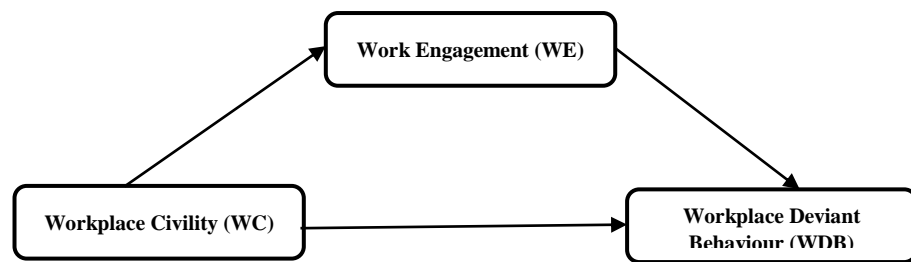


Figure 1: Research Model

The link between the study's components is depicted diagrammatically in the conceptual framework above, according to Ojeleye, Ojeleye, Bakare, and Abdullahi (2021). It demonstrates how work engagement plays an intervening role in the link between civility and deviant behaviour at work.

3. Methodology

The study employed quantitative research approach to explore the mediating role of work engagement in the relationship between workplace civility and workplace deviant behaviour. Quantitative research entails using numeric value to denote a particular construct (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2014). Therefore, cross-sectional and survey research designs were used in the study. Cross-section research, also known as one-shot research, gathers data only once, maybe over the course of days, weeks, or months, to address a research issue (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Unlike longitudinal research where data are gathered for at least two occasions to answer research questions (Otori, 2018). In addition, the study employed survey research design which involves procedures for collecting large amounts of data using interviews or questionnaires for proper and rational generalizations (Hair, Wolfinbarger, Ortinau & Bush, 2010). Sekaran and Bougie (2016) noted that most survey questions are grouped into interviews, structured observations, or self-administered questionnaires that a respondent fills out on their own, either manually or digitally.

The population of the study comprised of the entire staff of four tertiary institutions in Zamfara state. The four selected institutions are; Federal Polytechnic Kaura-Namoda, Abdu Gusau Polytechnic Talata-Mafara, Zamfara State College of Education Maru and College of Health Sciences and Technology Tsafe Zamfara State.

Table 1: *The population of the study*

Name of Schools	Number of Staff
Federal Polytechnic Kaura-Namoda	1117
Abdu Gusau Polytechnic Talata-Mafara	520
Zamfara State College of Education Maru	386
College of Health Sciences and Technology Tsafe	143
Total	2166

Source: Registry Department, 2023

Stratified sampling and proportionate was used in this study. In stratified random sampling, the researcher aims to divide the population into strata that are homogenous in terms of the characteristic being used to divide the population (Ojeleye, Ojeleye, Abdullahi, & Salaudeen, 2021). Each institution represents a stratum, and the number of samples from each institution depends on how many people work there.

Using the sample size chart created by Krejcie and Morgan in 1970, the study's sample size was determined. A population of 2000 has a sample size of 322, while a population of 2200 has a sample size of 327, according to the Table. Inferring that the sample size of 327 represents the population of 2166 is possible. Researchers should exercise caution when using the often-used sample size procedures, according to Bartlett, Kotrlik, and Higgins (2001), since they are predicated on assumptions about alpha and the generally recognised margin of error that might not apply in all situations. In light of this, the sample size recommended by Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2014) for a finite population was mathematically determined as follows as an addition to the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size

determination. A total of 326 sample size was determine from a population of 2166 staff. Furthermore, Israel (2013) suggested increasing the sample size by 30% to account for non-response errors in order to reduce non-response error, which may occur as a result of failure to get information from a number of subjects included in the sample (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016) and can introduce bias into the study. In order to obtain the 424-sample size given in Table 2 below, the original research sample size of 326 was raised by 30% ($1.30 \times 326 = 424$). Additionally, 399 of the questionnaires (94.1%) were correctly completed and included for the study.

Table 2: Stratified Sampling technique

Name of Schools	Number of Employees	Proportional Sampling%
Federal Polytechnic Kaura-Namoda	1117	219
Abdu Gusau Polytechnic Talata-Mafara	520	102
Zamfara State College of Education Maru	386	75
College of Health Sciences and Technology Tsafe	143	28
Total	2166	424

Source: Authors' computation, 2023

Measurement and Instruments

Primary data were used in this quantitative investigation, which is of such sort. The study's constructs were measured using instruments that were modified for earlier research. The short version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9) was used to measure work engagement; it was modified from Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, and Bakker (2002). This version, known as the UWES-9, varies from the lengthier version in that it just measures the overall involvement rather than the individual characteristics (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006). UWES has been widely utilised in engagement research and has been verified in several nations, according to Saks and Gruman (2014). The test consists of a 9-item scale with a 5-point Likert scale. According to reports, the instrument's dependability is strong, with a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.78 suggesting high internal consistency of the scale. For this study the composite reliability is 0.853. The 4-item Civility Norm Questionnaire Brief (CNQ-B), developed by Walsh et al. (2012) to evaluate workgroup atmosphere for civility, was used to measure workplace civility. The definition of the "climate for civility" is "employee perceptions of norms supporting respectful treatment among workgroup members," and the scale's reported Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.85 indicates that it has a good degree of internal consistency. For this study the composite reliability is 0.884. With a reported Cronbach alpha of 0.78, which indicates high internal consistency of the scale measured in 5-point Likert scale, workplace deviant behaviour was measured using Penney and Spector's (2005) 10-item scale of general workplace deviance (deviant behaviours directly harmful to other individuals within the organisation and the organisation at large). For this study the composite reliability is 0.853.

4. Result

The information gathered from respondents is examined in this section. The data was deemed clean after preliminary analysis, including tests for the response rate, missing values, outliers, multicollinearity, and normality, were completed. In addition, the hypothesised association was examined using a structural equation model.

SEM-PLS Path Modeling Evaluation

This summary of the measurement and structural model results was utilised in the study to establish the link that was hypothesised.

Measurement Model Evaluation

Internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity were evaluated using the structural equation modelling measurement model. The item loading was evaluated first. Hulland (1999) suggested keeping things with loading of 0.5 or above but removing those with loading below that level. Due to loading below 0.5, the investigation eliminated items WE2, WE3, WE6, WE8, WDB1, WDB4, WDB6, WDB8, and WDB9. The dependability of the research instrument was also determined using the composite reliability. The instrument is consistent and acceptable for the study, as shown by all of the results in Table 3 below, which is larger than the 0.7 cutoff value (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). As recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981), all average variance extracted (AVE) statistics used to establish convergent validity are higher than the 0.5 benchmark. Hence supporting the study instrument's convergent validity. According to Hair, Hult, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2014a), convergent validity is the degree to which two measurements that are meant to assess the same constructs demonstrate their relationship.

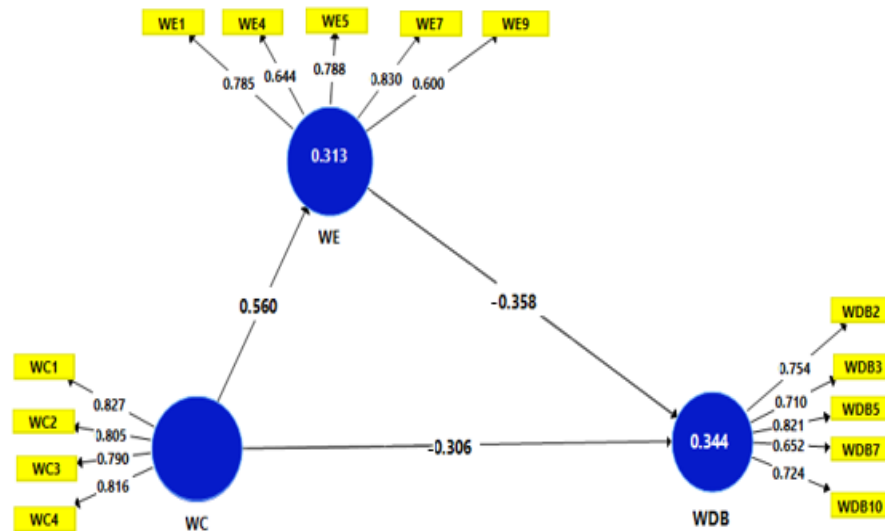


Figure 2: Measurement Model
Source: SmartPLS version 3.3.8

Table 3: Item Loadings, Internal Consistency, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

Constructs	Indicators	Loadings	Composite Reliability	AVE
Workplace Civility	WC1	0.827	0.884	0.656
	WC2	0.805		
	WC3	0.790		
	WC4	0.816		
Work Deviant Behaviour	WDB2	0.754	0.853	0.539
	WDB3	0.710		
	WDB5	0.821		
	WDB7	0.652		
	WDB10	0.724		
Work Engagement	WE1	0.785	0.853	0.540
	WE4	0.644		
	WE5	0.788		
	WE7	0.830		
	WE9	0.600		

Source: Authors' Computation

Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) correlations were used to examine the discriminant validity. Even though the Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross-loadings are the most popular techniques used by researchers to evaluate discriminant validity, Henseler, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2015) claim that they do not consistently identify the absence of discriminant validity in typical research situations, particularly when correlations fall between 0.65 and 0.85. As a result, HTMT was applied.

Table 4: Measurement Model: Discriminant Validity (Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT))

Constructs	WC	WDB	WE
WC			
WDB	0.604		
WE	0.663	0.655	

Source: Authors' Computation

The HTMT statistics are clearly created based on correlations across items of their reflective constructs, as shown in Table 4. According to the Table, all of the reflective latent constructs in this investigation had an HTMT value within the benchmark of 0.85 for conceptually dissimilar variables proposed by Henseler et al. (2015), indicating discriminant validity.

Structural Model Assessment

The nature of the hypothesised relationship between the independent variable (WC) and the dependent variable (WDB) was determined using the structural equation model. To investigate the relevance of the path coefficients of the direct and mediated links, 5000 bootstrap samples were used for 339 instances.

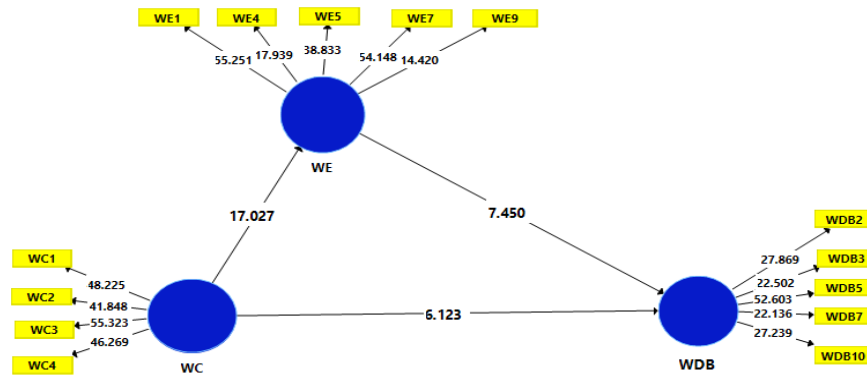


Figure 3: Structural Model (Bootstrapping)
Source: SmartPLS version 3.3.8

Table 5: Hypothesis Testing for the Direct and Mediating Relationship

Hypotheses	Relationship	Beta	Standard Error	T-Values	P-Values	Decision
H ₀₁	Workplace Civility->Work deviant behavior	-0.306	0.050	6.123	0.000	Rejected
H ₀₂	Workplace Civility->Work engagement-> workplace deviant behaviour	-0.200	0.029	6.878	0.000	Rejected
$R^2 = 0.344$						

Note: $p < 0.05$.

Source: Authors' Computation

The hypothesis one (H₀₁) suggests that there is a significant relationship between workplace civility and work deviant behaviour. In this case, the negative sign in front of the beta coefficient (-0.306) indicates an inverse or negative relationship between the variables. Simply put, an increase in workplace civility will lead to significant decrease in occurrence of workplace deviant behaviour by 30.6%. As a consequence, the beta coefficient (β) represents the estimated strength of the relationship between workplace civility and work deviant behaviour. In this case, the beta coefficient is -0.306. T-Value: The t-value (6.123) is calculated by dividing the beta coefficient by its standard error. It indicates the extent to which the estimated relationship between workplace civility and workplace deviant behaviour is statistically significant. P-Value: The p-value (0.000) associated with the t-value indicates the statistical significance of the relationship. In this case, the p-value is reported as 0.000, which means workplace civility has significant effect on workplace deviant behaviour among employees of tertiary institutions in Zamfara state. (e.g., $p < 0.05$). Hence, H₀₁ is here by rejected.

The hypothesis four (H₀₂) suggests a significant mediating relationship between workplace civility, work engagement, and workplace deviant behaviour (-0.200; 6.878; $p < 0.000$). It posits that workplace civility influences work engagement,

which, in turn, affects work deviant behaviour. The negative sign in front of the beta coefficient (-0.200) suggests an inverse relationship between workplace civility and workplace deviant behaviour when mediated by work engagement. Specifically, workplace civility indirectly affects workplace deviant behaviour through its impact on work engagement. The negative beta coefficient indicates that as workplace civility increases, work engagement increases, leading to a decrease in workplace deviant behaviour significantly. Consequently, the study rejects the H_{02} .

To determine how much of the variance in the dependent variable can be accounted for by the independent and mediating factors, the coefficient of determination (R^2) was determined. While additional factors not included in the research account for the remaining 66% of the variance in the dependent variable (WDB), the independent and mediating variables (WC and WE) only explained 34% of it. Chin (1998) argues that the R^2 value of 34% is regarded as moderate.

4 Determination of Effect size (f^2)

Each independent variable's contribution to the variance in the dependent variable was calculated using the effect size. Effect size (f^2) was calculated using Cohen's (1988) formula as follows:

$$f^2 = \frac{R^2 \text{ Included} - R^2 \text{ Excluding}}{1 - R^2 \text{ Included}}$$

Table 6: Effect Size Assessment (f^2)

Construct	f^2 (WDB)	Effect Size	f^2 (WE)	Effect Size
WC	0.019	Small	0.456	Large
WE	0.134	Medium		

Source: Authors' Computation

According to Cohen (1988) f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35, indicate small, medium, and large effects respectively. Hence, workplace civility and work engagement have small and medium effect size on workplace deviant behaviour respectively while workplace has large effect size on work engagement.

Determination of Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

The predictive relevance is an assessment often employed to ascertain the practical utility of a research model (Ojeleye, Ojeleye, Karem, & Abdullahi, 2023). A model with 0 or negative predictive relevance is an indication that the model does not have any practical value in real word situation. Q^2 value of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 depicts small, medium and strong predictive relevance. The Table 7 showed that Q^2 is 0 clearly revealing that the study's model has predictive relevance.

Table 7: Predictive Relevance(Q^2)

Constructs	SSO	SSE	$Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)$
WC	2,056.000	2,056.000	
WDB	2,570.000	2,129.756	0.171
WE	2,570.000	2,176.984	0.153

Source: Authors' Computation

Discussion of Findings

Employees at tertiary institutions in Zamfara State were the subjects of a study that looked at the mediating effect of work engagement in the link between workplace civility and workplace deviant behaviour. The first result of this study shows an inverse and significant effect of workplace civility on work deviant behaviour. This finding is consistent with previous findings e.g., Jafri, Hafeez, Maeenuddin, & Hamza, 2020; Sowe & Arslan, 2023; Abdullah, Nasruddin, & Mokhtar, 2021; Zahid & Nauman, 2023 on the relationship between workplace civility and work deviant behaviour. Ojeleye et al. (2021) posited when there is civility in the workplace, it decreases the likelihood of employees engaging in deviant behaviours such as theft, sabotage, or spreading rumors. These deviant behaviours can have serious consequences for the organisation, including damage to reputation, decreased productivity, and increased turnover (Jafri et al., 2020). However, because WC and WDB have an inverse connection, a rise in WC among personnel of these tertiary institutions will result in a drop in WDB.

The indirect effect's conclusion suggests that work engagement considerably mediates the link between workplace civility and workplace deviant behaviour. Previously the study showed that workplace civility can significantly impact work engagement. When employees experience a civil work environment, where they are treated with respect and dignity, it fosters positive emotions, enhances job satisfaction, and increases their level of engagement with their work. Conversely, an uncivil workplace characterised by rudeness, incivility, or disrespectful behaviour can negatively affect employees' engagement, leading to reduced motivation and commitment to their work. Now, the mediation effect of work engagement comes into play. Work engagement acts as a psychological mechanism that explains the relationship between workplace civility and work deviant behaviour. Engaged employees have a higher sense of ownership, identification, and loyalty towards their organisation. They are more likely to embrace organisational values, follow norms, and behave in line with expected standards. Thus, higher levels of work engagement are associated with lower levels of work deviant behaviour. When work engagement is introduced as a mediator, it suggests that the positive influence of workplace civility on workplace deviant behaviour is partially explained by the increased work engagement experienced by employees.

Implications

The study's implications are categorised into practical and theoretical implication. These are discussed elaborately below: Firstly, when there is a lack of civility in the workplace, employees are more inclined to engage in deviant behaviours such as stealing, sabotage, or spreading rumours. These choices can have major implications for the organisation, such as reputational harm, lost productivity, and higher turnover. Additionally, workplace incivility may create a poisonous office atmosphere in which employees are agitated, apprehensive, and demotivated. As a result, job involvement, morale, and general employee well-being may suffer. Furthermore, the detrimental implications of workplace incivility can damage team relationships and collaboration beyond individuals. Employees are less inclined to interact efficiently, exchange information, and collaborate when there is a lack of

civility, which can stifle creativity and problem-solving. Overall, organisations need to recognise the importance of fostering a culture of civility in the workplace to prevent deviant behaviours and promote a positive work environment conducive to productivity, employee satisfaction, and organisational success. Moreover, in order to maximise the positive impact of workplace civility on employee work engagement, organisations should prioritise the development of a polite and inclusive culture. This may be accomplished through training programmes, laws that encourage civil behaviour, and leadership that sets a good example. Encouraging open communication, recognising and rewarding excellent behaviour, and immediately addressing instances of incivility are all critical stages in creating a working atmosphere that fosters high levels of work engagement and promotes organisational success. Additionally, organisations can create platforms for employees to voice concerns and address conflicts constructively, emphasizing the importance of fair and just treatment for all individuals. By recognising and leveraging the mediating role of work engagement, organisations can create a harmonious work environment that minimises deviant behaviours and cultivates higher levels of work engagement, job satisfaction, and overall organisational success

Social exchange theory provides a framework for understanding the theoretical ramifications of engagement considerably influencing the link between workplace civility and deviant behaviour. According to social exchange theory, people engage in relationships and activities with the expectation of reciprocity in an effort to maximise positive outcomes and avoid negative ones. Employees are more likely to respond with higher levels of work engagement when they perceive a polite and respectful work environment. Employees who are treated with respect feel valued and supported, which leads to a positive social exchange in which they give back by working harder, more devotedly, and more enthusiastically. The mediating role of work engagement in this context suggests that when workplace civility is present, employees are more inclined to experience a sense of trust and positive social exchange with the organisation and their colleagues. This favourable interaction encourages people to become more involved in their job, resulting in less aberrant behaviours. Theoretically, organisations may promote a virtuous cycle by prioritizing and developing workplace civility. When workers consider their organisation to be courteous and respectful, they are more inclined to respond with increased work engagement, which leads to a reduction in deviant behaviour. As a consequence, adopting social exchange theory in this context can provide a beneficial framework for organisations to create and sustain strong workplace connections, improve workplace engagement, and successfully decrease work deviant behaviours.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

This research has made a contribution to the workplace civility, work engagement and workplace deviant behaviour literature in the education sector especially tertiary institutions in a developing country context. The study investigated the direct effect of WC on WDB. It further explored the effect of WC on WDB through WE. The study showed that WE significantly mediate the relationship between WC

and WDB among employees of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The study concluded with some practical and theoretical implication to literature.

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