

# Attribution Bias and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour of Construction Companies in South East, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** *This study examined the degree of relationship between attribution bias and organizational citizenship behaviour of workers in construction companies in South East, Nigeria. The study adopted survey design using modified standardized structured questionnaire to elicit data. The population was obtained from selected construction companies during field survey. Systematic sampling technique was adopted in selecting four (4) construction companies from the region. The sample size and number of units allocated to each construction company was determined using Taro Yamane and Bowley's Proportional Allocation Formulae respectively. Spearman Rank Correlation was used to test the hypothesis on the platform of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 21.0. The finding revealed a negative and significant relationship between attribution bias and organizational citizenship behaviour of workers in construction companies in South East, Nigeria. The study therefore, recommends organizations need to entrench the principles of corporate governance in the system that would leave all stakeholders satisfied to reduce counter-work productive behaviour of employees. Construction companies need to build trust in management/employees relationship. Employees need to also exercise restraint in their actions because not all negative perceptions about management of the company holds true.*

**Keywords:** Attributional bias, organizational, citizenship behaviour, Construction companies, South-East.

## Introduction

The dynamic nature of society has also affected organizations in their operations, activities, decisions and policies. Even as companies being bodies corporate by law are affected by such changes, the attitude and behaviour of human beings (employees) who are active and living, have ability to think, feel and react, become complex and probably unpredictable (Opatha cited in Weerarathna, 2014). The human resource remains an indispensable means by which organizations in strategic sector of the economy would sustain its competitiveness over competitors. The high level of reliance of construction companies on human-capital resources in coordinating physical-capital and organizational-capital resources is critical even in contemporary times. Managements' support for human-capital resources drive the effectiveness and efficiency of the physical-capital resources and organizational-capital resources (Barney cited in Fakhari, 2014).

The diversity of employees beyond age, gender, colour, educational status, ethnic and cultural divides in different organizations to people with different personalities, different values and beliefs, different expectations and different competencies have become challenging to manage. Employees think, understand and interpret information, their actions and inactions of that of others differently given their perception, personality clashes, attitude problems, poor interpersonal relationship, self-interest, distrust and suspicion across-the-board of workers. Employers on very many occasions mount too much pressure and control over employees believing to produce optimal task performance while implementing certain strategies to control cost leave employees disenchanted with growing disaffection with the company managers/supervisors.

It is obligatory for employees in any organization including companies to render productive services with utmost good faith for as long as they remain employees. However, more attention seems to have been given to achieving results than management creating an enabling environment for individuals and teams to co-operate with one another to achieve organizational goals. Organizations seldom help workers achieve their personal goals even as managers and supervisors are hostile and unfriendly to subordinates, subordinates become distrusting and suspicious, leading to disruption of co-operative endeavours and make employees dysfunctional. Employees see negative experiences in the work environment as motivated by management and attribute success to self while management see the worker as not doing enough and employees just done a favour for being employed.

Attribution bias otherwise called attributional style or sinister attribution error is the tendency to have different rationale for one's behaviour versus that of others. This is a situation where one may attribute the cause of our own and the behaviour of others to: *internal* - based on the individual characteristics of the person, *external* - based on the situation or circumstance. There are a number of common attribution biases including Fundamental Attribution Bias, Self-serving bias, Actor-Observer Bias and Hostile Attribution Bias.

Construction firms rely heavily on skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers in order to carry out their activities. Construction employees' interpersonal relationship is perceived as the foundation for all actions at the construction site. This is because most operations within the construction network usually involve some level of interdependence. Furthermore, it allows the supervisor or

manager to build a relationship with the entire working groups without alienating any employee in the work environment. For this reason, supervisors and/or managers must be encouraged to relate well to employees to foster growth both at the firm level. The good interpersonal relationship among construction employees tend to influence each other, as they share their thoughts and feelings, and engage in activities together (Velmurugan, 2016).

The South-East zone of Nigeria comprises five (5) States - Abia, Anambra, Imo, Enugu and Ebonyi States. As the region remains a part of Nigeria as a developing country, it has its fair share of infrastructural and developmental need alongside hosting several construction companies (indigenous and foreign) for their operations within and outside the zone. To this end, this study considers the need for employment opportunities created by construction companies to be enduring to complement the age-long commercial career of the citizens and residents amongst other contemporary occupations. The study of the nature of the relationship that exists between attributional bias and organizational citizenship behaviour would leave management and workers satisfied and meet other stakeholders' expectations.

Attribution theory is a collection of diverse theoretical and empirical contributions that focus upon the universal concern with explanation – why a particular event, or state or outcome has occurred and the consequences of phenomenal causality (Fiske and Taylor, 1991) and with the “how” and the “what” by which people process information in attempting to understand events, judge those events and act on those events (Manusov and Spitzberg, 2008). Among the prominent proponents are Fritz Heider (1958), Edward E. Jones (1965), Keith E. Davis (1965), Harold Kelley (1967, 1971, 1972 and 1973), Stanley Schacter (1962), Daryl Bem (1967) and Anthony Weiner (1986). However, Fritz Heider is most often attributed as the originator of attribution models as he laid the logical-empirical backbone of attribution theories by making relatively global claims about what people do.

The relevance of this theory to the study stems from the fact that opinions, behaviours, attitudes or beliefs could produce information that leads to attribution bias that could influence OCB of employees in the organization. This implies that opinions, behaviours, attitudes or beliefs can drive perceived OCB, thus leading to counterproductive work behaviour.

To the best of the researcher's ability in surfing the internet for materials, the study could access one related empirical works and reviewed same, carried out in the United States of America. The only study was done outside South East not even in any part of Nigeria. Again, the work was not on construction companies but a national corporation that specialized on senior living care (welfare outfit). Against the backdrop of the identified gaps, the aim of the study was to fill these gaps in knowledge by carrying out this study, attributional bias and organizational citizenship behaviour in construction companies in South-East, Nigeria.

#### **Statement of the Problem**

Redundancy, lay-off, frequent sack of workers is rife in construction companies in Nigeria. Construction firms are more disposed to temporary employment for its workforce as against permanent, gainful and pensionable employment. Employers perpetrate this anomaly by reducing the formalization aspect of due recruitment and selection process by holding back valid appointment letter. The policy bias for temporary employment is motivated by the freedom created for management to fire workers at any time with the least legal risk. However, temporary status of their employment breeds fear, and anxiety amongst workers which promotes employees distrust and suspicion of management.

Ideal labour practice encourages permanent, gainful and pensionable employment desired by employees and prospective employees as it guarantees job security. The negation of ideal practice leaves workers feel wronged and mistreated by the management of the organization from inception. But for the high unemployment in the country at the time, job seekers take up jobs in construction companies. No doubt, employees feel threatened as their job status does not portend long-term well-being for themselves and their families. The resultant resentment among employees influences the worker's attitude and behaviour to his or her job.

Evidently, in one of the construction companies visited during field survey (first week of June 2021), it was gathered that from workers who discussed in their twos, threes and fours that more than a hundred workers were unceremoniously laid-off describing their fate in the coming weeks and months as unsure moving towards the peak of the rains. Another employee also noted that the only document he could get from the company was letter of sack having been denied letter of appointment. This may not be far from what holds in other construction companies construed to cut down personnel cost feeling that the rains would render such number of workers unproductive.

In the event of such attribution bias, what prevails is not unanimity in the work relations. Hence, every action and inaction of managers is perceived in bad light, as such workers attribute all management policies, decisions and activities that affect colleagues as negative. Employers in part see themselves to have done employees a favour in the spate of very high unemployment in the land, even as they are under-employed or not properly employed. These conditions make employees withdraw organizational citizenship behaviour preceding actualization of threat of sack or retrenchment on completion of contract capable of affecting the competitiveness of the company, hence this study.

#### **Hypothesis**

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant relationship between attribution bias and organizational citizenship behaviour in construction companies in South East, Nigeria.

## Review of Related Literature

### Attribution Bias

Attribution bias is a cognitive bias that refers to the systematic errors made when people evaluate or try to find reasons for their own and others behaviours (Ihionkhan and Ohue, 2018). Attribution bias is also described as the tendency for social perceivers to over attribute lack of trustworthiness to others (Kramer cited in Subramanian, 2017). For Peterson *et al* cited in Cicero and Kerns (2011) attributional style refers to individual differences in casual attributions for life events. Sinister attribution tendencies include: overestimation of the extent to which one is the target of others' attention; ready acceptance of information that appears to confirm suspicions as authoritative, and systematic discounting or denial of evidence to the contrary (Bell, Halligan and Ellis; Bentall, Corcoran, Howard, Blackwood and Kinderman; Kramer cited in Chan and McAllister, 2014).

Kramer (1994) also noted that a second judgmental bias associated with paranoid cognition is the tendency for paranoid perceivers to view others' actions in unrealistically self-referential terms (Subramanian, 2017). The various viewpoints suggest that attribution is premised on the perceivers' interpretation of events. For example, an employee may attribute a recent salary rise to hard work while another may attribute it to chance or circumstances. But it is important to note that people tend to have a positively biased self-serving attributional style in which they attribute positive events to global, stable and internal causes and bad events to specific, fleeting and external causes; for instance, pay cuts and job loss due to bad economy. (Mezulis, Abramson, Hyde and Hamicus cited in Cicero, 2007). However, researchers have hypothesized that this is a defensive function against low self-esteem by refusing to acknowledge that they could have caused negative occurrences in their lives (Cicero, 2007).

The tendency towards making sinister attribution errors could lead an individual to perceive the existence of a hidden conspiracy with hostile motives towards the individual personally, or towards the individuals in group more generally (Brotherton and Eser, 2014). From workplaces it infers the spread of perceived distrust for employers by employees who hold similar feelings and see any negative events that happen to them and others as employer induced and positive events as personal effort or achievement. In effect, attribution biases are present in everyday live, where people constantly make attributions regarding the cause of their own and others' behaviour whereas attributions do not always accurately reflect reality.

Ihionkhan and Ohue (2018) elaborated on different types of attribution biases that have been identified by recent psychological researches and how they can subsequently affect emotions and behaviour, to include:

(a). *Fundamental attribution error*: This refers to a bias in explaining others' behaviours. It means that when people make attributions about another person's actions, there is every tendency to over emphasize the role of dispositional factors, while minimizing the influence of situational factors. For example, if we see a worker bump into someone on his way to a meeting, we are more likely to explain this behaviour in terms of our coworker's carelessness or hastiness, rather than considering that he was running late to a meeting.

(b). *Actor-observer bias*: This can be thought as an extension of the fundamental attribution error. Actor-observer bias in addition to over-valuing dispositional interpretations of others' behavior, tend to under-value dispositional explanations and over-value situational explanations of the behavior of others. For instance, a student who studies may explain her behaviour by referencing situational factors (for example; "I have an exam coming up"), whereas others will explain her studying by referencing dispositional factors (for example, "she is ambitious and hard-working").

(c). *Self-serving bias*: A self-serving bias refers to people's tendency to attribute their successes to internal factors but attribute their failures to external factors. This bias helps to explain any responsibility for failures. For example, an employee who wins a best staff award for a year might say, "I won the award because I worked diligently, whereas one who was not picked would say, "I was not picked because the management dislikes me". The self-serving bias has been thought of as a means of self-esteem maintenance. In other words, we feel better about ourselves by taking credit for successes and creating external blames for failure.

(d). *Hostile attribution bias*: Hostile attribution bias has been defined as an interpretative bias wherein individuals exhibit a tendency to interpret others' ambiguous behaviours as hostile, rather than pleasant and kind (Crick and Dodge, 1996). For example, if an employee witnesses two other employees whispering and assumes, they are talking about him/her, that employee makes an attribution of hostile intent, even though the other employee's behaviour was potentially pleasant and kind. Research has indicated that there is a relationship between hostile attribution and aggression, such that people who are more likely to interpret someone else's behaviour as hostile are likely to engage in aggressive behaviour (Crick and Dodge, 1996).

Another variant of attributional style as a cognitive personality variable refers to the habitual ways people explain their positive and negative life experiences (Abramson, Seligman and Teasdale cited in Tsuzuki, Matsui and Kakuyama, 2012). This is a common feature among employees in an organization. Recognitions, awards and promotions are ascribed to personal effort *et al* while queries, reprimands, demotions, etc are seen as management witch-hunt. It is referred to a process through which persons decide on reasons for some events like competence, attempt and level of difficulty (Weiner, 1996).

Abramson *et al* cited in Tsuzuki *et al* (2012) posited three attributional dimensions to include: internality, stability and globality which are crucial for explaining human helplessness and depression. However, Weiner *et al* (1971) highlighted four determinants of

the assignment covering those of Abramson and colleagues and gave deeper insight to the concepts. The scholars explained that the internal-external dimension refers to the extent to which an individual sees his or her life experiences, being caused by something about him or herself (internal attributions perceive impact, ability, luck and task difficulty as not external). The second, stable-unstable (situation or condition) attribution refers to the extent to which an individual perceives his or her life experiences being caused by non-transient factors (continuous overtime) also called locus of causality (stable attributions), as opposed to transient ones (temporary variable or unstable attributions). And lastly, the global-specific dimension refers to when an individual sees cause of his or her life experience as being present in a variety of situations (affect a number of results or global attributions), as opposed to more circumscribed reason limited to a particular event (Peterson *et al* cited in Tsuzuki *et al*, 2012).

More explicitly, some key concepts used are considered as follows:

*Perceived effort*: Success and failure depend on internal reasons and are temporary.

*Ability*: Success and failure depend on internal reasons and are continuous.

*Luck*: Success and failure depend on internal reasons and are temporary.

*Task difficulty*: Success and failure depend on external reasons and are continuous.

The first dimension of attributional style (internality) is a situation where an employee sees his successes and failures in the organizations resulting from higher strengths or weaknesses. The stability dimension presupposes that his/her achievements or inabilities are caused by the organization. And finally, the globality dimension leaves employees with the perception that the factors responsible for these experiences are myriad and pervasive in the organization.

Abramson *et al* cited in Tsuzuki *et al* (2012) suggested that depression-prone individuals tend to attribute negative life experiences to internal, stable, and global factors and positive life experiences to external, unstable and specific factors. It is important to note that Seligman *et al*, (1979) examined attributional styles for depressed and non-depressed individuals and found that depressed individuals make attributions systematically differently from non-depressed individual on all the three attributional dimensions. On a specific note, relative to non-depressed individuals, depressed individuals attributed positive life events to external, unstable, and specific causes, and negative life events to internal, stable and global causes.

The tendency to attribute positive events to internal, stable and global factors on one hand and negative events to external, unstable and specific factors was defined as optimistic attributional style (Seligman, 1990). On the other hand, the tendency to attribute negative events to internal, stable and global factors was defined as pessimistic attributional style. Abramson *et al* cited in Tsuzuki *et al* (2012) averred that individuals with an optimistic attributional style are more resilient when faced with unfavourable events than individuals with a pessimistic attributional style.

The process of attribution is important for people to understand their own behaviours as well as to evaluate other human behaviours and understand or interpret individual perceived events (Kale and Aknar, 2020). The styles of attribution of individuals have a significant effect on their future behaviours (Ciarrochi, Heaven and Davies, 2007). For example, a positive attribution style is related to individuals' experiences protecting them from depression (Needles and Abramson, 1990), while the negative attribution style is associated with a variety of negative social and emotional consequences such as depression, loneliness, and social anxiety (Gladstone and Kaslow; Peterson and Seligman; Crick and Ladd cited in Kale and Aknar, 2020).

### **Organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB)**

The concept of organizational citizenship behaviour was first introduced by Organ in 1988 (Mahdiun, Ghahramani and Sharif (2010), Podsakoff, Posakoff and Blime (2009), Ariani and Barsulai (2012). Organ (1988) originally defined OCB as individual behaviours that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization (Organ, 1997; Mahdiun *et al*, 2010; Podsakoff *et al*, 2009; Ogunleye, Oke, Olawa and Osagu (2014); Khan, Feng, Zhen, Leong, Yee and Zhi (2015) and Ariani (2012).

This definition signposts the problems of interpretations of *discretionary, directly or formal reward system* where Organ later explained that the behaviour is not an enforceable requirement of the role or the job description, that is the clearly specifiable terms of the person's employment contract with the organization. The behaviour is rather a matter of personal choice, such that its omission is not generally understood as punishable. However, Organ (1993) modified the definition of OCB to: the performance that supports the social and psychological environment in which task performance takes place. In this latter definition, OCB is conceived as synonymous to contextual performance (Ariani, 2012 and Organ, 1997). The advantage of the revised definition according to Mackenzie, Podsakoff and Fetter (1991), Motowidlo and VanScotter (1994), Rotundo and Sackett (2002) is that it (a) maintains the distinction that has been empirically shown to exist between task performance and OCBs, (b) is more consistent with Borman and Motowidlo's (1993) definition of contextual performance, and (c) avoids some of the difficulty with viewing OCBs as discretionary behaviour for which an individual might not receive formal rewards (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2009).

Following the credibility Organ placed on Borman and Motowidlo's 1993 definition, it is important to recall their definition of contextual performance as behaviours that do not support the technical core itself so much as they support the broader organizational, social, and psychological environment in which the technical core must function. Moreso, OCB specifies contributions that are neither strictly required by the job description nor rewarded by formal incentives unlike contextual performance framework which makes no reference to what is expected in the job description or the prospects of formal reward (Sharma and Jain, 2014). Suffice to say that employees take additional step to enable themselves, colleagues and the organization

meet set objectives while carrying our particular tasks is the hallmark of all the definitions and the route to see survival and competitiveness of every organization.

Notwithstanding a number of ways in which OCBs have been conceptualized over the years by different authors, academicians and researchers including Bateman and Organ (1983), Organ (1988, 1990), Williams and Anderson (1991), Podsakoff *et al.*, (2009). Organ (1988) originally proposed a five-factor OCB model consisting of altruism, courtesy, conscientiousness, civic virtue and sportsmanship. However, he subsequently expanded this model (Organ, 1990) to include two other dimensions (peacekeeping and cheerleading).

a). *Altruism*: This deals with items such as helping an overloaded worker catch-up with the work flow to solve a problem; help colleagues that have been absent from work and helping a new worker learn a job; being mindful of how one's own behaviour affects others' jobs. When employers have socially driven values that emphasize the group over individual concerns, they are likely to encourage altruistic behaviour beneficial to the group.

b). *Courtesy*: This prevents problems and facilitates constructive use of time; employers give advance notices, timely reminders, and appropriate information. Organizations are equally sensitive to the claims of others or commonly used organizational resources. No wonder, Foote (2005) asserted that intergroup conflict is avoided by courteous employees who avoid creating problems for co-workers, thereby reducing managers' time for handling crisis management.

c). *Conscientiousness*: Often called compliance is a behaviour that goes beyond the minimum role requirement level of the organization such as not taking extra break, work extra-long days, punctual at work, low absenteeism; indicative that employees accept and adhere to the rules, regulations, and procedures of the organization (Organ, 1988). More conscientiousness from employees will led to high performance by employer being more responsible and requiring less supervision (Borman, 2001).

d). *Civic virtue*: This refers to a responsible and constructive involvement in the political processes of the organization which helps improve job performance (Baker, 2005). This behaviour monitors organizations' environment for threats and opportunities, show employees' willingness to participate actively in managerial events, and looks out for organization's best interest (Organ, 1988). Podsakoff (2000) posited that employee performance is improved by these behaviours that reflect an employee's recognition of being part of the organization.

e). *Sportsmanship*: Organ (1988) defined sportsmanship as a willingness on the part of employees to tolerate less than ideal circumstances without complaining and making problems seem bigger than they actually are. It infers employee's willingness to sacrifice their personal interest for the good of the work group, while maintaining a positive attitude and enduring personal inconveniences without complaint in order to conserve organizational resources. In addition, Organ (1990) suggested two additional dimensions which are:

f). *Cheerleading*: This involves the celebration of co-worker's accomplishments. The effect is to provide positive reinforcement for positive contributions, which in turn makes such contributions more likely to occur in the future.

g). *Peacemaking*: This is where employees notice that a conflict is on the verge of escalating into a personal war between other employees and appropriate steps are taken to cool heads, help the antagonists save face, and help discussants get back to consideration of personal issues.

The second major conceptualization of OCBs is that proposed by Williams and Anderson (1991). These authors organized OCB's into categories on the basis of the target or direction of the behaviour. More specifically, they called behaviours directed towards the benefit of specific individuals and through this means contribute to the growth of the organization as *OCBI*, whereas behaviours directed toward the benefit of the organization as *OCBO* (Podsakoff, 2009; Banahene, Ahudey and Asamoah, 2017).

Earlier, Williams and Anderson identified Organ's (1988, 1990) altruism dimension as an exemplar of OCBI. Notwithstanding, courtesy, peacekeeping, and cheerleading behaviours are also appropriate to be included in OCBI category given that they are all aimed at helping other individuals. Again, if Williams and Anderson earlier used Organ's compliance (or conscientiousness) dimension as example of OCBO, other authors: Hoffman, Blair, Meriac and Woehr (2007); Lepine, Ene and Johnson (2002) have also included civic virtue and sportsmanship in this category.

In addition, Williams and Anderson's (1991) categorization scheme incorporates most other OCB-related constructs into it. For example, in addition to Organ's (1990) altruism, courtesy, peacekeeping and cheerleading dimensions as captured in OCBI. OCBI also captures Graham's (1989) interpersonal helping, Van Scooter and Motowildo's (1996) interpersonal facilitation, and Farh, Earley and Lin's (1997) helping co-workers and interpersonal harmony constructs.

Similarly, OCBO captures not only Organ's (1990) compliance, civic virtue, and sportsmanship dimensions but also Graham's (1991) organizational loyalty; Borman and Motowildo's (1993, 1997) endorsing, supporting, and defending organizational objectives; Van Scooter and Motowildo's (1996) job dedication; Lepine and Van Dyne's (1998) voice behaviour; Morrison and Phelps's (1999) taking charge (or individual initiative); and Farh, Zhong and Organ's (2004) promoting the company's image construct. To this end, all of Organ's (1988, 1990) OCB dimensions are same put forth by Williams and Anderson's conceptual scheme and same with others, earlier elaboration on Organ's elements of OCB will suffice for this work.

OCB is carried out by individuals as a result of supervisors' responses and it influences the evaluation of individual, group, and organizational performance (Ariani, 2012). Therefore, in this global economic situation that is characterized by market

competitiveness and self-team-based work structures, all winning organizations are increasing relying on employees who take on extra- role activities in the workplace (Ilgen and Pulakos, 1999; Podsakoff *et al*, 2000).

In-role behaviours are the task performance activities that are explicitly indicated in employees' job description. The extra-role behaviours are the contextual performance involving pro-activeness, discretionary and deliberate employee behaviours that are outside the job description, employment contract, or associated with the main job task (Organ, 1988; Schnake, 1991). In this regard, extra-role behaviours are aimed to improve the social, psychological and organizational environment where in-role behaviours happens (Bateman and Organ, 1983; Organ, 1997).

### **Attributional bias and organizational citizenship behaviour**

OCB is a unique aspect of individual activities in a workplace which are not formally required by their jobs, independent and not clearly and formally stated in work procedures and remuneration system. These activities as have been earlier explored according to the contribution of different scholars include: altruism (interpersonal helping), courtesy, sportsmanship, civic virtue, conscientiousness (personal industry), cheerleading, peacemaking, individual initiative, loyalty to the organization, organizational compliance, behaviours that benefit the organization in general and behaviours that immediately benefit specific individuals and indirectly through this means contribute to the organization.

Meanwhile, attributional biases are systematic tendencies toward certain causal perceptions that persist even when such perceptions are not consistent with objective reality (Martinko, Gundkoh and Douglas, 2003). The biases include: self-serving bias, actor-observer bias, fundamental attribution error and hostile attributional bias. Harvey, Harris and Martinko (2008) noted that of the four dimensions of attributional bias; the last, hostile attribution styles are primarily demonstrated in response to negative events, meaning that those with such a bias may or may not be external in their attributions for positive events. Research has shown that hostile attributions can lead to frustration and aggression when negative outcomes occur (Douglas and Martinko, 2001).

Hostile attribution bias concerns individuals' tendency to think that the behaviour of others in uncertain situations is hostile (Matthews and Norris, 2002). Individuals with high hostile attribution bias will attribute the responsibility for mistakes to others or to circumstances, especially if the responsibility for the mistake is unclear (Wingrove and Bond, 1998). Research has shown that trait hostility is implicated in negative outcomes (Adams and John, 1997) and that individuals with high hostile attribution bias is more likely to have negative psychological feeling after setbacks, such as anger and dissatisfaction (Thomas and Pondy cited in Qi, Wei, Li, Liu and Xu, 2020).

Conversely, employees with a pro-social motive are perceived as having a strong desire to help coworkers, a concern for the wellbeing of others, and a desire to build positive relationships with colleagues, creating a positive organization climate and facilitating interpersonal harmony in the organization (Su, Liu and Hanson-Rasmussen, 2017). For example, employees could offer some practical suggestions to resolve the interpersonal conflicts among colleagues. When supervisors believe that the voice behaviour of the subordinates is driven by an altruistic rather than egoistic motive, they tend to regard the subordinates as "good citizens" which is outright display of a desirable behaviour on the part of the employee.

Employees with a high constructive motive have a fervent desire and sense of obligation to perform behaviours that benefit the organization. These employees pay more attention to the organization, spend extra time at work, and offer useful suggestions to supervisors. As a result, the organization can function more effectively and plan for the future. The social exchange theory (Blau cited in Xu, Liu and Hans-Rasmussen, 2017) hold the view that people tend to reciprocate helping behaviours. There is yet just one related study that has looked at the nature of relationship between attributional style and organizational citizenship behaviour to the best of the knowledge of this research.

### **METHODS**

The study adopted a cross-sectional descriptive survey research design. It utilized both qualitative and quantitative methods. The population encompassed two thousand, eight hundred and eighty-five (2,885) construction workers from four (4) construction companies in South-East, Nigeria. They include: Julius Berger Nigeria Plc, Hartland Construction Company Nigeria Limited, Reynolds Construction Company and Arab Contractors Nigeria Limited.

Systematic sampling technique was used to draw from the population. The sample size of 351 was determined using the Taro Yamena (1967) sample determination formula. The sample size for each construction firm was subsequently estimated using Bowley's Proportional Allocation Technique formula (Dike, Ehikwe and Onwuka, 2013). Primary data were collected, using a two-section structured, self-administered survey questionnaire. Section A comprised of Personal Data while Section B comprised abusive supervision and turnover intention set on a 5-point Scale, weighted 1-5: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Undecided (U), Agree (A) and Strongly Agree (SA). The questionnaire was reviewed and pre-test was conducted, by administering the instrument to two conveniently selected managers to fill. The two managers evaluated the statement items for relevance, meaning and clarity. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used to measure the internal consistency of the constructs. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data for the study. The data generated was retrieved, analyzed and the hypothesis tested using Spearman Rank Correlation on the platform of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 21.0. Coefficients were used to interpret data. Spearman rank correlation coefficient ( $\rho$ ) was used to measure the linear relationship between attribution bias and OCB.

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**Decision rule**

The following interpretation coefficients were used:

<0.1: weak;

0.11- 03: modest;

0.31- 05: moderate;

>0.5: strong (Muijs, 2004).

**ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

Participants Demographic Information

Table 1: Gender Status of Participants

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	198	72.8	72.8	72.8
	Female	74	27.2	27.2	100.0
	Total	272	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

As shown in table 5.1, large proportions of 72.8 of the participants are male while 27.2 are female.

Table 2: Spearman’s Rank *Correlation of Attribution bias and OCB*

			Attribution Bias	Organizational Citizenship Behaviour
Spearman's rho	Attribution Bias	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.603*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.013
		N	272	272
Organizational Citizenship Behaviour	Organizational Citizenship Behaviour	Correlation Coefficient	-.603*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.013	.
		N	272	272

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

Source: Research Data, 2021.

The above table shows a negative and significant relationship between attribution bias and OCB of workers with a rho value of -0.603. This indicates that there is a 60.3 percent explanation of the relationship between both variables, while 29.7 percent are explained by other variables not considered in this relationship. However, this statement is true as the level of significance of 0.013 is less than 0.05, therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and its alternative form accepted. This states that there is significant relationship between attribution bias and OCB of workers in the studied construction companies in the South East, Nigeria.

The findings of the study revealed that there is significant relationship between attribution bias and OCB among employees of the construction companies in South East, Nigeria. The Spearman rank correlation coefficient tested the relationship between attribution bias and OCB. The findings revealed that the relationship between attribution bias and OCB was strong and significant. This implies that there is existence of employee attribution bias in the construction companies within the period under study which can be attributed to poor human resource management policies. The correlations coefficient of -0.603 (60.3%) indicates that to a large extent there is a negative variation on turnover intention which can lead to significant variation on OCB while the probability value is .013 which confirms that the null hypothesis is not accepted. This means that there is relationship between attribution bias and OCB. Such height of attribution bias heightens disenchantment and employees contribute less to the construction companies. This again confirms the general rule that employees at the lower levels are important as they are the transmission channel of policies formulated by the top level managers in corporate organizations. The finding confirms the a-priori expectation of the study and empirical finding of Baker (2005) that all the negative dimensions of attribution style (External, stable, intentional, controllable and global causes) were negatively related to OCB..

**Conclusion**

The study found attribution bias had negative and significant relationship but OCB of workers in construction companies in South East, Nigeria.

**Recommendations**

The following specific recommendations are made based on the findings of this study:

- i. Organizations need to promote the hallmarks of corporate governance in the company to reduce distrust and suspicion and enhance optimum contribution from the workers.
- ii. Company policies need not to be shrouded in secrecy so that at entry employees understand the terms and conditions guiding their service as well as the rules and regulations guiding the operations of the company.

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## APPENDIX I

### QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is meant to supply information of a research work on “**Attribution bias and organizational citizenship behaviour in construction companies in South-East, Nigeria**”. Please answer all the statements honestly. Your response and the results obtained will be used exclusively for the purposes of this investigation.

**SECTION A  
PERSONAL DATA**

NAME OF COMPANY: \_\_\_\_\_

GENDER: MALE  FEMALE

DEPARTMENT: \_\_\_\_\_

AGE: 18 – 30  31 – 40  , 41 – 50  51 - 60

Highest Educational Qualification: FSLC  , SSCE  , ND/OND   
HND DEGREE  MASTERS DEGREE  , PhD

Years of work experience: 0-5  6-10  11-15  16-20  Above 20

Years with the organization: 0-5  6-10  Above 10

Please read each statement below in **Sections B** and indicate your opinion from your present work environment and experience. Each statement ranges from **strongly disagree (SD)**, **disagree (D)**, **undecided (U)**, **agree (A)** to **strongly agree (SA)**. Please tick the space in each case.

**SECTION B**

S/N	ATTRIBUTION BIAS	SD	D	U	A	SA
1	My poor performance evaluation was caused by my colleague(s)/supervisor/manager or circumstances.					
2	My failure to receive the promotion was caused my colleague(s)/supervisor/manager or circumstances.					
3	My poor rise is caused by my colleague(s)/supervisor/manager or circumstances.					
4	My pending layoff is masterminded by my colleague(s)/supervisor/manager or circumstances.					
5	My accident was caused by my colleague(s)/supervisor/manager or circumstances.					

S/N	ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR	SD	D	U	A	SA
1.	I help co-workers learn new skills and orientate new employees about the job.					
2.	I take steps to try to prevent problems with and among other teammates.					
3.	I attend meetings and make contributions to enable the company succeed..					
4.	I do what is right despite gossips, rumours and speculations from other employees.					
5.	I obey rules and regulations of the company.					