Deviant Behaviour and Service Delivery of Civil Servants in Rivers State

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Abstract: The aim of the study is to determine the relationship between deviant behaviour and service delivery of civil servants in Rivers State. The population of the study consisted of conveniently sampled sixty-two (62) clients of government parastatals in Rivers State. Two (2) hypotheses were formulated for the study. Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient was relied on to test the hypotheses. The results showed a significant and positive relationship between deviant behaviour and service delivery of civil servants in Rivers State. Specifically, it was found that organizational deviance and interpersonal deviance has significant but negative relationship with service delivery; which imply that a decrease in organizational and interpersonal deviance could lead to an increase in the quality of service delivery of civil servants, and an increase in organizational or interpersonal deviance could result in a decrease in the quality of service delivery of civil servants in Rivers State. As such, it was concluded that an increase in the prevalence of deviant behaviour will lead to a decrease in the quality of service delivery of civil servants in Rivers State. Consequently, it was recommended that the government should: ensure that civil servants are well motivated in terms of providing good terms and working conditions in order to discourage them from engaging in deviant behavior that is inimical to the good image and reputation of the civil service; and create a working environment in which citizenship behaviours can flourish. This working environment needs to include among other things more effective leadership and supervision; promotion of a culture of client-centred performance; and empowerment of the civil servants.

Keywords: Deviant Work Behaviour, Organizational Deviance, Interpersonal Deviance, Service Delivery

Introduction

Employees' positive service delivery behaviour is crucial in any service organisation because it serves as a connection between the organisation and its customers, representing a critical factor in the development of effective customer working relationships (Doherty et al., 2015; Andrzejewski & Mooney, 2016). Service delivery may also serve to maintain customer satisfaction by delivering on promises made to customers. Success, growth, customer retention, and connections, as well as long-term viability, may all be attributed to effective service delivery, which has received widespread recognition both in the public and commercial service sectors (Lues, 2007; Dorasamy, 2010; Sibanda, 2012). Because of its potential positive effects on an organization's health and competitiveness, service delivery is often viewed as a factor that can boost service quality. As a result of its impact, a service organisation might gain or lose credibility, productivity, and dedication to their mission (Echchakoui, 2016; Ratanavaraha et al., 2016; Verbich & Ahmed, 2016).

Providing a service often refers to producing anything of value (Pugh & Subramony, 2016). The term "service delivery" encompasses both the technical and human aspects of providing a service to a client (Wang et al., 2016). Some characteristics of service delivery that have been identified by researchers such as Holtom and Burch (2016) and Pugh and Subramony (2016) are that they are intangible (because they cannot be physically held), inseparable (because production and consumption occur simultaneously), and heterogeneous (because they are unrelated). As a result of positive or bad service delivery behaviour, the customer, client, or citizen may experience either an increase in value and satisfaction or a decrease in value and discontent (Mpofu & Hlatywayo, 2015).

Reports indicate that between 35 and 75 percent of Nigerian workers engage in deviant behaviour, which poses a significant risk to service delivery in both public and private sector organisations (Alias & Mohd Rasdi, 2007; Fagbohungbe et al., 2012; Olabimitan & Alausa, 2014). The prevalence rates of disobedience, tardiness, and unauthorised use of company property are reported to be 65%, 40%, and 80%, respectively (Akikibofori, 2013). Theft, fraud, sabotage, rudeness, and arguments are thought to be on the rise in Nigerian workplaces (Fagbohungbe et al., 2012; Otaotu, 2016). It is puzzling how common workplace misbehaviour is in Nigeria.

Although there have been research on service delivery in the public sector, few have examined the role of deviant behaviour. As a result, this study looks at the relationship between deviant behaviour and service delivery of civil servants in Rivers State, in an effort to address this gap in the literature.

Statement of the Problem

It has been proven that a company's market share and growth are increased when consumers have their service needs met, and even exceeded (Lewis, 1991). According to research conducted by Gowan et al. (2001), public servants provide a wide range of services, including but not limited to: allocation of resources, public justification and accountability for services rendered, and care for less concrete and more abstract problems.

Most of the economic resources in developing nations are controlled by the government, which plays a crucial role in providing essential services. For example, in Nigeria, the people interact with government policy and services through parastatals, which are wholly controlled by the state (BPSR, 2015). Even though some government agencies have made significant progress in terms of service process or management technique (as evidenced by the extent to which their innovations have been novel, implemented, and had an impact) (OECD, 2014), most of these parastatals have failed in effective and efficient delivery and are therefore under pressure.

It has been said that the public sector has a history of inefficiency and ineffectiveness (Abass, 2012). Corruption, poor management, and low morale were the norm. Absenteeism, begging for bribes from clients, and spreading unfounded rumours are a few more. These issues have made the Nigerian civil service a less-than-desirable institution for many Nigerians (Abass, 2012).

Nevertheless, despite the challenges they have faced, several parastatals in developed nations have succeeded in their services by adopting novel approaches to issue solving and service improvement (Bloch & Bugge, 2013; Borins, 2014). This research endeavour is thus motivated by a desire to provide an answer to the well-documented incompetent service delivery associated with most parastatals, which typically results in disgruntled clients and consumers.
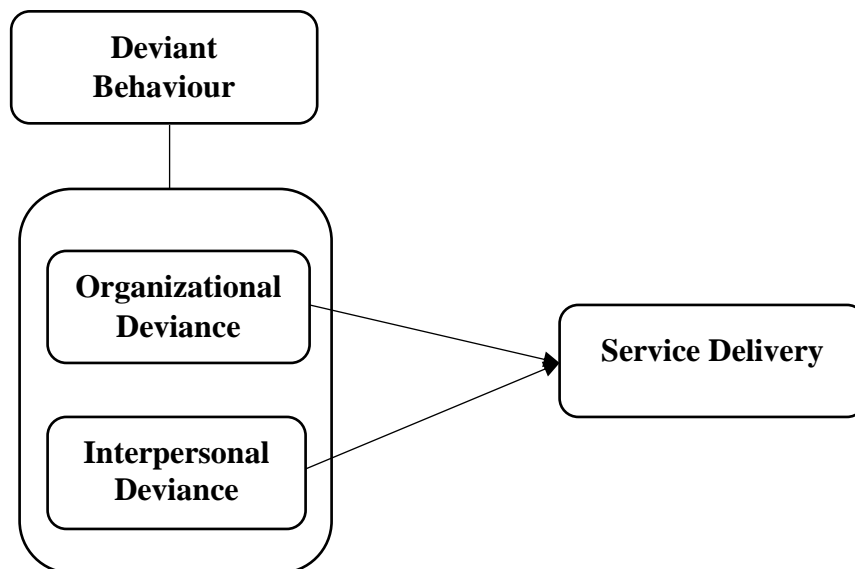
Figure 1: A Model of Deviant Behaviour and Service Delivery.

Source: The dimensions of deviant behaviour were adapted from the work of Bennett and Robinson (2000); while items relied on to measure service delivery were adapted from the work of Dabholkar et al. (1996).

Hypotheses

In furtherance of the study, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H_{01}:   Organizational deviance and service delivery.

H_{02}:   Interpersonal deviance and service delivery.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

According to Herzberg's two-factor theory (1959), there are two types of elements that might motivate workers to do a good job: intrinsic variables and extrinsic variables (Tan & Waheed 2016). Intrinsic motivation, as defined by Sandhya and Kumar (2014), is the type of motivation that comes from inside and is directly related to one's work, whereas extrinsic motivation is the type of drive that comes from without and is directly related to one's life outside of work. Extrinsic motivational variables include, but are not limited to, remuneration and relationships that exist between coworkers and supervisors (Malik et al., 2014), while intrinsic motivational factors include, among others, opportunities for career growth and advancement, challenging work, autonomy, and responsibility in the performance of one's duties (Kantor, 2016).

Both internal and external motivators are required for workers to feel inspired (Robbin, 2011). According to Samuel and Chipunza (2015), including both extrinsic and intrinsic components into the salary and incentive system has been shown to boost employee engagement. According to the research that inspired this essay, municipal workers may be motivated by offering them opportunities for personal improvement and professional satisfaction. Having access to extrinsic elements like strong management, a motivating company culture, a pleasant physical workplace, and cooperative coworkers might prevent employees from losing motivation. Because of both internal and external causes, employees are happy in their jobs and dedicated to remaining and helping a company or institution succeed by providing excellent service.

Conceptual Review

Deviant Behaviour

Malik and Sattar (2019) say that deviance is a behaviour that is very bad for the workplace and causes employees to be aggressive at work, get into fights with each other, cause trouble, or even steal from the company, which hurts its finances. Employee deviance is described by Dora and Azim (2017) as "employee voluntary behaviour that drastically breaches important organisational standards and, while doing so, undermines the well-being of an organisation and also the people who are associated to the organisation" (p. 12). Deviant behaviour in the workplace is harmful not only to organisational standards but also to the employees' social standards (Di Stefano & Scrima, 2019).

Taking unfair advantage of the organisation and so negatively affecting the company's common norms and expectations as well as its underlying social values is also regarded a deviant behaviour in the workplace (Singh, 2019). In addition to posing a threat to workplace standards, deviant behaviour impedes progress toward organisational goals and can have a negative impact on the mental health of otherwise committed workers (Ford & Agosta, 2018). Workers accept the standards and strive toward organisational goals, but a deviant attitude harms the right work environment and financially undermines the organisation (Ramzy & Bedawy, 2018). Employees will engage in deviant behaviour at work based on the culture of the organisation they are a part of (Cohen & Ehrlich, 2019, p. 12).

Organizational Deviance

Behaviors such as lying, slowdown strikes, harassment, gambling, disobedience, violence (Demir, 2009), theft, embezzlement, and mobbing (O'Neill et al., 2011) are examples of organisational deviant behaviours. These behaviours put organisations in a position where they are more likely to experience problems. Robinson and Bennett (2000) regard behaviours like these to be acts of volitional deviance that go against the norms of the organisation. Brady (2010) defines organisational deviance as an activity, situation, or formation that results in outcomes that are worse than expected and that deviates from formal goals, normative standards, and expectations. Organizational deviance can be characterised as a deviation from formal goals, normative standards, and expectations. Misconduct manifests itself in the form of activities such as stealing from the workplace, divulging sensitive information to unauthorised individuals, neglecting the management, and snitching on the working environment (Zhang et al., 2008).

These behaviours have been addressed by researchers working on organisational deviant behaviours as the bad ones affecting the organisation; as a result, these behaviours have been researched as the negative ones within the associated literature. Researchers working on organisational deviant behaviours Absenteeism, withdrawal, concealment, sexual abuse, making unethical judgments, violating the directions of the management, going on strike, being late for work, destroying the equipment, gossiping, and sabotage are some of the behaviours that fall within the purview of organisational behaviours. The focus of organisational behaviours is on undesirable behaviours such as these (Muafi, 2011).

Interpersonal Deviance

Interpersonal deviance is directed towards members of the organisation and involves behaviours such as acting impolitely toward a coworker or saying something upsetting to them, for example (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). It refers to behaviours that are harmful to members of an organisation, such as insulting colleagues or pupils, hiding official information from colleagues, stealing from coworkers, assigning blame to colleagues, engaging in sexual harassment, and talking about colleagues (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). The victims of interpersonal deviance in the forms of harassment and bullying reported lower levels of organisational commitment,

increased absenteeism, decreased levels of self-confidence, quitting work or the intention to quit, and increased on-the-job drug use. Victims of interpersonal deviance in the forms of harassment and bullying also reported higher rates of on-the-job drug use (Lim & Teo, 2009; Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011). Interpersonal deviant behaviour takes place on a regular basis (Pearson & Porath, 2005), and it frequently causes an emotional reaction in the victim, such as rage (Phillips & Smith, 2004), which can lead to stress (Perguson & Barry, 2011).

Service Delivery

A service is an action that involves two parties, one of which provides an activity to the other party that is not tangible and does not result in the other party acquiring anything for themselves (El Saghie, 2015). According to Saghier and Nathan (2016), services should be viewed more as a process than a product. A consumer and the person who is delivering the service engage with one another as part of the provision of a service, which is an example of an immaterial or process-based economic activity or procedure. According to Saghier and Nathan (2016), the interaction process between a consumer and a service provider is what constitutes a service. Employees inside an organisation are always the sellers, and they are the ones who represent the service that is being offered.

According to Ejumudo (2009), the provision of services has emerged as the primary focus of an increasing amount of managerial attention; it also constitutes a significant proportion of the economies of the developed nations of the world; and it sits at the very centre of organisational performance, regardless of whether it is in the public or private sphere. The centrality of service delivery in public and private sector organisations and institutions is inextricably linked to the functionality, operationality, growth, and development of societies. This is due to the fact that such organisations and institutions exist in, operate in, and are shaped by their environments. Moreover, societies are inextricably linked to the delivery of services (Ejumudo, 2010). The delivery of services necessitates the management of various stakeholders, such as external customers who anticipate receiving true value for the money they spend, employees or internal customers who play an essential role in ensuring the satisfaction and loyalty of external customers, creditors, suppliers, regulators, and other similar parties (Ibietan, 2013; Oyibo, 2010).

The quality of the service that is provided may be evaluated according to its responsiveness and reliability. According to Holweg (2005), responsiveness is defined as the capacity to meet the requirements of customers, clients, or citizens in a manner that is both prompt and flexible. The ability of workers to be eager and ready to provide quick services to clients, customers, or citizens, depending on the context, is central to the concept of responsiveness (Yarimoglu, 2014). According to Hult et al. (2005) as well as Kohli and Jaworski (1990), responsiveness refers to the propensity of an organisation to act on reports and information received from customers and other sources in order to improve the quality of the services they provide. In addition, Kohli and Jaworski (1990) emphasised the importance of businesses being able to take action based on the information they obtain in order to improve the quality of the services they provide. They maintained that this is the very essence of what it is to be responsive.

On the other side, reliability requires delivery that is both on time and free of mistakes. It is also possible to explain it as being able to provide services that are accurate and genuine. In other terms, it is the capability of delivering an expected standard in the shortest amount of time possible. According to Zeithaml et al. (2008), it is the manner in which organisations respond to the issues that their customers confront, the manner in which they execute services in an appropriate and timely manner free of faults, and in accordance with the standards that have been established. According to Yang and Fang (2004), dependability is comprised of precise records, precise assertions, precise billing, and precise computation of commissions. All of these things are ways to provide the service that was promised to the consumer.

Deviant Work Behaviour and Service Delivery

A positive or bad work attitude can be considered as a series of activities taken by individuals inside the firm that can either foster or stifle productivity (Welsh et al., 2012; Lee et al., 2013). When bad things happen at work, it can cause stress, lead to minor ailments, and even lead to melancholy (Limpanitgul et al., 2013). These potentially harmful actions (deviant behaviours) pose a risk of spreading across the workplace, similar to a contagious disease, with significant consequences for the health and productivity of everyone involved (Dhar, 2015).

Employee optimism affects the connection between what makes for successful service delivery and how workers act to satisfy customers and organisations (Muthanna & Karaman, 2014). Therefore, an improvement in workers' attitudes can have a beneficial effect on the quality of their services. Good attitudes in the workplace lead to good actions (Anand et al., 2015). The effort put in by the company to foster an optimistic outlook among its staff is crucial, since this outlook is what will ultimately lead to the satisfaction of the public they serve and the parastatals they work for.

Methodology

The theoretical population for this study comprised of all the clients of government parastatals in Rivers State as at today; although our accessible population for the study comprised conveniently sampled sixty-two (62) clients. Given the manageable nature of the sample elements, there was no need to draw a sample, hence the census approach was adopted. Deviant behaviour was measured

using the Workplace Deviant Behaviour Scale developed by Bennett and Robinson (2000). The scale measures two dimensions of workplace deviant behaviour, organisational deviance and interpersonal deviance. Each of these dimensions has two further sub-dimensions. The organisational deviance scale (12 items) was further divided into property deviance and production deviance, while the interpersonal deviance (7 items) was further divided into political deviance and personal aggression. Service quality has responsiveness and reliability as its measures. They were measured via eight (8) statement items obtained from Dabholkar et al. (1996) and also modified to suit the context of the study. Responsiveness has four (4) items. Reliability has four (4) items. Respondents were asked to rate perceived deviant behaviours and the satisfaction they derived from services rendered by civil servants in government parastatals on a five-point Likert-like scale (from strongly disagree =1, to strongly agree = 5). The internal consistency of the items in relation to the study area was determined via a test re-test approach which yielded satisfactory composite alpha value of .86 (Nunnaly & Bernstein, 1994). Spearman Rank Correlation Analysis was carried out on the stated hypotheses. Of the sixty-two (62) copies of the study instrument distributed, fifty-nine (59) were retrieved and analysed.

Results and Discussion
Test of Hypotheses
This section is concerned with testing hypotheses stated earlier in chapter one; using Spearman's rank order correlation coefficient statistical tool and the p-values obtained.

Decision Rule: reject null hypothesis if p-value obtained is less than the alpha value (0.05/95% level of significance) and accept null hypotheses when p-value is greater than the alpha value.

Table 1: Spearman Correlation Coefficient (Spearman's rho): Test of relationship between the variables Organizational Deviance and Service Quality (H0$_1$)

			Organizational Deviance	Service Delivery
Spearman's rho	Organizational Deviance	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.321**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	62	62
	Service Delivery	Correlation Coefficient	-.321**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	62	62
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).				

SPSS output, Version 20 – Field Survey, 2022

Analysis result in table 1 reveal that there is a significant relationship between organizational deviance and service delivery (p =0.000), however the relationship is negative (rho = -.321). This implies that as one variable increases, the other decreases and vice versa; that is, if organizational deviance decreases, service delivery increases; and organizational deviance increases, service delivery decreases. Furthermore, we find that organizational deviance is associated with responsiveness and based on the decision rule of p < 0.05 for null rejection; we therefore reject the null hypothesis and restate that there is a significant relationship between organizational deviance and service delivery of civil servants in Rivers State.

Table 2: Spearman Correlation Coefficient (Spearman's rho): Test of relationship between the variables Interpersonal Deviance and Service Quality (H0$_2$)

			Interpersonal Deviance	Service Delivery
Spearman's rho	Interpersonal Deviance	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.243**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	62	62
	Service Delivery	Correlation Coefficient	-.243**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	62	62
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).				

SPSS output, Version 20 – Field Survey, 2022

Also, the result in table 2 shows that there is a significant relationship between interpersonal deviance and service delivery (p =0.000), however the relationship is negative (rho = -.243). This implies that as one variable increases, the other decreases and vice versa; that is, if interpersonal deviance decreases, service delivery increases; and interpersonal deviance increases, service delivery decreases. Furthermore, we find that interpersonal deviance is associated with service delivery and based on the decision rule of p <

0.05 for null rejection; we therefore reject the null hypothesis and restate that there is a significant relationship between interpersonal deviance and service delivery of civil servants in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

The test of hypotheses indicates that deviant behaviour has a considerable influence on service delivery, with the quality of service delivery decreasing as deviant behaviour increases in the civil service and vice versa. This result is consistent with a wide range of recent studies in this field. For instance, Lee et al. (2013) and Welsh et al. (2012) consider employee behaviors—including deviant behavior—as numerous sequences of acts carried out by employees inside the organisation that have the potential to either reinforce or demolish a productive work environment. According to Limpanitgul et al. (2013), the recurrence of unfavourable behaviours might lead to stress, mild ailments, and even depression in workers.

On the other hand, other writers have promoted citizenship or extra-role behaviours as contributors to the link between the factors that determine excellent service delivery and the behaviour of those who provide that service in order to meet the expectations of both clients and institutions (Muthanna & Karaman, 2014). According to Anand et al. (2015), positive changes in employee behaviour and attitude can have a favourable impact on how well employees provide services since positive working attitudes result in positive behaviour. Based on this assumption, this study provides empirical support for the notion that service delivery and deviant behaviour are significantly correlated, particularly among government workers in Rivers State.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The goal of the study was to determine whether deviant workplace behaviour has any bearing on how well Rivers State's government workers provide services. It was assumed that two characteristics of deviant work behavior—interpersonal deviance and organisational deviance—would have a relationship with service delivery. The study's findings showed that every aspect of deviant behaviour has a substantial influence on service delivery, with the result that increasing deviant behaviour would result in decreased service delivery and vice versa. Thus, it may be argued that when deviant workplace behaviour becomes more prevalent, Rivers State's civil servants would provide less effective services. To this end, it is recommended that the government should:

i. Ensure that civil servants are well motivated in terms of providing good terms and working conditions in order to discourage them from engaging in deviant behavior that is inimical to the good image and reputation of the civil service.
ii. Create a working environment in which citizenship behaviours can flourish. This working environment needs to include among other things more effective leadership and supervision; promotion of a culture of client-centred performance; and empowerment of the civil servants.

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