

Proactive Work Behaviour Among Bank Employees in Anambra State, Nigeria: An Examination of Abusive Supervision, Organizational Justice and Core Self-Evaluation

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Abstract

This study focused on abusive supervision, organizational justice and core self-evaluation as predictors of proactive work behaviour. The sample population of the study was 349 commercial bank employees randomly selected from the three senatorial zones of Anambra State which comprises 198 males and 151 females and whose ages ranged from 24 to 49 years with an average age of 31.50 years and standard deviation of 2.40. Abusive supervision scale by Tepper (2000), Organizational justice scale by Neihooft and Morman (1993), Core self-evaluation scale by Timothy, Judge, Locke and Durham (1997) and Proactive work behaviors scale by Parker, Williams, and Turner (2006) were used as instrument for data collection. Correlation and hierarchical regression analysis were used as the appropriate design and statistical tool respectively to analyze the data obtained from the field. The result indicated that organizational justice (interactional) and core self-evaluation correlated positively with proactive behaviour at $r(1, 349) = .489, p < .05$ and $.414, p < .05$ respectively while negative correlation was recorded between abusive supervision and work proactive behaviour among commercial bank employees at $r(1, 349) = -.572, p < .05$. It was unraveled that abusive supervision, perceived organizational justice (interactional) and core self-evaluation significantly predicted proactive behaviour of commercial bank employees at $B = .376, p < .05, .268, p < .05$ and $.274, p < .05$ respectively. Finally, recommendations were made based on the findings that organizational climate be improved to elicit employees' proactive and innovative behaviour.

Keywords: Abusive Supervision, Organizational Justice, Core self-evaluation, Predictors, Proactive

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The unstable economic climate in most developing countries such as Nigeria has lots of impacts on private sector organizations [1]. The banking sector as a private sector industry is not different. The recent acquisition of defunct Diamond bank Plc by Access bank Plc due to the failure of the former has once more emphasized the volatile nature of the economic climate in the private sector. Many management experts have emphasized that most of the time survival of organizations may be dependent on the prevailing economic climate and volatile natures of policies that regulate the sector especially among developing economy [2]. As regards the relationship between organizational climate and employee-organization fit, [3] characteristically contended that it is a “Swim or Sink” for private organizations trying to survive the harsh economic climate without and the banking sector are not an exception.

This study focused on a type of work-variable – proactive behaviour which may likely give the organization an edge in the turbulent economic climate in the Nigerian banking industry. The study is also interested in examining other worker-variables which may positively or negatively influence proactive work behaviour of employees. The factors under consideration for this influence are abusive supervision, organizational justice and core self-evaluation. Proactive behaviour is an anticipatory action involving preventing problems, seizing opportunities, and self-directed efforts that target improving and changing the work context or situation and future of the self [4]. When a person is proactive, they are acting in advance of a future event. Proactive employees typically don't need to be asked to do something and will usually require less detailed instructions to achieve a course of an action.

Employees that exhibit pro-activity are big assets to organizations because they can move their organization to the next level when they take advantage of an opportunity to better their organization based on their anticipatory instincts which can be used to harness their strength during preparation to tap into abundant opportunities [5]. Proactive employees are focused, organized, and are always ready to take on advantageous opportunity. They are also peace makers in the organization and often make sacrifices for fellow workers and the organization. Abusive supervision describes the hostile actions of superiors (supervisors, managers or team leaders) toward their subordinates [6]. Abusive supervision is also superior's inordinate behaviour toward his/her subordinates in a way that affects their jobs or their persons. This includes looking down on workers, ignoring their requests, withholding vital information that could aid their performance, downgrading their performance and maligning their ability. Perceived organizational justice entails employees' perception of equity observed in the organization's decisions, rewards, punishments and processes of doing things [7]. Another factor which could influence employees' proactive behaviour is core self-evaluation. Core self-evaluation is an individual's subconscious and fundamental traits of self-evaluations in one's own ability and control [8]. Core self-evaluation

helps to develop positive or negative attributes about the self especially in respect to inert abilities and being confidence about the self. This study has in consideration of these circumstances and the volatile economic climate of commercial banks in Nigeria deemed it expedient to explore factors which are likely to predict proactive behaviour of bank employees whose understanding may help the organization bolster the quality of their workforce by motivating a workforce which is capable and willing to go above the call of duty to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of their organizations.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Many studies in the past have linked proactive and citizenship behaviours as consequences of the employee behaviour most especially with positive construct; however, there are still gaps especially as regards negative constructs such as abusive supervision and poor organizational justice as explored by the current study. Hence, studying as dimension will help to close the existing gaps in understanding factors which promote proactive workplace behaviour. This study in view of impacts which may emanate from organizational interaction in the workplace is being carried out with the hope of understanding the relationships among these factors and proffering solutions especially as it affects proactive behaviour. However, several issues remain unsolved which created gaps and necessitated this current study. There are also gaps in the studies with bank employees which have limited their focus on the causes and consequences of discretionary behaviours such as proactive behaviours, organizational citizenship behaviours and extra role behaviour which influence the workplace. The findings of such studies are limited in scope because they have not broadened their perspectives to overall proactive behaviour which organizational citizenship behaviour is a part of. This study therefore aims at filling this gap. Equally, concepts such as organizational citizenship behaviour and extra role behaviour may not be entirely adequate to cover most proactive behaviours which occur in the workplace with both being limited in concept. Also, there is gap in extending the influence of organizational climate to employee behaviour which this study attempts to fill this void.

1.3 Research Questions

In consideration of the above stated problems, the following research questions have been formulated to guide the study. They are:

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- i. Will abusive supervision significantly predict proactive work behaviour among commercial bank employees in Anambra State?
 - ii. Will organizational justice dimensions significantly predict proactive work behaviour among commercial bank employees in Anambra State?

- iii. Will core self-evaluation significantly predict proactive work behaviour among commercial bank employees in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses have been formulated to guide the study:

- i. Abusive supervision will significantly predict proactive behaviour among commercial bank employees in Anambra State.
- ii. Organizational justice dimensions will significantly predict proactive behaviour among commercial bank employees in Anambra State.
- iii. Core self-evaluation will significantly predict proactive behaviour among commercial bank employees in Anambra State.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to examine if abusive supervision, organizational justice dimensions and core self-evaluation will significantly predict proactive work behaviour among commercial bank employees in Anambra State. Specifically, the objectives of this study are to determine if:

- Abusive supervision will significantly predict proactive work behaviour among commercial bank employees in Anambra State.
- Organizational justice dimensions will significantly predict proactive work behaviour among commercial bank employees in Anambra State.
- Core self-evaluation will significantly predict proactive work behaviour among commercial bank employees in Anambra State.

2.0 Review of Related Literature

- *Concept of Pro-active work behavior*

Pro-active work behavior is critical for employee retention and successful organizational viability. In the current economic situation, banks engage the acquisition of knowledge-based services. Knowledge-based services, such as proactive idea implementation, requires supervisor support or leadership support in the form of established leadership supervision and perception of fairness that may accelerate employee proactive problem solving. In such a context, banking industry as a knowledge-based organization requires individual who are inherently in control of their thought and feelings and as a result have higher proactive work behavior. One dispositional trait known to enhance proactive work outcomes is core self-evaluation (CSE). Core self-evaluation represents critical evaluation of individuals feeling of competence, control, capability

and self-worth, which should initiate proactive work behavior. Proactive work behavior is an anticipatory extra-role behavior (ERB). Extra- role behavior encompasses all categories of anticipatory behaviors initiation based either on relational exchange or economic exchange or both outcomes. Extra- role behavior such as scholarly extra-role behavior [9], proactive work behavior [10], organizational citizenship behavior [11] abound in academic literature.

- *Concept of Abusive Supervision*

Abusive supervision describes the hostile or inappropriate actions of superiors, supervisors and managers towards their subordinates [12]. When workers are abused by their superior without opportunity to express themselves, they may seek retaliation through unsanctioned means. If a subordinate encountered abusive supervision as a result of being late to work is a typical example of how abusive supervision could lead to counterproductive work behaviour. He or she may decide to form the habit of lateness as revenge to abusive supervision, saying after all, he or she will only be abused and that is all. Although, there are other factors which causes withdrawal behaviours among employees, loss of trust on the organization or her authorities often brings about employee cynical behaviours at the danger of cyber-loafing with the organization productive resources.

- *Perceived Organizational Justice*

In the words of [13] Organ, distributive justice is guided by three major rules: Equity, Equality and Need. Equity rule of distribution is based on the idea that rewards should be contingent upon the level of contribution. Thus, an individual employee who works full-time, deserves greater pay or compensation than someone who only works part-time, if all other aspects are equal.

- *Core Self-Evaluation*

Timothy, Judge, Lock and Durham [14] measured core self-evaluation in cognizance of locus of control, generalized self-efficacy, self-esteem and neurotic tendencies and found it to be consistence with most intrinsic concepts. Tims and Akkermans [15] evaluated core self-evaluations and work engagement and assert that this is kind intrinsic evaluation has consistently been linked to goal setting and achievement, motivation and consequently performance [16] and may be instrumental to proactive behaviour.

2.1 Empirical Review

Several studies have provided empirical support for the model of this study and they have been reviewed to provide further understanding on the predictive effects of the predictors on the proactive work behaviour.

- *Abusive Supervision and Proactive Work Behaviour*

Raman [16] carried out a study on the Relationship between Organization Retaliatory Behavior and Abusive supervision in Indian Railways and the Role of Perception of Justice as a Moderator. The sample size was 650

employees and data were collected using measures including the organizational justice scale by Neihoff and Moorman (1993), abusive supervision scale by Tepper (2000) and organization retaliatory behavior scale by Skarlicki and Folger (1997). The study concluded that at high perceived level of justice, abusive supervision is considered to be much severe aberration than at low levels of perceived justice, but when abusive supervision is present at high level of justice, it is associated with a higher level of Organizational Retaliatory Behavior.

- *Core Self–Evaluation and Proactive Work Behaviour*

Debra and Joshua [18] conducted a research on Core Self-Evaluations and Innovative Behaviour among Micro-Entrepreneurs: The mediating effect of proactive personality, which the examined the mediating effect of proactive personality on the relationship between core self-evaluations and innovative behaviour among micro-entrepreneurs in urban areas. The study made use of 346 participants (212 males, 346 females, age mean= 37.66, SD= 11.25). Janssen (2000) 9-item innovative behaviour scale was used to measure Innovative Behaviour, Proactive Personality was measured using a 10-item scale developed by Bateman and Crant (1993) while core self-evaluation scale developed by Judge et al. (2002) was used as a measure Core Self-Evaluation. As predicted, they found out that Core self-evaluation is positively related to Innovative Behaviour.

- *Organizational Justice and Proactive Work Behaviour*

Xiaofu, Mengyan, Zhichao, and Wenfen [19], investigated, The Effect of Organizational Justice on Positive Organizational Behavior. In examining this, they made use of 2,566 employees from 13 cities of China who were randomly selected from 45 manufacturing-type enterprises (male=44.7% and females=55.3%, age ranges from 25-55 years), The respondents span across the four major job levels from first line manager, middle manager, and senior managers. a 33-item positive organizational scale was used to measure positive organizational behavior while organizational justice was measured using a 12-item scale which was developed by them. Using multiple regression analysis, the result indicated that organizational justice is a positive predictor of positive organizational behaviour. ($b = .51$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.26$).

3.0 Method

This chapter focused on study participants, research instruments, study procedure, design and statistics used in the study.

- *Participants*

The sample population of the study was 349 commercial bank employees randomly selected from the three major cities in the three senatorial zones of Anambra State which comprise: Onitsha, Nnewi and Awka. The participants were made up of 198 males and 151 females whose ages ranged from 24 to 49 years with an average age of 31.50 years and standard deviation of 2.40. The participants were drawn from the following commercial banks which

were randomly chosen using paper balloting: First bank Plc (44 participants), Guaranty Trust Bank Plc (27 participants), Zenith bank Plc (38 participants), Unity bank Plc (15 participants), Fidelity bank Plc (32 participants), Polaris bank Plc (30 participants), Access bank Plc (60 participants), Union bank Plc (35 participants), United Bank for Africa Plc (45 participants) and Eco Trans-international bank Plc (28 participants). One hundred and eighty-two (182) participants were married while 167 participants were not married. In terms of educational qualification 9 had Doctorate degree, 53 had master’s degree, 197 had bachelors’ degree, 42 had HND, 28 had NCE, 15 had OND while 5 had First school leaving certificate (FSLC). The participants were drawn from branch offices of the banks in the selected cities with the aid of trained research assistants during the field work.

- *Instruments*

These instruments were:

Abusive supervision scale by Tapper reported reliability index for the Scale as .95.

Organizational justice scale reported a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient reliability of .90 (distributive justice); .91 (procedural justice) and .92 (interactional justice).

Core self-evaluation scale by Timothy, Judge, Locke and Durham reported the sum of the ratings of the items. A high score indicates high core self-evaluation.

Proactive work behaviors scale by Parker, Williams, and Turner reported the Cornbrach’s alpha reliability of the proactive work behaviour items as .81, Proactive idea implementation 0.82 and proactive problem-solving dimension 0.80 respectively.

4.0 Results

The statistical results of the tested hypotheses are presented with the aid of descriptive tables followed by a brief interpretation.

Table 1: Zero order correlation matrix for abusive supervision, organizational justice (interaction), core self-evaluation and proactive behaviour among bank employees in Anambra State

| Variables | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|-----------------------------|--------|-------|------|------|
| 1. Proactive work behaviour | 1.00 | | | |
| 2. Abusive behaviour | -.572* | 1.00 | | |
| 3. Organizational justice | .489* | .455* | 1.00 | |
| 4. Core self-evaluation | .414* | .268 | .166 | 1.00 |

*Correlation is significant at $p < 0.05$

Data in Table 1 showed correlation matrix for all the variables of the study. From the table, it could ascertained that where positive correlations were recorded with organizational justice and core self-evaluation on proactive

behaviour at $r(1, 349) = .489, p < .05$ and $.414, p < .05$ respectively; negative correlation was however recorded between abusive supervision and proactive behaviour among commercial bank employees at $r(1, 349) = -.572, p < .05$. The relationship is indicative that while organizational justice and core self-evaluation positively influenced proactive behaviour of commercial bank employees, abusive supervision on the other negatively influenced proactive behaviour of commercial bank employees. The findings imply that while organizational justice and core self-evaluation would enhance proactive behaviour, abusive supervision would reduce it.

Table 2: Model summary for the three tested models of the study namely: abusive supervision, organizational justice and core self-evaluation

| Mode | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Change Statistics | | | | |
|------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|----------|-----|-----|---------------|
| | | | | | R Square Change | F Change | df1 | df2 | Sig. F Change |
| 1 | .572 ^a | .328 | .326 | 1.96495 | .328 | 169.003 | 1 | 347 | .000 |
| 2 | .633 ^b | .401 | .397 | 1.85757 | .073 | 42.278 | 1 | 346 | .000 |
| 3 | .678 ^c | .460 | .455 | 1.76588 | .059 | 37.864 | 1 | 345 | .000 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Abusive Supervision

b. Predictors: (Constant), Abusive Supervision, Core Self-evaluation

c. Predictors: (Constant), Abusive Supervision, Core Self-evaluation, Perceived Org Justice

Data observed in Table 2 indicated that the model of the study contributed a total of .445 or 45.5% explanation of the predictive influence of abusive supervision, organizational justice and core self-evaluation. The first model indicated that abusive supervision alone accounted for .326 adjusted R² which is 32.6% independent explanation of abusive supervision on proactive behaviour. When organizational justice was added, the initial contribution rose to .397 or 39.7% showing that organizational justice alone contributed 7.3% as indicated by the R Square change of .073. Equally, the addition of the third variable in the third model further increased the predictive influence to 45.5% indicating that the core self-evaluation independently contributed 5.9% total explanation of the model as shown in the R square change of .059.

Table 3: Hierarchical regression analysis indicating predictive influence of the tested models

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | T | Sig. |
|-------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
| | | B | Std. Error | | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 16.700 | 1.239 | | 13.482 | .000 |
| | Abusive Supervision | -.501 | .039 | -.572 | 13.000 | .001 |
| 2 | (Constant) | 13.514 | 1.269 | | 10.646 | .000 |
| | Abusive Supervision | -.435 | .038 | -.497 | 11.506 | .000 |
| | Core Self-evaluation | .457 | .070 | .281 | 6.502 | .019 |
| 3 | (Constant) | 6.311 | 1.681 | | 3.754 | .000 |
| | Abusive Supervision | -.329 | .040 | -.376 | 8.260 | .002 |
| | Core Self-evaluation | .436 | .067 | .268 | 6.511 | .017 |
| | Perceived Org Justice | .201 | .033 | .274 | 6.153 | .013 |

a. Dependent Variable: Proactive Behaviour

At the end of the hierarchical regression analysis in Table 5, beta weight coefficients for the model of the study were indicative that the model - abusive supervision, perceived organizational justice and core self-evaluation significantly predicted proactive behaviour of commercial bank employees at $B = .376, p < .05, .268, p < .05$ and $.274, p < .05$ respectively. The finding implies that as perceived organizational justice and core self-evaluation improves in the organization proactive behaviour also improves and vice versa. The finding is indicative that proactive behaviour can be encouraged among commercial bank employees with improvements in perceived organizational justice and core self-evaluation. However, abusive supervision which correlated negatively with proactive behaviour of commercial bank employees indicated that if the employees perceive more abuse from their superiors, their proactive behaviour dwindles. This is as a result of negative predictive relationship between the variables. Based on the above findings, hypotheses I, II and III were confirmed.

5.0 Discussion

The study examined abusive supervision, core self-evaluation and perceived organizational justice as predictors of proactive work behaviour. Based on the tested models, the statistical output from the analysis confirmed the three hypotheses of the study which will be discussed.

In hypothesis one, the study sought for the predictive influence of abusive supervision on proactive work behaviours of commercial bank employees; the result confirmed that abusive supervision had negative influence on proactive work behaviour and this negative influence reached significant proportions as ascertained in negative significant beta weight coefficients. The finding has buttressed the importance of effective leader-member exchange which serves as intrinsic motivation if it is supportive or otherwise it may reduce the good will of employees which affects proactive behaviour. The way superiors and unit heads in organizations treat their subordinated is particularly highlighted as consequential to low prevalence of proactive behaviour to the detriment of the organization. Organizations need to ensure that supervisors and superiors support the workers and help to bring out their inner creativity which may often be expressed as proactive behaviour. The result is in line with the findings of [20] on the relationship of discretionary human resource practices with proactive work behaviour and the mediation role of affective commitment and the moderation roles of abusive supervision.

In the second Hypothesis, the statement that perceived organizational justice will predict proactive work behaviour was confirmed. The finding indicated that perceived organizational justice has significantly and positively influence proactive work behaviour of commercial bank employees. The finding has once more emphasized the importance of good human interaction in the organization and equitable member to member exchange. Fairness is hereby established as a prerequisite for eliciting employee creativity which is often expressed as proactive

behaviour directed to enhance organizational wellbeing. The finding also share support from similar studies in literature. Hypothesis III which stated that core self-evaluation (CSE) will significantly predict proactive work behaviour was also confirmed. The study indicated that core self-evaluation has significant positive impact on proactive work behaviour. The study is in line with the work of Haynie, Flynn, and Mauldin [21] that examined the effects of core self-evaluation on work outcomes of employee task performance and found CSE exhibit unique influences leading to greater performance, even though the study variables indicated that job engagement mediated the relationship.

Recommendation

Based on the result of the current study, the following recommendations were made:

- There is need while recruiting bank employees to focus not only on their academic qualifications and requisite skills but also to also consider underlying personality trait (Core Self Evaluation) and their interactional attitude to work (in the concept of perceived organizational justice) because these are likely to provide necessary indicators to ascertain the qualities in bank employees during the selection process
- Also, to promote discretion behaviours in the workplace organizations need to enthrone justice.
- Superiors in the organizations are advised to treat all members of the organization with the dignity they deserve and not abuse as this will motivate them to exhibit discretionary behaviour such as proactive work behaviours.

Conclusion

The current study explored the predictive relationship of abusive supervision, core self-evaluation, and perceived organizational justice on proactive work behaviour among commercial bank employees. The study attempted to establish the predictive effects of core self-evaluation and perceived organizational justice on proactive behaviour. A review of extant literature confirmed that an organization may be hampered by the prevailing interactive climate which may create feeling and perception of inequity and abuse. These conditions have proved to affect the employees' good will behaviour especially as regards proactive behaviour. relationship design was adopted and data obtained from the field confirmed positive and negative relationship for core self-evaluation and abusive supervision respectively. Organizational justice also had positive and significant predictive impacts on proactive behaviour. Interactive organizational climate was consequently implicated while recommendations were given.

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