

Effect of Leadership Styles on Counterproductive Work Behavior Among Civil Servants in Borno State

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Abstract

The study examined leadership styles and counterproductive work behaviour among civil servants in Borno State. The study aims to discern the influence of Transformational, Transactional and Servant leadership style on employees' engagement in counterproductive work behaviors, with a particular focus on the unique context of a state grappling with complex challenges, such as security concerns and reconstruction efforts. The study adopted survey research design with a population of 25,234 civil servants of Borno State. The study sample size was 379 civil servants which was obtained using Dilman's (2007) formular. However, 30 percent was added to the sample size to take care of low response rate making the sample size became 491 out of which 418 were retrieved. Multistage sampling techniques was employed. Data was collected through the administration of close-ended questionnaire design on five-point Likert scale. Similarly, SPSS software was used for the preliminary analysis and PLS-SEM approach was used for the main analysis with the aid of Smart PLS 3. The result from the study indicated that there is a significant relationship between transformational and transactional leadership styles and counterproductive work behaviour while no such relationship was found with servant leadership style. The study concludes by emphasizing the importance of leadership awareness in addressing and reducing counterproductive work behavior among civil servants in Borno State.

Keywords: Counterproductive Work Behaviour, Transformational, Transactional, Servant and Civil Servants.

1. Introduction

Counterproductive work behaviour (CWB) has turned into a serious concern to human and organisational undertaking because of its harming impacts, significant expense and troublesome nature (Anjum and Parvez, 2018). It is evident that counterproductive work behaviour exists in every organization regardless of the magnitude. This is because of flighty nature and activities of workers, as well as their reactions to different circumstances. However, the sector of the economy wherein such kinds of practices are displayed by workers most frequently is the public sector (Burned and Pope, 2017). CWB incorporates a total scope of workers' destructive conduct that influence the endurance of an organisation. It is an umbrella of any regrettable conduct focused on against the workplace like unsocial conduct. It can influence the performance and wellbeing of the individual

practicing it, the individual connecting with the individual participating in it, and the organisation where it is occurring.

CWB is a conscious or deliberate activities showed by workers that can adversely influence organisation, different workers or both (Penny and Spector 2005). Models incorporate blabbering about collaborators, squandering supplies or going home early. It likewise includes any demonstration by the workers that abuses the hierarchical standards, culture and strategies that can possibly genuinely or intellectually hurt the organisation. Robinson and Bennet (1995) recognized two primary dimensions of counterproductive work behaviour. That is, interpersonally directed deviance (CWB-I) and organizationally directed deviance (CWB-O). Interpersonally directed deviance can incorporate minor conduct like blabbering about others, or serious conduct like lewd behavior. The second component of counterproductive work behaviour is organizationally directed deviance (CWB-O). This kind of aberrance can incorporate minor conduct, for example, showing up after the expected time, or extreme activity, like demolishing hardware. Spector and Fox (2002) recognized a few explicit kinds of counterproductive work practices which is past these two aspects. They are: maltreatment against others, creation abnormality, damage, withdrawal and burglary. Maltreatment against others alludes to destructive activities or practices designated at associates and others that hurt either actually or genuinely through conveying intimidations, unsafe remarks or misuse coordinated at others, for example, making tales, being discourteous, contending or pushing somebody.

The outcome of an organization's effort is heavily impacted by its leadership style, as noted by Abimbola, Omowumi, and Dele (2017). The extent to which individuals within an organisation contribute to optimizing resources is directly linked to leaders' knowledge and the acceptance of suitable forms of leadership in their roles as managers and leaders. Thus, the effectiveness of resource mobilization and allocation and improving resources to boost the overall performance of an organization is predominantly determined by the selected leadership style, alongside other influencing factors. A favorable kind of leadership in any organization is one that positively impacts employees' potentials and working abilities, enabling the efficient and effective achievement of organizational goals and objectives (Mohammad, Rafi & Saad, 2012). A leader can adopt any of the available leadership styles by looking at the situation and environment he finds himself. Some of these leadership styles include: transformational, transactional and servant leadership styles (Bass & Avolio, 1994). The difference between transformational and transactional leadership depends on ways of motivating others.

Counterproductive work behavior has consistently posed a challenge within the civil service, research indicates that this issue is costly both in terms of financial implications for the organization and psychological impacts on its employees. (Edward, 2018). However, due to the nature of the social exchange relation existing between civil servants and superior, employees always require a good leadership style to carry out their functions. In other words, good leadership will go a long way in minimizing the counterproductive work behaviour among civil servants. Moreso, organisation inability to appreciate it leadership influence on employee lead to counterproductive work behaviour (Timothy, Andy, Victoria & Idowu, 2011) Lack of effective leadership are serious problems in civil service which often lead to counterproductive work behavior such as absenteeism, late coming, stealing just to mentioned but a few among civil servants (Haruna, 2019).

This study aims to examine the effect of transformational leadership style on counterproductive work behavior among civil servants. It is also the objective of this study examine the effect of transactional leadership style on Counterproductive work behavior among civil servants. The study also examines the effect of Servant leadership style on

Counterproductive work behavior among civil servants. To achieve these objectives, the following hypotheses were developed.

Ho₁: *transformational leadership style has no significant effect on Counterproductive work behaviour among civil servants*

Ho₂: *transactional leadership style has no significant effect on Counterproductive work behaviour among civil servants*

Ho₃: *Servant Leadership style has no significant effect on Counterproductive work behaviour among civil servants*

2. Literature Review

Counterproductive Work Behaviour CWB is intentional actions by employees causing harm to both organization and its associates (Spector et al., 2006). CWB involves a deliberate violation of significant organizational rules, impacting the overall welfare of the organization and its personnel (Gruys & Sackett, 2003; Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Various conceptualizations of counterproductive behavior exist in the literature, such as counterwork behavior, delinquency, antisocial behavior, organizational aggression, mobbing/bullying, deviant behaviors, noncompliant behavior, and workplace retaliation (Mamza, Odekina, & Elkanah, 2019).

The severity of CWB ranges from minor actions like making fun of someone and absenteeism (Spector et al., 2006) to serious offenses such as theft and fraud (Wimbush & Dalton, 1997). Nasir and Bashir (2012) identified diverse forms of CWB, including theft, scams, leg-pulling, verbal abuse, nepotism, and corruption. Consequences of CWB include low motivation, reduced productivity, legal expenses, and property damage (Demir, 2011; O'Leary-Kelly, Griffin, & Glew, 1996). Individuals with high guilt proneness are less likely to engage in CWB (Cohen, Panter, & Turan, 2013).

Furthermore, Counterproductive work behaviour (CWB) is a behaviour intended to harm the organisation or other members of the organisation (Spector & Fox, 2002). CWB represents a phenomenon that is studied under a variety of terms, most notably deviance (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). CWB involves a variety of behaviours, both minor, such as taking overly long breaks, or using organisation time for private purposes, and major, such as stealing, or attacking others. Counterproductive Work Behaviour (CWB) is the actions of employees within the organization that destroy the workplace setting (Spector & Fox, 2002). Scholars define CWB from different and various perspective (Hogan & Hogan, 1989), organizational retaliatory (Gallagher, 2008), stimulated aggression (O' Leary-Kelly, 1996), rebellious behavior (Lee, 2005) and workplace deviance (Robinson & Bennet, 1995). The negative individual sentiments will pessimistically affect the organizational performance (Dunlop & Lee, 2004). Such behaviours of employees are intolerant (Douglas and Martinko, 2001) and stressors for individual job (Penney & Spector, 2005).

On the other hand, leadership style in an organization is a crucial factor that significantly influences the motivation and commitment of employees. It refers to the approach adopted by a leader to guide and inspire employees in implementing plans to achieve organizational objectives (Strom, Sears & Kelly, 2014). Messick and Kramer (2004) assert that the expression of leadership attitudes in individuals depends on their characteristics, personal capabilities, circumstances, and the environment in which they operate. Glantz (2002) stresses the importance for a manager to recognize their own kind of leadership. The level to which organizational members contribute to optimizing resources is closely linked to leaders' comprehension and adoption of appropriate leadership styles in their managerial and leadership roles. Consequently, the efficacy of resource mobilisation, allocation, utilisation, and overall increase of organizational performance is heavily dependent on

leadership style, along with other influential elements. An exemplary kind of leadership in any organization is one that influences the potentials and working abilities of employees to efficiently and effectively achieve organizational goals and objectives (Mohammad, Rafi & Saad, 2012) A leader can adopt any of the available leadership styles, by looking at the situation and environment he finds himself.

Transformational leadership, as outlined by Burns (1978), involves a collaborative process where leaders and followers work together to enhance morale and motivation. Boonzaier (2008) notes that transformational leaders establish strong emotional bonds with their followers through individual attention, visionary guidance, and inspiration. These leaders direct their followers towards the future and cultivate organizational cultures that encourage creative change and growth. The proactive nature and heightened involvement in the work of employees characterize this leadership style, as recognized by Jansen (2013). Bass (1985) suggested that transformational leaders display behaviors surpassing the cost-benefit dynamics associated with transactional leadership, thereby energizing followers. Transformational leadership is marked by the empowerment of followers to serve as catalysts for change, leading to performance levels exceeding those achieved through transactional relationships. These leaders intellectually stimulate and support subordinates by offering coaching, personal attention, and mentoring to enhance rational thinking and problem-solving. As defined by Shamir, House, and Arthur (1992), transformational leaders guide followers or subordinates to prioritize the goals and values of the organization over their individual interests.

Bass (1998) delineated four dimensions of transformational leadership: inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, charisma and individualized consideration. Charismatic leadership involves behaviors that elicit strong emotions in followers, fostering identification with the leader. This dimension is further divided into idealized influence behavior and idealized influence attributed. Inspirational motivation includes articulating a compelling vision, using symbols to guide subordinate efforts, and setting a standard for followers to emulate appropriate behavior. Intellectual stimulation comprises behaviors that heighten awareness of problems and inspire followers to approach challenges from a fresh perspective. The fourth dimension, individualized consideration, involves providing support and guidance to subordinates.

Transactional leadership is defined as a reciprocal commitment where employees receive rewards in exchange for achieving specific objectives (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Yukl, 2006). The adoption of transactional leadership is known to enhance employee motivation (Jansen, 2013). In this leadership style, transactional leaders motivate followers by setting goals and providing rewards upon their accomplishment (Boonzaier, 2008; Yammarino, Spangler, & Bass, 1993). The approach involves contingent reinforcement and closely aligns with a behaviour-reward paradigm. Subordinates' performance behaviors are encouraged through the leader's praise, rewards, and promises, while corrective actions include communicating negative feedback, threats, reprimands, or disciplinary measures. Essentially, transactional leadership involves a leader's response to followers' behaviors based on whether they have fulfilled the assigned tasks as agreed upon between them.

Bass (1985) outlined two aspects of transactional leadership: management by exception and contingent reward. Contingent reward involves rewarding employees solely when tasks are completed as agreed upon. Management by exception requires proactive leader intervention when unforeseen issues could hinder employee performance. Burns (2010) characterizes the transactional leadership style as a more reciprocal relationship at work, emphasizing exchanges as a primary form of interaction between superiors and subordinates, such as providing monetary rewards for achieving set objectives. Followers' compliance is not only based on rational values and rules but also on established

agreements. Burns (1978) also describes transactional leadership as a "favor-for-favor" exchange, with transactional leaders focusing on ensuring tasks are executed correctly.

According to Bass and Avolio (1990), transactional leaders understand the needs of employees and address them by providing rewards for their hard work and contributions to the successful completion of assigned duties. Employees under transactional leadership perceive that their relationship with their superior is determined by the outcomes of their performance.

Servant leadership is a leadership concept in which the primary purpose of the leader is to serve, as opposed to traditional leadership in which the primary emphasis is on the organization's success. A servant leader delegated authority, put their team members' needs first, and helped people reach their full potential. This leadership style challenges the conventional approach by placing employees as the central priorities. The purpose of the leader is to serve the people, not the other way around. Defined as a leadership approach primarily focused on the personal growth and well-being of individuals, a servant leader is characterized by moral character, foresight to anticipate needs, and the capacity to attend to people's needs (Nuijten, 2009).

Servant leadership, as defined by Greenleaf (1977), is a leadership approach where leaders prioritize the needs of their subordinates over their own. They go the extra mile to facilitate the growth and realization of the maximum potential of subordinates, aiming for both optimal organizational and career success. Greenleaf asserts that servant leadership is fundamentally centered on developing subordinates to their fullest potential across various dimensions, including self-motivation, task effectiveness, community stewardship, and future leadership capabilities.

Patterson (2003) defined servant leadership as the practice of leading organizations by prioritizing followers, making their well-being the primary concern while considering organizational matters as secondary. Hale and Fields (2007) characterized servant leadership as a leadership form that places the welfare of those being led above the self-interest of the leader. This involves emphasizing leader behaviors focused on the development of followers, while downplaying the glorification of the leader. Joseph and Winston (2005) conceptualized servant leadership as a situation where a leader prioritizes the interests of followers over their own. Similarly, Sendjaya, Sarros, and Santora (2008) perceived servant leadership as motivating to followers/subordinates because it revolves around followers' development, community building, authentic leadership, and shared leadership. A significant indicator of servant leadership is that followers are more likely to embrace a servant-leader approach themselves.

Empirically, Sharma and Nair (2020) examined the nexus between Transformational Leadership and Subordinate Counterproductive Work Behavior within the banking sector in Rajasthan, India. Employing a quantitative research approach, the authors gathered primary data from a sample of 422 respondents. The researchers employed a multistage sampling technique, and statistical analyses, including T-test, Pearson Correlation, and Regression Method, were applied for data analysis. The findings showed a statistically significant negative association between employee CWB and transformative leadership in private sector banks.

Younus, Danish, Sair, and Rahi (2022) conducted a study to explore the mediating role of information silence in the correlation between destructive leadership and CWB within the tanner's sector of Pakistan. The research involved collecting data from 353 respondents through a self-administered questionnaire specifically designed for the tanners' sector in Pakistan. Structural equation modeling was utilized for data analysis and to assess the hypothesized relationships. The results revealed a significant association between destructive leadership and CWB in the tanner's sector. Moreover, the study identified

information silence as a mediating factor in the relationship between destructive leadership and CWB.

Huang, Li, and Chang (2021) conducted research to investigate the predictive roles of transformational, ethical and participative leadership concerning CWB in financial technology firms. The study included data collected from 505 employees in Fintech businesses in China over three waves spanning six months.

Sabran, Ekowati, and Supriyanto (2022) conducted a study to explore the interactive effects of leadership styles on counterproductive work behavior, utilizing multiple theoretical perspectives. The research focused on employees in State-Owned Enterprise (SOE) Islamic banks in Malang Raya, Indonesia. A proportional random sampling method yielded a sample size of 160 from the total of 310 bank employees. The findings indicated that transformational leadership was linked to a reduction in employee counterproductive behavior through an enhancement in the quality of work life. Conversely, transactional leadership was associated with an increase in such behavior.

Mukwerho, Nesamvuni and Roberson (2020), conducted a study on factors impacting employee absenteeism and the manager's perception and its cause in the Hotel Industry in South Africa. The aim is to ascertain factors contributing to employee absenteeism. The survey indicated that absenteeism is mostly due to family obligations, fatigue and transport problems. Also, Sabokro, Tavakoli, and Malmiri (2020) investigated the impact of organizational justice on deviant work behavior and the moderating role of moral disengagement. The study utilized a sample size of 117 students. The findings suggested that the impression of organizational injustice had a positive and substantial effect on deviant work conduct, and this link decreased by the purpose of moral disengagement.

3. Theoretical Review

Social exchange theory, developed by sociologist George Homans, posits that social behaviour is the consequence of an exchange process in which individuals assess the prospective rewards and hazards of social interactions. If the risks outweigh the rewards, individuals may opt to terminate the relationship. In the context of CWB, Social Exchange Theory receives prominence by emphasizing the relationship between individual variations and organizational factors (Henle, 2005), providing insights into understanding such behaviors within an organizational framework.

Social Exchange Theory explains CWB by highlighting the significance of reciprocity in social interactions. The central principle is the concept of obligation, where individuals anticipate a return for their positive actions towards others, contingent on available time (Blau, 1964). Within organizational settings, SET serves as a framework to comprehend the role of the organization and its management in cultivating a sense of obligation and desired behavior among employees (Wayne et al., 2002). The theory assumes that organizational support hinges on the trust each member places in the organization, influenced by how well the organization recognizes contributions and cares for the welfare of its members. An individual with a heightened perception of organizational support is likely to feel obligated to reciprocate and reward the organization (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

Social exchange theory serves as a framework for understanding why employees tend to adjust their job performance based on their perceptions of the fulfillment of their psychological contracts. According to Blau (1964), employees who perceive that organizations have upheld their commitments may interpret this as favorable treatment. Consequently, employees are incentivized to reciprocate the positive actions of the organization by elevating their performance levels, operating under the belief that their employment relationship is founded on a fair social exchange (Chen, 2007; Cortina,

Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001; Moorman, 1991). In line with the fundamental premise of social exchange theory, leadership styles can play a role in shaping the relationship between individuals' assessments and their work attitudes and behaviors, including Counterproductive Work Behaviors (CWBs). It is hypothesized that Social Exchange Theory would offer support for the association between leadership style fulfillment and CWBs in the current context.

4. Methodology

The study adopted a survey research design with a population of 25,234 civil servants of Borno State. The study sample size was 379 civil servants which was obtained using Dilman’s (2007) formular. However, 30 percent was added to the sample size to take care of low response rate as suggested by (Chander, 2017). The sample size became 491. Multistage sampling techniques was employed. That is stratified and simple random sampling techniques. The data for this research study was collected from primary sources, utilizing a questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. Out of 491 questionnaires administered 418 were retrieved and this constitute 87 percent response rate which is sufficient for analysis. Data collected was analysis using PLS-SEM approach, although, before the main analysis a preliminary analysis was carried out in order to ensure the robustness of the Data.

Preliminary Analysis

After the preliminary analysis, missing values were found in certain items and addressed through mean substitution. Subsequent normality tests was conducted using both the histogram and Skewness and Kurtosis Statistics (See Appendix A), the result indicated that the data is normally distributed. Additionally, a multicollinearity test was conducted, revealing that the correlations between exogenous latent constructs are well below the suggested threshold values of 0.90 or more. This implies that the exogenous latent constructs are independent and not highly correlated (See Appendix B).

Hypotheses Testing

Smart PLS was used to test the hypotheses of the study.

Table 1: Results of Direct Relationships (Hypotheses Testing)

Hypo.	Relationships	B	Std. Dev.	T Stat.	P Values	Decision
H1	TFL => CWB	-0.219	0.080	2.724	0.006**	Reject
H2	TSL => CWB	0.220	0.145	1.811	0.070*	Reject
H3	SLS => CWB	-0.048	0.071	0.624	0.532	Accept

Note: *** Significant at 0.01** Significant at 0.05, * Significant at 0.10

Hypothesis 1 posited that there is no significant relationship between the transformational leadership style and counterproductive work behavior. However, the results presented in Table 1 reveal a negative and significant relationship between transformational leadership and counterproductive work behavior ($\beta = -0.219$, $t = 2.724$, p -value = 0.006). Consequently, Hypothesis 1 is rejected, indicating that there is a significant relationship between the transformational leadership style and counterproductive work behavior.

Hypothesis 2 proposed that there is no significant relationship between transactional leadership style and counterproductive work behavior. However, the results presented in the table reveal a positive and significant relationship with counterproductive work behavior ($\beta = 0.220$, $t = 1.811$, p -value = 0.070). Consequently, Hypothesis 2 is rejected,

indicating that there is a significant relationship between transactional leadership style and counterproductive work behavior.

Hypothesis 3 posited that there is no significant relationship between servant leadership style and counterproductive work behavior. The findings presented in Table 1 indicate a non-significant relationship with counterproductive work behavior ($\beta = -0.048$, $t = 0.624$, $p\text{-value} = 0.532$). Therefore, Hypothesis 3 is accepted, suggesting that there is no significant relationship between servant leadership style and counterproductive work behavior.

5. Discussion of Findings

H0₁: There is no significant relationship between transformational leadership style and counterproductive work behavior. The null hypothesis is found to be negatively significant and is therefore rejected. As expected, the hypothesis receives empirical support, indicating that with increase in transformational leadership style adopted in organisation it tends to reduced employee counterproductive work behaviour. In other words, when transformational leadership style is practiced it would enhance the employee performance and consequently decreases counterproductive work behaviour. Bass (1985) asserted that transformational leadership exhibits behavior that inspires followers beyond the cost-benefit relationship typical of transactional leadership. The current studies found support from the previous studies (Hussaini, Akbar, Innatulla, Arzar & Gilliani, 2017).

H0₂: There is no significant relationship between transactional leadership style and counterproductive work behaviour. The null hypothesis is found to be positively significant and therefore is rejected. As expected, the hypothesis receives empirical support, indicating that with increase transactional leadership adopted in organisation it tends to increase employee counterproductive work behaviour. In other words, when transactional leadership is practiced it will increase employee counterproductive work behaviour. The current studies received validation from prior research (Tsuno & Kawakami, 2015).

H0₃: There is no significant relationship between servant leadership style and counterproductive work behaviour. The null hypothesis is found to be not significant and therefore is accepted. As expected, an increase or decrease in servant leadership will not increase or decrease employee counterproductive work behaviour. These findings are supported by the work of Quereshi, Brobi, Ahmed, and Jawaid (2018).

6. Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study made a number of conclusions.

Firstly, the current study has provided empirical evidence that leadership styles is positively and negatively related to counterproductive work behaviour. Therefore, leaders of civil service in Borno State should be aware of the importance of leadership in reducing the problems of counterproductive work behaviour among civil servants in Borno State. It is against this backdrop that administrators in civil service should appreciate the impact of leadership towards reducing counterproductive work behaviour in order to enhance the performance civil servants. The study recommends that administrators in Borno civil service should always try to improve by adopting transformational leadership as it has shown negative significant relationship with counterproductive work behaviour. This would go long way in reducing the level of counterproductive work behaviour among the civil servants, which usually value transformational leaders. Similarly, the findings reveal a significant and positive relationship between transactional leadership style and counterproductive work behavior. Consequently, this study recommends that administrators refrain from employing transactional leadership to mitigate instances of counterproductive work behavior.

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