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WORKLOAD, WORK PRESSURE, NEUTRALISATION, AND INTERPERSONAL DEVIANCE IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN NIGERIA

Michael Olalekan Adeoti, Faridahwati Mohd Shamsudin, & Mohammad Mousa AlHamwan

ABSTRACT

Extant empirical research on deviant workplace behaviour (DWB) has given less focus on interpersonal deviance. Drawing from the theory of neutralisation and job demand-control model, the present study examined the mediating role of neutralisation in the relationship between workload, work pressure, and interpersonal deviance. Cluster sampling was adopted, and a self-administered questionnaire was used to obtain data from 356 faculty members in public universities in Nigeria. Using partial least squares-structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM), the result revealed that workload and work pressure were significantly related to interpersonal deviance. As expected, neutralisation significantly mediated the positive relationship between workload and interpersonal deviance and between work pressure and interpersonal deviance. The result suggests that faculty members rationalised their interpersonal deviance as a result of workload and work pressure. From the result, the management of Nigerian public universities can minimise the incidence of interpersonal deviance by taking a holistic review of the existing workloads of faculty members and minimise internal conditions that may warrant neutralisation. The outcome of this study provides significant theoretical and practical contributions to organisational behaviour literature.

Keywords: Interpersonal deviance, neutralisation, workplace deviance, workload, work pressure

INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, faculty members face a higher degree of job pressure than their counterparts in most countries, probably due to the level of economic development, higher academic workload, and the poor salary package (NEEDS Report, 2012). Studies have found a significant relationship between workload, work pressure, and negative behavioural outcomes in organisations (Fida et al., 2015: Houston, Meyer, & Paewei, 2006; Tuckey, Chrisopoulos, & Dollard, 2012). However, little is understood about their direct effect on other types of workplace deviance, particularly interpersonal deviance. More studies have been conducted on organisational deviance, defined as deviant acts targeted at the organisation (Bennett & Robinson, 2000; Biron, 2010; Fagbohungbe, Akinbode, & Ayodeji, 2012; Kura, Shamsudin, & Chauhan, 2015; Lian, Ferris, & Brown, 2012; van Gils et al., 2015), than on interpersonal deviance. Examining interpersonal deviance among faculty members in Nigeria is relevant because most acts of workplace deviance are directed towards colleagues and/or students; however, past studies have neglected this aspect of deviance at work. Also, this study was an attempt to respond to Kura et al.'s (2015, p. 2) observation that "deviant behaviours directed toward individuals within the organisation provide an opportunity for future research."

Despite the significant relationship between workload, work pressure, and negative behavioural outcomes in organisations (Fida et al., 2015: Houston et al., 2006; Tuckey et al., 2012), little is understood why such a link was found to exist. According to Baron and Kenny (1986), a strong relationship warrants the introduction of a mediating variable. Hence, this study we investigated the role of neutralisation as a mechanism to explain why individuals engage in interpersonal deviance by drawing from the theory of neutralisation (Sykes & Matza, 1957) and job demand-control model (Karasek, 1979). By integrating these theories to understand interpersonal deviance, our theoretical understanding of the cognitive process of the justification of deviant acts is enhanced considering the demands of the job. As little is understood about the process involved, our study was an attempt to contribute toward such theoretical insight. Also, understanding the direct and indirect effect of workload and work pressure on interpersonal deviance is essential because such empirical knowledge helps managers to initiate effective interventions to reduce or manage interpersonal deviance as negative acts cost financially and non-financially the organisation and its members (Lawrence & Robinson 2007; Robinson, 2008). Since an organisation is primarily made up of people and maintaining a healthy and positive social relationship at work is key to the accomplishment of organisational performance (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014).

To recap, the purpose of the present study was twofold: (a) to examine the direct influence of workload and work pressure on interpersonal deviance, and (b) to investigate the mediating role of neutralisation as a mechanism to explain the influence of workload and work pressure on interpersonal deviance. To achieve these aims, this paper is organised as follows. The relevant literature on interpersonal deviance is reviewed next toward the development of the research hypotheses. Then, the method of the study and data analysis will be presented, followed by a discussion of the results. The implications to theory and practice, limitations of the study, and the direction of future research are offered.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

(i) Interpersonal Deviance

Robinson and Bennett (1995) defined deviant workplace behaviour (DWB) as a voluntary behaviour that breaks organisational norms significantly thereby threatens the well-being of an organisation, its workforce or both. According to Bennett and Robinson (2000), DWB has two major dimensions, namely organisational and interpersonal deviance. In simple terms, both forms are judged based on the targeted victims. A deviant act whose victims are colleagues and other individuals in the organisation is called interpersonal deviance while a deviant act directed at the organisation, its properties, and production schedules is known as organisational deviance. The focus of the present study was interpersonal deviance.

Interpersonal deviance denotes acts such as humiliating colleagues or students, withholding official information from colleagues, stealing from co-workers, assigning blame to colleagues, harassing other people sexually, gossiping about colleagues, speaking in a disrespectful manner, giving silent treatment, raising voice at students or colleagues, giving snide treatment, excluding oneself from comradeship, and other demeaning treatment to colleagues and/or students (Lim, Cortina, & Magley, 2008). In Nigeria, cases of deviant acts directed at colleagues and students in tertiary institutions are reported in the media daily (Adekoya, 2017; Dike, 2017; Geidam, Njoku, & Bako, 2010; Ogunbodede, 2018), which

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signifies that there are more incidences of interpersonal deviance than organisational deviance on campuses.

(ii) Workload, Work Pressure, and Interpersonal Deviance

The broad term covering both workload and work pressure is job demands. Job demands refer to physical, psychological, social or organisational aspects of the job which usually require physical and/or psychological efforts from the workers and may generate certain physiological and/or psychological costs (Bakker & Demerouti, 2016). Extant literature revealed two major dimensions of job demands, namely workload and work pressure (Houston et al., 2006; Karasek & Theorell, 1990). The present study defined job demands as having two dimensions, namely academic workload and work pressure. Academic workload was operationalised as the professional efforts a faculty member devotes to activities such as teaching, research, administration, community services, and other academic-related tasks. However, borrowing the definition of Nasurdin and O'Driscoll (2012), the present study postulated that academic work overload occurs when work demands exceed an individual's abilities and resources to perform their work roles comfortably. On the other hand, work pressure is conceptualised as the degree to which an academic has to work fast and hard, has a great deal to do, but with too little time (Karasek & Theorell, 1990).

Studies have demonstrated that work stressors, such as work overload and work pressure, could result in incivility at work (Gilin et al., 2012; Lim et al., 2008). Stouten et al. (2010) found that higher job demands contributed to a higher likelihood of interpersonal deviance in organisations. In public universities, exposure to excessive work pressure and work overload increases lecturers' perceptions of high job demands, which reduces their ability to interact with colleagues and students harmoniously. Theoretically, Karasek (1979) stated that high job demand is positively related to workplace bullying and aggression, which are interpersonal deviance in nature because bullying is directed at individuals and causes emotional and psychological harms to individuals who are bullied. Drawing on the job demand-control model, Baillien, De Cuyper, and De Witte (2011) observed that high strain jobs, i.e. high workload with low job autonomy, were related with being a perpetrator of workplace bullying. They reasoned that in these situations the stressed employee might lash out at a co-worker to deal with his/her negative emotions.

Hoel, Cooper, and Faragher (2001) conducted a large-scale, nationwide survey on workplace bullying in Great Britain by focusing on the differences in experience with regard to organisational status. They found that workers and supervisors were more frequently exposed to derogatory or exclusionary behaviour. In the context of large-scale restructuring and downsizing in the last 12 months that could feed the perception of job insecurity during which the study was conducted, the researchers also observed that managers felt that they were liable to be bullied as their ability to resist ever-increasing pressures may be reduced. When reporting that more than 40% of people they surveyed suggested that time pressure fuels uncivil behaviour and that civility takes too much time, Pearson and Porath (2004) provided similar reasoning in that "corporate schemes to rearrange, recast, or reduce the workplace often make long-standing norms and values irrelevant. The resulting work and information overload and time pressure allow less time for the "niceties" of business life" (p. 407). Andersson and Pearson (1999) described uncivil behaviours as "acting rudely or discourteously, without regard for others, in violation of norms for respect in social interactions" (p. 455).

On the bases of the above theoretical views and past empirical studies, we hypothesised the following:
H1: Workload is positively related to interpersonal deviance of faculty members.
H2: Work pressure is positively related to interpersonal deviance of faculty members.

(iii) The Mediation of Neutralisation

According to the theory of neutralisation, individuals are generally aware that they are expected to engage in moral behaviour. However, if they are unlikely to behave morally, they will justify their behaviour through the process of neutralisation, where the behaviour is redefined to make it acceptable (Sykes & Matza, 1957). According to Skyes and Matza, there are five types of neutralisation techniques individuals use to justify their delinquent behaviour: (a) denial of responsibility where the delinquent behaviour is the result of the circumstance beyond the individual's control (i.e., the individual is the victim of circumstance); (b) denial of injury where the individual feels that his/her behaviour does not cause any harm despite it being against the law; (c) denial of the victim where the individual feels that the victim deserves whatever act committed by the delinquent individual; (d) condemnation of the condemners where the individuals shift the focus of the attention from his/her own deviant acts to the motives or behaviour of those who disapprove the act; and (e) the appeal to higher loyalties where the individual believes that his/her act was for the greater good. In other words, neutralisation techniques make deviants not to consider their acts as morally reprehensible (Sykes & Matza, 1957).

Neutralisation techniques seem to receive empirical support in studies on deviant behaviour. For instance, Cheng et al. (2014) found that all five neutralisation techniques had a significant influence on personal use of the Internet while at work. They also found that neutralisation and perceived benefits were much stronger than perceived detection of using the Internet, suggesting that people may think more about neutralisation and perceived benefits than they do about costs when deciding whether to use the Internet at work for personal purposes. In his study on digital piracy, Hinduja (2007) found that denial of injury, appeal to higher loyalties, denial of negative intent, and claim of relative acceptability (i.e., techniques of neutralisation) had a positive effect on piracy behaviour. In a later study on digital piracy, Yu (2013) found that neutralisation techniques enabled Asian students to engage in digital piracy. In another study on neutralisation restaurant workers used to justify theft, Shigihara (2013) found the various use of neutralisation techniques. Using data gathered via participant observation and 44 in-depth semi-structured interviews, she found two new neutralisation techniques restaurant workers used to justify theft: denial of excess and no one cares.

In the case of the present study, faculty members who perceive work overload and work pressure will justify their engagement in interpersonal deviance. For instance, the faculty members may use the technique of condemnation of the condemners by indicating that the management of the university, their colleagues and students are unethical, deviants and wrong-doers as well, or that interpersonal deviance is a normal thing people do anyway (claim of normalcy). Based on theoretical perspectives and empirical submissions, the following hypotheses emerged:
H3: Neutralisation mediates the relationship between workload and interpersonal deviance of faculty members.
H4: Neutralisation mediates the relationship between work pressure and interpersonal deviance of faculty members.

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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

(i) Sample and Data Collection

Survey data were collected from 356 faculty members from13 public universities in Nigeria. The choice of public universities was justified because negative deviance appears to be peculiar to public universities as opposed to private universities in Nigeria (Adekoya, 2017; Omonijo, Uche, Nwadiafor, & Rotimi, 2013). To recruit the sample, cluster sampling was employed where the sample was selected based on which university they were employed. Such a sampling technique was deemed appropriate because it was assumed that faculty members in all public universities had to work in a similar work environment characterised by high workload and work pressure (Gay & Diehl, 1992).

In the present study, most of the participants were male (77%), 31 years old and above (73%), and had a doctoral degree (73.87%). All of them had at least worked six years with the institution. In terms of job category, the sample comprised 55 professors (15.5%), 86 associate professors (24.2%), and 122 senior lecturers (34.3%).

(ii) Measures

Interpersonal deviance was assessed by an eight-item scale developed by Bennett and Robinson (2000) with a reported reliability coefficient of 0.78. Participants were asked to indicate how frequently they engaged in the deviant acts listed. All items were scored on a five-point frequency scale (1 = never; 2 = rarely; 3 = sometimes; 4 = often; 5 = always). Sample items include "I say something hurtful to colleagues and/or students" and "I raise tempers at colleagues/students".

Workload was assessed by eight items (α =0.74 to 0.78) adapted from Houston et al.'s (2006) job demands scale. Participants were asked to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement on statements related to workload on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The scale reported a reliability coefficient of 0.74 to 0.78. An example of a sample item was "My workload has increased over the past 12 months."

Five items were used to measure work pressure on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The items were reported to have a reliability coefficient between 0.73 and 0.85 (Brenninkmeijer et al., 2010; De Braine & Roodt, 2011). All items were taken from Karasek and Theorell's (1990) scale. A sample item was "I feel pressured to attract external research funding for my publications".

Neutralisation was measured by six items employed from Rogers and Buffalo's (1974) neutralisation scale. The scale was reported to be reliable, with an alpha coefficient of 0.861 (Rogers & Buffalo, 1974). Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on items such as "Most people in this institution engage in bad behaviours, so I am not alone" on a five-point Likert scale ('1' = strongly disagree to '5' = strongly agree).

RESEARCH FINDINGS

(i) Data Screening and Analysis

We employed partial least squares-structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) on SmartPLS-SEM 3.2 to test the relationship between the constructs (Ringle, Wende, & Becker, 2015). To

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overcome common method variance (CMV), we observed both procedural and statistical remedies as recommended by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, and Podsakoff (2012). We also checked for multicollinearity, which was not an issue in this study because the VIF values were less than 5 (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011; O'Brien, 2007). Furthermore, the tolerance values for all variables ranged from 0.425 to 0.837, indicating higher values than the threshold 0.20 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Additionally, the normality test revealed that none of the items in the dataset was skewed; the skewness and kurtosis statistics were above ±3 and ±10, respectively. After satisfying all the reliability and validity tests, we analysed both the measurement and structural models.

(ii) Measurement Model Assessment

To examine the measurement model, we first assessed individual item reliability and construct reliability (internal consistency reliability) using composite reliability index (CRI). This is because CRI has been shown to be superior to Cronbach's alpha (Hair, Sarstedt, et al., 2012). Table 1 shows that the CRI of each construct ranged from 0.883 to 0.975, exceeding the minimum acceptable level of 0.70 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). In terms of individual item reliability, Table 1 and Figure 1 indicate the items with loadings 0.70 and above (Hair, Sarstedt, et al., 2014).

Table 1: Result of Measurement Model

Constructs and Indicators	**Loadings**	**CR**	**AVE**
Workload		0.903	0.652
WL01	0.881		
WL02	0.885		
WL03	0.752		
WL05	0.771		
WL06	0.735		
Work pressure		0.883	0.716
WP01	0.901		
WP02	0.781		
WP04	0.851		
Neutralisation		0.975	0.865
NT01	0.922		
NT02	0.865		
NT03	0.955		
NT04	0.944		
NT05	0.954		
NT06	0.937		
Interpersonal deviance		0.948	0.819
ID01	0.830		
ID02	0.926		
ID03	0.928		
ID04	0.933		

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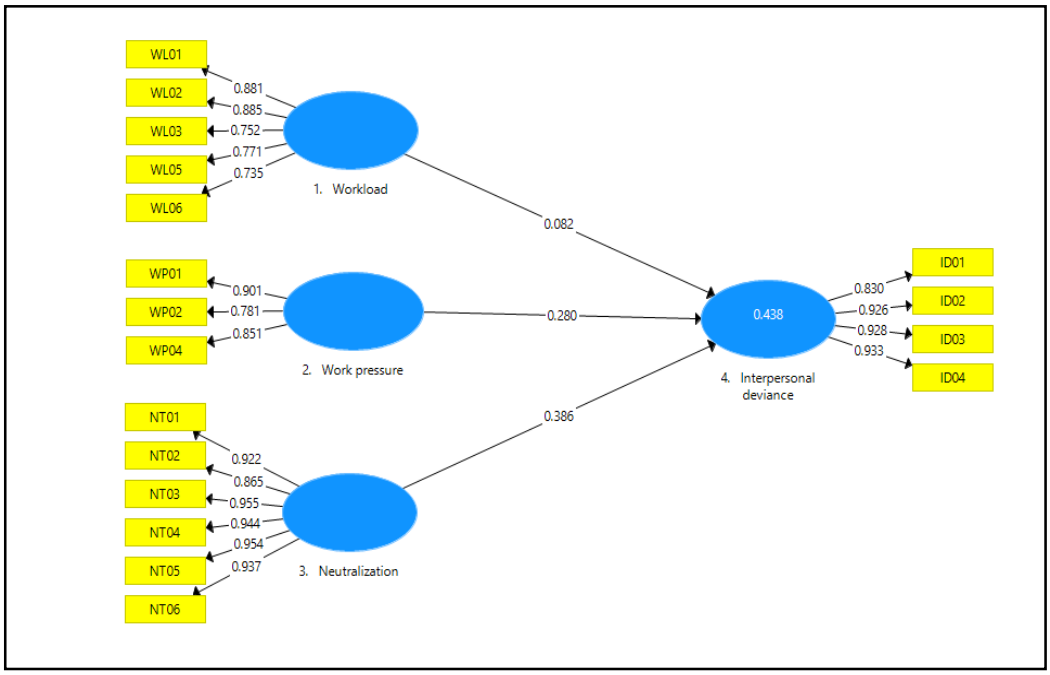
We also computed the average variance extracted (AVE) to ascertain convergent validity. According to Chin (1998), the AVE for each latent construct should not be less than 0.50. A critical look at Table 1 shows that the AVE values ranged from 0.652 to 0.865, indicating adequate convergent validity. Figure 1 presents the measurement model.

Figure 1: Measurement Model



Next, we analysed discriminant validity by comparing the square roots of AVE for each latent construct with the correlations among the latent constructs. Our results suggest satisfactory discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Workload	0.807			
2. Work pressure	0.709	0.846		
3. Neutralisation	0.624	0.604	0.930	
4. Interpersonal deviance	0.523	0.572	0.607	0.905

To cross-examine the result of the Fornell-Larcker's criterion, we appraised discriminant validity by computing Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT). Consequently, as indicated in Table 3, all correlation values obtained were less than the cut-off value of 0.85, which confirms an acceptable level of HTMT in assessing discriminant validity (Clark & Watson, 1995; Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015).

Table 3: Discriminant Validity - (Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Variables	1	2	3	4

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1.	Workload			
2.	Work pressure	0.828		
3.	Neutralisation	0.670	0.676	
4.	Interpersonal deviance	0.577	0.651	0.638

All the parameters used to judge the validity and reliability of our constructs proved satisfactory. The next sub-section describes the assessment of the structural model of the present study.

(iii) Structural Model Assessment

We employed the bootstrapping technique of estimating indirect effects in mediation models, as suggested by Hayes (2013) and Preacher and Hayes (2004, 2008). This procedure provides "higher levels of statistical power compared with the Sobel's test" (Spector & Jex, 1998, p. 223). First, we evaluated the path coefficients by testing the direct relationship between workload, work pressure, and interpersonal deviance (H1 and H2).

Table 4 shows that H1 and H2 were both supported at a 95% confidence interval. Also, Table 4 indicates the coefficient of determination (R^2) and predictive relevance (Q^2) of the model. Stone-Geisser test of predictive relevance-Q^2 (Geisser, 1974; Stone, 1974) was observed after running the blindfolding procedure (Chin, 1998; Spector & Jex, 1998). The R^2 value for the direct effect was 0.36, which implies that the model explained 36% of the total variance in interpersonal deviance. Also, the Q^2 value for interpersonal deviance was 0.270. The Q^2 value exceeded zero, which suggests satisfactory predictive relevance of the model (Chin, 1998). We measured the goodness of fit using the standardised root mean residual (SRMR). Our model recorded an SRMR value of 0.067, which was less than 0.10, signifying a satisfactory value (Henseler, Hubona, & Ray, 2016). Table 4 presents the result of the direct effect model.

Table 4: Result of Direct Effect Model

Hypotheses	**Relationship**	**Beta**	**SE**	***t*-value**	**95% CI**	**Findings**
H1	Workload → ID	0.234	0.072	3.279	[0.127; 0.365]	Supported
H2	Work pressure →ID	0.406	0.086	4.717	[0.248; 0.537]	Supported
		ID				
	R^2	36%				
	Q^2	0.270				
	SRMR	0.067				

Note: ID=Interpersonal deviance

The direct effect result shown in Table 4 is further presented in Figure 2. Figure 2 shows the t-values of 3.279 for H1 and 4.717 for H2. The values were greater than 1.645 (Hair et al., 2017), which is the cut-off point to indicate a significant relationship. Hence, H1 and H2 were supported.

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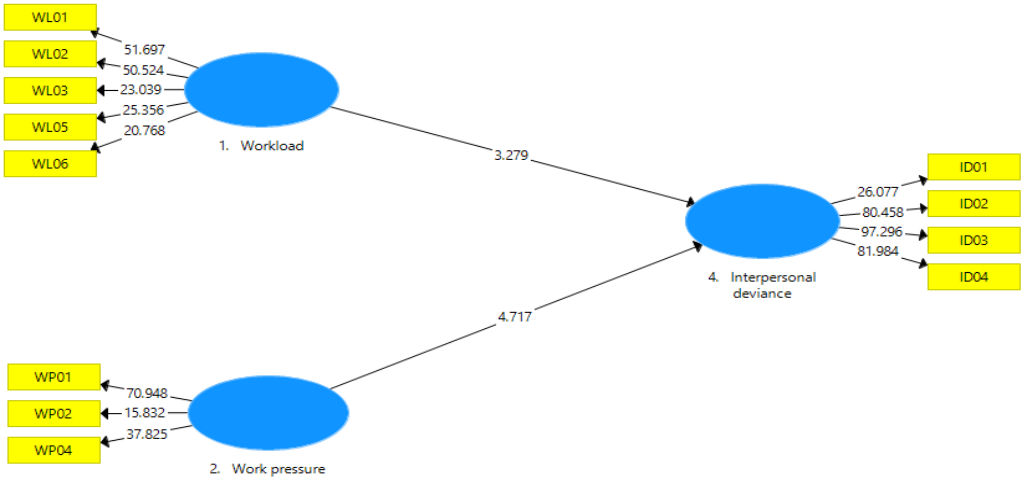
Figure 2: Structural Model for Direct Effect



When a mediator was incorporated into the PLS path model, we applied the standard bootstrapping procedure with a number of 5000 bootstrap samples and 356 cases to assess the significance of the path coefficients (Henseler et al., 2012, 2015; Spector & Jex, 1998). The result in Table 5 showed that neutralisation mediated significantly and positively the relationship between workload and interpersonal deviance (H3) and the relationship between work pressure and interpersonal deviance (H4), supporting both hypotheses. As shown in Table 5, the coefficient of determination (R^2) was 44% (0.44), which indicates that the indirect effect model explained 44% of the total variance in interpersonal deviance. After running the blindfolding procedures (Chin, 1998), the result revealed 0.332 as the Q^2 value, which was greater than zero, indicating acceptable predictive relevance of the indirect model (Chin, 1998).

Table 5: Result of Indirect Effect Model

Hypotheses	**Relationship**	**Beta**	**SE**	***t*-value**	**95% CI**	**Findings**
H3	Workload →Neut. → ID	0.153	0.032	4.777	[0.101; 0.205]	Supported
H4	Work pressure →Neut. → ID	0.124	0.036	3.475	[0.070; 0.187]	Supported
		ID				
	R^2	44%				
	Q^2	0.332				
	SRMR	0.055				

Note: ID=Interpersonal deviance

After running the blindfolding procedure (Chin, 1998), the results revealed that the Q^2 value for interpersonal deviance was 0.332, and R^2 value of 44% (0.44) were satisfactory. Statistically, all values were greater than zero, indicating acceptable predictive relevance of the indirect model (Chin, 1998). Figure 3 presents the indirect effect model result.

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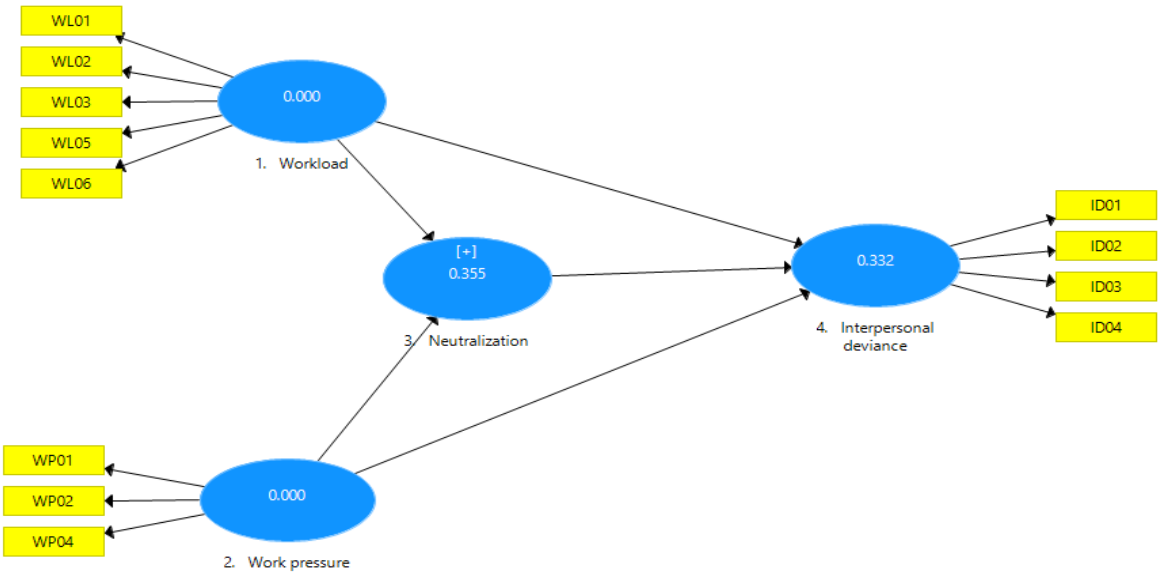
Figure 3: Indirect Effect Model Graph



DISCUSSION

The present study was an attempt to test the direct and indirect influence of workload and work pressure via neutralisation on interpersonal deviance. As indicated by the results, we found empirical support for all the hypotheses. As expected, workload and work pressure were shown to directly affect interpersonal deviance in that the higher the workload and work pressure the higher the likelihood that faculty members will exhibit interpersonal deviance in public universities in Nigeria. Such a result is not surprising because of the poor work environment in public universities highlighted in the media. Nigerian public universities have been suffering from inadequate infrastructural facilities and rising student population, which result in excess workload and work pressure (NEEDS Report, 2012). Such an unconducive work environment expectedly will result in negative work-related outcomes, such as interpersonal deviance. Past studies have demonstrated the negative link between poor working conditions and interpersonal deviance, such as bullying, aggression, and incivility (Takaki et al., 2010; Taylor, Bedeian, & Kluemper, 2012; Yeh, 2015), which can be regarded as interpersonal deviance. In this regard, the findings of this study support previous works (Baillien et al., 2011; Gilin et al., 2012; Lim et al., 2008). More importantly, it corroborates the job demand-control theory (Karasek, 1979) in that high strain jobs are likely to produce negative outcomes at work.

Another contribution of the present study is the mediation role of neutralisation in the relationship between workload and interpersonal deviance and between work pressure and interpersonal deviance. The effect of neutralisation on interpersonal deviance supports past research (Cheng et al., 2014; Hinduja, 2007; Shigihara, 2013; Yu, 2013) and the theory of neutralisation (Sykes & Matza, 1957). Extant literature found that cyber loafers used 'metaphor of the ledger' as a neutralisation technique to justify their engagement in cyberloafing when they experienced organisational injustice (Lim, 2002). Also, other studies found that consumers

employed neutralisation techniques to justify their role in unethical buying behaviours, such as shoplifting (Cromwell & Thurman, 2003; Gruber & Schlegelmilch, 2014).

As postulated by the theory of neutralisation, faculty members in Nigeria should not be perceived as immoral or unethical individuals. Instead, their engagement in interpersonal deviance was perceived to be justified because of the poor working conditions characterised by high workload and work pressure. Unfortunately, the present study did not empirically test the neutralisation techniques used by the sampled faculty members. However, it could be speculated that denial of responsibility, condemnation of the condemners, and the claim of normalcy were likely to be used to justify the exhibition of interpersonal deviance. More studies are needed, however, to confirm the speculation.

iv) Theoretical Implications

Drawing from the theory of neutralisation (Sykes & Matza, 1957) and job demand-control model (Karasek, 1979), the present study provides some theoretical insight into the effect of working conditions in justifying the engagement of interpersonal deviance of faculty members of public universities in Nigeria. The findings suggest that interpersonal deviance is a conscious act committed by employees. Despite being against the organisational norms and expectations, the employees still engage in such deviant acts. However, their decision to act in such a manner should be understood from the perspective of a demanding and straining job that elicits self-justification or the neutralisation process to rationalise their deviant acts at work. The inclusion of neutralisation to justify interpersonal deviance into the job demand-control model is significant because it implies that the employees are not necessarily deviant in the first place; rather, their engagement in interpersonal deviance appears to be justified as a response to the poor working conditions. In this regard, to perceive interpersonal deviance in a negative light could be misleading.

v) Managerial Implications

As indicated by our findings, the management of universities can minimise the incidence of interpersonal deviance by taking a holistic review of the existing workload of faculty members and improve physical working conditions in the institutions. Without a re-examination of the current job demands brought about by high workload and work pressure, academic jobs are likely to be stressful for faculty members. As a result of such a negative job experience, faculty members are likely to engage in destructive relationships with their colleagues and/or students and, more importantly, may not consider such behaviour as being unethical or wrong and deviating from the organisational norms and expectations. When faculty members rationalise their deviant act against their colleagues and/or students, such acts are likely to continue and harm the organisational well-being.

CONCLUSION

The present study managed to provide empirical evidence on the direct influence of job demands as characterised by workload and work pressure on interpersonal deviance, offering support to the job demand-control model. It also managed to offer empirical support that faculty members in Nigeria rationalised their deviant act as a result of poor working conditions in the public universities, providing support to the theory of neutralisation. Despite the insightful

findings, some caveats should be considered. Firstly, the generalisability of the findings could be limited to faculty members in public universities in Nigeria only. In other countries, the working conditions in public universities may not be similar; hence, interpersonal deviance may not be a severe problem. Secondly, despite the use of PLS-SEM, the causality of the variables could not be ascertained as the study was correlational. Finally, even though CMV was ruled out by the analysis, it is suggested that future research collect data in different periods.

Several future research works are possible from the current study. For instance, future researchers may wish to ascertain the neutralisation techniques employees use in justifying interpersonal deviance. By doing so, a cognitive process used by the employees could be better understood to help relevant interventions to reduce the incidence of workplace deviance. Secondly, future research may also wish to consider the boundary conditions that could further strengthen or weaken the effect of job demands on interpersonal deviance with the inclusion of neutralisation. For instance, workload and work pressure may reduce interpersonal deviance when employees receive organisational support.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

MICHAEL OLALEKAN ADEOTI
Department of Business Administration,
Federal Polytechnic, Bida, Nigeria
michaelolalekanadeoti@gmail.com

FARIDAHWATI MOHD SHAMSUDIN
School of Business Administration,
Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco
F.MohdShamsudin@aui.ma

MOHAMMAD MOUSA AL HAMWAN
malhamwan@yahoo.com