

Career Development Practices and Workplace Deviance: The Case of Nigeria

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This paper investigates the relationship between some career development (CD) practices and the incidence of destructive workplace deviance using Robinson and Bennett's typology of workplace deviance. We hypothesized that the various CD practices would not be associated with reduction in the variants of workplace deviance used for the study. The study was a cross-sectional survey of some manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. A purposive sampling technique was used to select a sample of 201 respondents from a population of 427 middle level and junior employees. Data generated by means of a questionnaire were analysed using SPSS version 20 and Spearman rank Order Correlation Coefficient (ρ) was used to test the hypotheses. Results showed that organisations engage in CD and CD practices were, in varying degrees, associated with reduction in organisational deviance. We conclude that organisation managers may inadvertently be legitimating destructive deviance by their insufficient attention to employees needs and not ensuring fairness in CD practice. We recommend more widespread use of coaching and exposure of more employees to challenging job assignments.

Keywords: Career development practices, workplace deviance, organisational deviance, production deviance, property deviance.

1. Introduction

For an organization to survive, it is important that employees adhere to corporate norms, policies and procedures. Although strict adherence to procedures may hamper innovativeness which is much needed in today's workplace, non-adherence may portend danger to the overall effectiveness of the organization (Galperin 2002). Non-adherence to company norms and procedures constitute the phenomenon variously referred to as workplace deviance, employee deviance, workplace misconduct, counterproductive work behaviours etc. (Robinson & Bennett 1995; Galperin 2002; Kidwell & Martin 2004; Fagbohunge, Akinbode & Ayodeji 2012).

Workplace deviance is considered an important issue of concern for organizations particularly in view of the generally accepted need for organizations to gain competitive advantage as well as contend with daunting uncertainties in the marketplace. Montes, Gutierrez and Campos (2011) argue that in confronting challenges facing organizations, leaders may generate a work climate that put pressure on both managers and employees thus creating grounds for conflict and negative behaviours at work. Similarly, Fagbohunge,

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Akinbode & Ayodeji (2012, p. 208) maintain that “increasing global competitiveness and trends toward downsizing and restructuring will lead to significant misconducts in the workplace”. These behaviours, which often violate workplace norms, threaten effective functioning of organizations and the well-being of members (Fox and Spector 1999; Bolin & Heatherly 2001; Aquino, Galperin & Bennett 2004; Kura, Shamsudin & Chauhan 2013).

However, Galperin (2002) distinguishes between destructive and constructive deviant behaviours. While destructive behaviours have harmful effects on the organization, constructive behaviours are functional, constituting important sources of innovation and entrepreneurship. This study focuses on destructive deviant behaviours which according to Chirasha and Mahapa (2012), Shamsudin, Chauhan and Kura (2012) are likely to cause the organization harm.

Counterproductive behaviours are associated with considerable economic and social costs (Robinson & Bennett 1995; Fisher 2002). They probably contribute significantly to business failures and higher production and consumer costs (Hollinger 1986; Hollinger, Slora & Terris 1992). Regrettably, in spite of efforts at reducing workplace deviance, such as using different forms of formal controls (e. g. rules and regulations, disciplinary procedures), it remains a rather intractable phenomenon in the workplace. Griffin and O’leary-Kelly (2004) suggest that all workpeople have the potential of carrying out destructive behaviours at work.

In the attempt to understand and explain employee deviance, extant researchers have identified various factors that might influence employee deviance (Kura, Shamsudin & Chauhan 2013). These include factors such as perceived organizational support (Eisenberger et al. 1986; Ferris, Brown & Heller 2009), organizational justice perceptions (Galperin 2002; Devonish & Greenidge, 2010), organizational politics (Davis & Gardner 2004; Bashir et al. 2011), leadership style (Chullen et al. 2010) and psychological contract breach (Kickul et al. 2001). However, it appears the HR practices that may be antecedents of work place deviance are under-researched. Hence using career development practices (CDPs) as an aspect of HRM practices, this study explores the relationship between CDPs and employee deviance in Nigerian manufacturing firms. Previous studies have suggested that involvement in CDPs is indicative of an organization’s care and concern for employees and often lead to positive outcomes. For instance, Foong-Ming’s (2008) study linked CDP to reduced employee turnover intentions. Also, Huiras, Uggen and McMoris (2000:245) in their analysis of data from a youth development study found that career stakes, which they conceptualize as “the fit between workers current job and their long-term career plans”, affect worker misconduct. They assert that changes in rates of employee misconduct may result as employers adopt new management approaches which influence employee commitment. Therefore, this study is considered significant in the extent that it seeks to investigate whether defined CDPs could similarly be associated with reductions in workplace deviant behaviours.

The rest of the paper is presented in 4 sections. It starts with examining conceptualisations and antecedents of workplace deviance as well as explore defined career development practices. The second section presents the method used in collection and analysis of the research data. The next section considers the results of the data analysis and research findings. The final section presents the discussion, conclusion and recommendations. Broadly, we contend that CDPs would enable reductions in the incidence of employee deviance, but much depends on the level of favourableness of the work climate.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Workplace Deviance

Workplace deviance is varied in nature, form and extent. Although much of workplace deviance literature conceptualises deviance as antisocial behaviour, Galperin (2002, p.136), who recognizes that some voluntary violation of organizational norms may be “important sources of innovation and entrepreneurship”, conceptualizes workplace deviance as including both destructive and constructive aspects. Constructive deviance, comprising innovative behaviours, is functional providing the organization with necessary creativity. Galperin (2002) concludes that constructive forms of deviant behaviour contribute to the overall well-being of the organization and hence “provides a limited perspective of deviance in the workplace”.

On the other hand, destructive workplace deviance, which is the focus of this study, could be seen as comprising voluntary, improper behaviours engaged by employees which defy and violate shared organizational norms and, in doing so, threatens the well being of the organization and/or its members (Robinson & Bennett 1995. Bolin & Heatherly 2001; Vardi 2001). It may also be described as the deliberate or intentional desire to cause harm in the workplace. Destructive deviant behaviours, such as unnecessary absence, coming late to work and leaving early, intentionally working very slowly, making errors, intentional production of poor quality work, sabotaging equipment, spreading negative rumors about the organization or co-workers, fraud and theft etc, (DePaulo & DePaulo 1989; Kidwell & Bennett 1993; Johns 1997; Fox & Spector 1999; Bennett & Robinson 2000), are costly to organisations since they negatively affect their effectiveness. Specifically, their detrimental effects can result in significant economic and social costs to the organization.

Robinson and Bennett (1995) seem to focus on destructive deviance in their classification of workplace deviance. Their typology identifies two broad categories namely deviance aimed directly at the organization, referred to as organizational deviance and that targeted at organizational members, called interpersonal deviance. For each of these categories, Robinson and his colleague identify two subcategories. In their scheme, organizational deviance, evidenced by employees’ physical and emotional detachment from the organization, encompasses (i) Production deviance and (ii) Property deviance. Production deviance which violates organizational norms with respect to minimum quantity and quality of work an employee is expected to accomplish (Pulich & Tourigny, 2004), may be expressed as excessive absenteeism, tardiness, intentionally working slow, intentional production of poor quality work and wasting resources. Negative behaviours captured under property deviance include sabotaging company equipment, theft, lying about hours worked etc. Similarly, interpersonal deviance comprises of two sub-groups namely: (a) political deviance and (b) personal aggression. The former includes misconducts such as favouritism, discrediting co-workers, while the latter border on hostility towards co-workers and include verbal abuse, stealing from co-workers and sexual harassment. Robinson and Bennett (1995) conclude that generally, workplace deviance falls into these four distinct sub-groups. However, the concern of this study is on organisational deviance made up of production and property variants.

Hollinger and Clark (1982a) maintain that job satisfaction may reduce the incidence of workplace deviance whilst deviant behaviours often may arise as a result of employees dissatisfaction with their jobs. A dissatisfied worker is more likely to retaliate against the organization and co-workers as well as becoming less productive (Bolin & Heatherly 2001).

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Thus, Kemper (1966) argues that increases in workload and/or the failure of the organization to recognize merit result in dissatisfaction which may cause employees to become retaliative on the organization. That is, dissatisfaction with the job and/or the work environment is positively related to workplace deviance.

Hence workplace deviance resulting from experiences at work, could be seen as a form of negative reciprocity, a 'tit for tat' situation. On the other hand, perceptions of organizational support (Eisenberger et al 1986; Ferris, Brown & Heller 2009) will result in positive reciprocity. That is, when, for instance, an organization is supportive of employees' growth needs it is likely to reduce workplace deviance.

2.2 Career Development Practices (CDP)

A recent view that employees should assume a major role in managing their own careers (Halal 1998; Arthur, Inkson & Pringle 1999; Baruch 2003; Cassio 2013, Torrington, Hall & Taylor 2008) notwithstanding, some scholars (Leibowitz, Farren & Kaye 1988; Lipe-Wierams & Hall 2007; Foong-Ming 2008) opine that employers should provide resources as well as the appropriate environment to ensure the continuous self-development of employees. Career development (CD) is therefore seen as "a long-term effort in which the organization helps employees utilize their full potential" (Gomez-Mejia, Balkin & Cardy 2008, p.410). That is, career development should be a planned effort by organizations to optimize individual employees' career needs and the organization's workforce requirement.

For many organizations, interest in developing the careers of their workforce stems from the realization that investing in employees leverages the firm's talent, skills and knowledge base and enables them to compete more effectively in the economic market place (Gutteridge 1986; Hill, Jones & Galvin 2004). Hence, in recognition of deficiencies among employees, their need for continuous learning, and in view of unrelenting and increasing competition, organizations embark on career development programmes which enable acquisition of new skills and capabilities. For instance, Evans et al. (2007) report a positive association between providing skills needed for the job and job-related outcomes. Organizational growth and effectiveness is expected to be achieved through seeking ways and means of capturing the interest of employees and making them see their fate as intertwined with that of the organization (Oladunni 1998; Nwuche & Awa, 2011). In this sense, the presence of career development opportunities in the organization could be seen as indicative of its interest in forging employees' career growth. Career development programmes include skill training, coaching, mentorship, job rotation and challenging job assignments, among others. These opportunities/practices enable professional achievement and self-actualization of employees.

Specifically, skill training aims to provide new job skills and knowledge. It is vital for personal development and career success (Mullins, 1995). Coaching helps to develop employees' knowledge and skill sets so as to improve on the – job performance (Clegg, Kornberger & Pitsis 2011). In mentoring, a senior manager shares his/her knowledge and experience and provides general guidance to the junior employees, the protégés. This makes the latter feel confident and capable (Daft 1995). With challenging work assignments, employees become more visible, have opportunities to take up new challenges, display their talent to their superiors and potentially achieve a sense of personal worth. Giving such opportunities tends to be highly motivating for many people.

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Thus, Gutteridge (1986, p.58) opines that organizations “adopt career development programmes in response to pragmatic human resource concerns and because they believe it will help ensure a continual supply of qualified talented personnel”. For, Perkins and White (2009), access to career development opportunities may be perceived among workforce members as an instrument for ‘progression’ and so potentially valued as an intrinsic benefit. When this happens, employees perceive such organizations as caring and supportive and are likely to feel obliged to reciprocate with greater effort and loyalty. We expect this to also result in reduced misconduct in the workplace. In this vein, Foong-ming (2008, p.13) conclude that career development practices could heighten employees’ confidence in their employer and CD practices which “provide coaching, personal worth and perceived competence could meet the socio-emotional needs of employees and hence lead to a favourable behavioural outcome”. That is, the provision of CD opportunities should logically inhibit deviant behaviours. However, Fagbohunge and colleagues (2012, p.210) emphasize that deviant behaviour could occur “when there is an incongruence of needs/expectations... between the individual and the organization”. In effect, if the organization is perceived as not providing adequately for employees’ self growth and development, ‘negative reciprocity’ may result.

It is notable that Foong-Ming’s (2008) investigation on CDPs did not clearly define specific CDPs and their specific contributions to reduced employee turnover intentions. Similarly, in drawing their conclusion, Fagbohunge and Colleagues (2012) did not differentiate among different classes of deviant behaviours. This study attempts to address these gaps and, coupled by the fact that we are unaware of studies that specifically examine CDPs and workplace deviance, we are led to make the following propositions:

- H0₁:** The provision of training will not reduce production deviance in the workplace.
- H0₂:** The provision of training is not associated with reduction in property deviance.
- H0₃:** The use of coaching will not reduce production deviance in the workplace.
- H0₄:** Coaching will not reduce property deviance.
- H0₅:** There is no association between provision of challenging work assignments and reduction in production deviance in the workplace.
- H0₆:** Providing challenging job assignment is not associated with reduction in property deviance.

3. Methodology

The study was a cross-sectional survey of manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised of 427 middle level and junior employees. Using the Krejcie and Morgan (1972) table, a sample size of 201 was determined. A purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the respondents. Of the 201 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 143 (71%) were retrieved of which, after cleaning, 122 (61%) were usable for analysis.

Data on dimensions of CD practices used for the study (training, coaching and challenging job assignments) were generated using 14 items in the instrument developed for the study. Workplace deviance, the dependent variable, was measured by production and property deviance. Each of this was assessed using 6 items in the study instrument. We expect that exploring specific CDPs as well as specific classes of deviant behaviour will yield more valid results.

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Data were generated by means of a 5 point Likert – type scale which ranged from strongly agreed (5 points) to undecided (1 point) and used to assess a respondent's level of agreement or disagreement with each of the items. Test of reliability of the instrument using Nunnally (1978) model yielded the following Cronbrach's Alpha coefficients: training (0.78); coaching (0.74); challenging job (0.73); Production Deviance (0.80); and Property Deviance (0.79). Descriptive statistics was used to assess the means, standard deviation etc of the questionnaire items while Spearman's Rank Order Correlation statistical tool was used to test the hypotheses.

4. Results

The results of the analysis are presented in table 1-3

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Career Development Practices

TRAINING	N		MEAN	Std. Error of Mean	Std. Deviation
	VALID	MISSING			
My organization provides opportunities for employees to develop their careers.	119	3	4.15	0.076	0.83
My organization provides skill training opportunities.	120	2	4.23	0.062	0.679
Training provided enables employees learn new skills so as to achieve their career goals.	120	2	4.15	0.06	0.657
Training has enabled me acquire the ability to handle new and higher assignments.	118	4	4.07	0.077	0.834
There is fairness in the selection of those for training.	120	2	3.51	0.091	0.996
C OACHING					
My organization makes provision for more knowledgeable and competent managers to coach inexperienced subordinates.	119	3	3.71	0.084	0.913
In my organization, employees who require coaching receive it.	112	10	3.39	0.087	0.924
Coaching helps employees learn to perform job tasks quickly.	120	2	4.18	0.06	0.657
Coaching enables employees conform to work rules.	121	1	4.02	0.067	0.741
CHALLENGING JOB ASSIGNMENTS					
In my organization, employees are given tasks that improve their potential for advancement on the job.	120	2	3.88	0.082	0.9
My organization provides enough challenges to stretch and improve employees learning capacity.	120	2	3.71	0.085	0.929
I am given challenging assignments at work.	120	10	3.39	0.087	0.924
My job challenges are not overwhelming.	120	2	3.51	0.091	0.996
Challenging job assignments has enabled me to overcome my personal limitations at work.	121	1	4.04	0.07	0.768

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Table 1 shows the results from descriptive analysis of responses on training, coaching and challenging job assignments. With regard to training, mean scores of all the items are quite high, much above the average of 3. Evidently, a majority of respondents affirmed that their organization provide training opportunities (4.23) for the acquisition of new skills (4.15) which enable employees handle new and higher assignment (4.07). However, perception of fairness in the selection of those for training has a comparatively low mean (3.51). As also evident in table 1, the mean scores of items on coaching range from 3.39 to 4.18, again all above the average mean.

From the results, organizations engage in coaching employees (3.71); employees that require coaching receive it (3.39); learn to perform tasks quickly (4.18); and conform to work rules (4.02). With regard to challenging job assignments, the mean scores of items are also weighty, ranging from 3.39 to 4.04. The organizations provide challenging job assignments to their employees (3.39); challenging job assignments are not overwhelming (3.51); stretch and improve learning capacity (3.71); help employees overcome personal limitations at work (4.04); and improve employees potentials for advancement on the job (3.88).

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Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on Workplace Deviance

PRODUCTION DEVIANCE	N		MEAN	Std. Error of Mean	Std. Deviation
	VALID	MISSING			
I am always punctual at work	119	3	4.15	0.076	0.83
I take extra breaks when I feel like.	120	2	4.23	0.062	0.679
In my organization, people absent themselves from work at will.	120	2	4.15	0.06	0.657
I intentionally do my work slowly anytime I want.	118	4	4.07	0.077	0.834
I always obey company rules and regulations whether or not someone is watching.	120	2	3.51	0.091	0.996
Workers make up excuses to leave work earlier than expected.	112	10	3.39	0.087	0.924
PROPERTY DEVIANCE					
I make every effort to protect company property.	119	3	3.71	0.84	0.913
I have never thought of causing my organization harm.	120	2	3.71	0.085	0.929
I cannot be bothered about the safety of company property.	120	2	4.18	0.06	0.657
I will not sabotage company property under any circumstance.	121	1	4.02	0.067	0.741
People do lie about the number of hours worked.	112	10	3.39	0.087	0.924
People do help themselves to company property without permission from their superiors.	120	2	3.51	0.091	0.996

Similarly, table 2 presents results on production and property deviance. The analysis of production deviance shows that the mean scores of all items are all above average and range from 3.39 to 4.23. The results suggest that people are punctual at work (4.15) but take extra breaks as they like (4.23); absent themselves at will (4.15); intentionally work slowly (4.07); and intentionally make up excuses to leave work earlier (3.39). However, employees appear to obey company rules whether or not they are being watched (3.51).

For property deviance, mean scores of all items are also above average ranging from 3.39 to 4.18. Employees make effort to protect company property (3.71); never think of causing their organization harm (3.71); will not bother about the safety of company property (4.18) but at the same time will not sabotage company property (4.02). Besides, employees do lie about the number of hours worked (3.39) and help themselves to company property (3.51).

Table 3: Correlation of the Study Variables

(a) Correlations of Training and Production Deviance

			Training	Production Deviance
Spearman's rho	Training	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.551*
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.018
		N	121	121
	Production Deviance	Correlation Coefficient	.551*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.018	
		N	121	122

(b) Correlations of Training and Property Deviance

			Training	Property Deviance
Spearman's rho	Training	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.690*
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.029
		N	121	121
	Property Deviance	Correlation Coefficient	.690*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.029	
		N	121	122

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

5. Test of Hypotheses

The relationships between CD practices and organisational deviant behaviour were tested by means of Spearman's Rank Correlation statistical tool and the results presented in tables 3a – 3f. The first hypothesis (H0₁) proposed that the provision of training will not reduce production deviance in the workplace. The result (table 3a) presents a rho value of 0.55 indicating a positive correlation between training and production deviance. A p – value of 0.018 < 0.05 leads us to reject the null hypotheses. That is, the provision of training will reduce production deviance. The coefficient of Determination, r², is 0.30 suggesting that 30% of variation in production deviance can be predicted by variations in training.

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

The second hypotheses (H0₂) examined the relationship between training and property deviance. The results presented in table 3b show a rho value of 0.69 and p – value 0.029 < 0.05. Thus we reject the null hypothesis since the results suggest a positive and significant relationship between training and property deviance. The Coefficient of Determination, r², is 0.48 which suggests that 48% of variation in property deviance can be predicted by variations in training.

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(c) Correlations of Coaching and Production Deviance

			Coaching	Production Deviance
Spearman's rho	Coaching	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.646*
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.021
		N	121	121
	Production Deviance	Correlation Coefficient	.646*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.021	
		N	121	122

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

(d) Correlations of Coaching and Property Deviance

			Coaching	Property Deviance
Spearman's rho	Coaching	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.587**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.008
		N	121	121
	Property Deviance	Correlation Coefficient	.587**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	
		N	121	122

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

(e) Correlations of Challenging Job and Production Deviance

			Challenging Job	Production Deviance
Spearman's rho	Challenging Job	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.877*
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.016
		N	121	121
	Production Deviance	Correlation Coefficient	.877*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.016	
		N	121	122

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

Hypotheses 3 (H₀₃) and 4 (H₀₄) respectively proposed that coaching would not reduce production and property deviance. The analyses reveal positive and significant relationships as evident in tables 3c and 3d. With H₀₃; $r = 0.646$; $p - \text{value } 0.021 < 0.05$; and for H₀₄; $r = 0.587$; $p - \text{value } 0.008 < 0.05$. Hence we reject the null hypotheses and accept that coaching would reduce production and property deviance. The coefficients of determination,

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r^2 , are 0.42 and 0.34 for H_{03} and H_{04} respectively. This means that 42% of variation in production deviance and 34% of variation in property deviance can be predicted by variations in coaching.

(f) Correlations of Challenging Job and Property Deviance

			Challenging Job	Property Deviance
Spearman's rho	Challenging Job	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.723*
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.031
	Property Deviance	N	121	121
		Correlation Coefficient	.723*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.031	
		N	121	122

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

With regard to hypotheses 5(H_{05}) and 6 (H_{06}), these respectively stated that there is no association between challenging job assignments and production and property deviance. In table 3e we see that there is a positive correlation between challenging job and production deviance ($r = 0.877$; $p - \text{value } 0.016 < 0.05$). The $p - \text{value}$ leads us to reject the null hypothesis. That is, there is an association between challenging job assignment and production deviance. The coefficient of Determination ($r^2 = 0.769$) means that 77% of variation in production deviance can be predicted by variation in the provision of challenging job assignments. Similarly, with property deviance, analysis (table 3f) shows a positive association between provision of challenging job assignments and property deviance ($r = 0.723$; $p - \text{value } 0.031 < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is also rejected. The r^2 value (0.523) suggests that 52% of variation in property deviance can be predicted by variation in the provision of challenging jobs.

Hence, all the null - hypotheses are rejected suggesting that CD practices are associated with reduction in organizational deviance.

In effect, the results are in congruence with those from earlier studies. For example, results are similar to Foong-Ming's (2008) which posted a reduction in employee turnover intentions.

6. Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

The study sought to investigate the influence of career development practices, specifically training, coaching and challenging job assignments, on variants of workplace deviance namely, production and property deviance among a sample of manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. To this end, we have used both descriptive and correlational analysis. The descriptive analysis shows that organizations studied engage in the CD practices used for the investigation. However, the results suggest that the organizations give most emphasis to training followed by challenging job assignments and lastly coaching.

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With regard to training, the comparatively low mean score on respondents perception and fairness in the selection of those for training suggest that not a few query the level of fairness in the exercise. Similar low points are identified for coaching and challenging job assignments. The research evidence suggests that a considerable number of employees who require coaching do not actually receive it and so also with challenging job assignments where it appears not so many are given the opportunity.

In this scenario, it is presumable that some level of dissatisfaction is likely to occur which would result in deviant behaviours (Hollinger & Clark 1982a; Bolin & Heatherly 2001). For instance, in relation to training, it is conceivable that a perceived unfairness in the selection of those for training would, in distributive justice terms (Greenberg 1987) result in feelings of inequity. Inequity would likely beget 'a disgruntled employee... [who] . . . would try to restore balance and equity . . . by more negative or deviant means' (Lucas, Lupton & Mathieson 2008, p.323). That is, a lack of fairness and equity in the use of career activities would encourage employee deviance.

Results on production and property deviance are particularly paradoxical. For instance, although employees are comparatively low on making up excuses to leave work earlier and on obeying company rules whether or not they are being watched, they are quite high on absenting themselves at will and taking extra breaks as they like. With regard to property deviance, employees are comparatively low on telling lies about the number of hours worked and on helping themselves to company property. But, they are significantly high on not bothering about the safety of company property. In effect, there appear to be some degree of employee detachment from the organization inspite of CD efforts of these organizations. One question is, why would some employee appear to exhibit retaliative behaviours? In our view, a reason could be located in perceptions of unfairness. Besides it is quite probable that work discipline is lax in these organizations and employees, as proposed by Agency theory, are behaving opportunistically (Shapiro 2005).

However, results of correlation analyses favour the inclusion of career development practices in the list of factors that could help our understanding and explanation of employee deviance. We find that all three CD practices individually reduce deviant behaviour. This is in consonance with Foong-Ming's (2008) submission that when CD practices meet the social and emotional needs of employees, more positive behaviours result. It is also consistent with Huiras, Uggen & McMoris' (2008) conclusion that management approaches could elicit commitment and hence reduce misconduct among employees. In any event, we believe that more significant reductions in employee deviance is achievable depending on the extent of favourableness of the organisation's work climate.

It is notable that results reveal variations in the magnitude of reduction in deviance associated with the different CD practices. For instance, results show that training influences property deviance more than it does production deviance while both coaching and challenging job assignments would cause more variation in production deviance than in property deviance. Two plausible conclusions arise from this. First, in the presence of these CD practices, production deviance seems to be more amenable to reduction than property deviance. We believe that this could be so because property deviance lies within the domain of peoples personality trait which, from a nomothetic perspective, are resistant to change (Mullin 2013). Secondly, some credence could thus be given to the view that utilizing 'bundles' of mutually reinforcing practices "have the potential to contribute to improved employee attitude and behaviours . . ." (Marchington & Wilkinson, 2008, p.91).

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The study also reveals that the provision of challenging job assignments has most outstanding influence on both production and property deviance. Explanation for this outcome, perhaps, lies in Wehrich, Cannice & Koontz (2011) assertion that inherent in challenging job assignments are opportunity for growth, perceived recognition and a sense of accomplishment when assignments are successfully completed. These lead to job satisfaction and possibly commitment to the organization and may account for the tendency towards a more positive behaviour (Hollinger 1986; Huiras, Uggen & McMoris. 2000).

The findings of this study notwithstanding, some limitations, which offer perspectives for future research, must be acknowledged. Primarily, methodological limitations arise from the study being a cross-sectional not an experimental one. This means that casual relationships cannot be inferred from these findings. Besides, we adopted a purposive sampling technique and focused on only a limited number of firms. These further limit the generalizations we can make.

Further, given that the behaviour of people in organizations is influenced by interrelationships with a complexity of variables (Mullins 2013), not giving due consideration to contextual variables in an acknowledgeable short coming of the study. Hence, our descriptive analysis of the influence of CD practices on organizational deviance need to be treated with some caution. More rigorous investigation is required. In addition, deviance has been measured by reliance on self reporting and the bias inherent in this must also be acknowledged.

In spite of the limitations, the findings of the study do give credence to the view that career development practices would influence misconduct at work. However, organisation managers may inadvertently be legitimating destructive deviance by not paying sufficient attention to employees need and not being perceived as fair in their dealings with employees. As is apparent the contribution of training to reduction of deviance may be enhanced by always ensuring that the real needs of employees are taken into cognizance and that there is fairness in the selection of those for training. Also, there should be more widespread use of coaching and exposure of more employees to challenging job assignments.

Finally, and taken together, the results of the study appear to suggest that, for a given organisation, what career practices to emphasize would be dependent on what deviant behaviour that needs to be addressed.

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