

Workplace Conflict Factors and Employee Counterproductive Work Behaviour in Selected Private Universities in South-West Nigeria as Moderated by Organisational Justice

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Abstract: Due to the increasing complexity in the job itself and the workplace in which it is performed, counterproductive work behaviour has attracted growing attention in recent years. While the existing literature has established that workplace conflict factors could be significant drivers of employees' counterproductive work behaviour, there has been a dearth of literature on this issue in academia. Therefore, this study examines the interactions between workplace conflict factors and employee counterproductive work behaviour using universities in South-West Nigeria as Moderated by organisational justice as the theatre of the study. The study relied primarily on questionnaires as its major data collection method, reflecting its adoption of a survey research strategy. The results revealed that workplace conflict factors do not affect employee outcomes in selected private universities in South-West Nigeria as moderated by organisational justice. This research suggests that universities that want to foster employee loyalty must develop and execute effective incentive systems.

Keywords: Organisational behaviour; employee counterproductive work behaviour; workplace conflict factors; universities.

1. Introduction

Saddled with the aim of producing the best human resources to facilitate the growth of the country, Wilkins et al. (2017) observed that the marketisation of higher education globally (exposure of higher education to market forces where higher education institutions present education as a product to consumers) had required institutions to cut expenses while raising quality standards. Also, the emergence of covid-19 and the need for higher education institutions worldwide to adopt new strategies to survive and remain competitive leave these institutions seeking ways to improve employee outcomes as they adjust to the new normal. The foundation of every effective educational system is the quality of its faculty (Khalid et al. 2012), which implies that the outcome of the academic staff determines much of student learning and success as well as the university's (organisation) success.

Due to the widespread nature of Counterproductive work behaviour (CWB) in a variety of countries and industries, many researchers have begun studying it (Hasanati et al., 2018; Ng, Lam, & Feldman, 2016; Lawal, Babalola, & Ordu, 2019; Obalade & Akeke, 2020; Uche,

George, & Abiola, 2017). Most of these studies employed survey research to their advantage, showing that CWBs have many different features and causes. Adeoti, Oluremi, and Samuel (2020) claim that existing research on CWB focuses mostly on industrialised nations, whereas emerging and under-developed countries vulnerable to CWBs get less attention. Given the uniqueness of the idea and setting (sector, nation, and economy) in which these studies were conducted, the majority of them propose more research. These studies emphasised that counterproductive work behaviour in one culture may not be a CWB in another. Insinuating that results from high-income nations may not apply to low-income nations like Nigeria. Moreover, Olasupo and Fagbenro (2021) found that, among university employees in South-West Nigeria, academic staff are likelier to get involved in inappropriate behaviour at work than the general workforce, and staff from private universities have a greater propensity for engaging in work misbehaviour than their counterparts at public universities. Furthermore, research on the influence of workplace conflict variables on employee results in terms of unproductive behaviour is scarce among South-West Nigeria's private universities. In light of this, the researcher set out to fill a huge informational need. Therefore, the research determined the influence of workplace conflict elements on unproductive employee conduct in a subset of South-West Nigerian private universities.

Adeoti et al. (2020) state that the majority of the literature on CWB has focused on high-income nations. In contrast, emerging and low-income countries that are also vulnerable have received significantly less attention. Because of the uniqueness of the idea and setting (sector, government, and economy) in which these studies were conducted, it was stressed that what is considered CWB in one culture may not be considered CWB in another, with the majority of the studies recommending additional research. Insinuating that results from high-income nations may not apply to low-income countries like Nigeria. Moreover, Olasupo and Fagbenro (2021) found that, among university employees in South-West Nigeria, academic employees have a greater propensity to engage in employee misconduct than non-academic staff, and employees from private universities have a greater propensity to participate in work deviations than public university employees. Furthermore, there is a dearth of data on how workplace conflict factors affect the outcomes of employees in terms of counterproductive habits in private universities in South-West Nigeria.

Similarly, studies looking at the factors that lead people to engage in CWB have shown that having a lot of disagreements with coworkers is correlated with taking action like that against the company (Bujan et al., 2018; Efanga et al., 2015). However, Gupta and Gupta (2020) argue that instances of empirical and theoretical convergence between these bodies of work (workplace conflict factors and employee counterproductive work behaviour moderated by organisational justice) remained the exception instead of the rule. Researchers have identified several factors as contributing to counterproductive conduct, such as narcissism, rage, discontent, envy, and other undesirable emotions and qualities, lack of motivation, inadequate supervision and working conditions; confusing job descriptions; instability in employment; a dearth of internal career chances; and improper judgement systems (Heron et al., 2018); The inability to accept the group, stress (and the inclination to quit working are all examples of stimuli that lead to unproductive workplace actions. Several variables might contribute to counterproductive actions at work, including individual variation, such as personalities, socioeconomic background, experience, emotional maturity, and so on; and contextual variables, such as organisational justice, management style, perceived organisational goals, and organisational justice, are the two main categories into which the causes of this behaviours can be sorted (Loop, 2018). Since stress is a major contributor to unproductive behaviour on the workplace, this study zeroed in on this issue to determine what causes it and how businesses might mitigate the effects of stress on their bottom line. Negative effects include

decreased output, disinterested workers, poor decision-making, poor communication among workers, increased absenteeism, and maybe even workplace violence. In light of the above, the study's authors hypothesise that organisational justice may mediate between interpersonal conflict and unproductive conduct on the job. It is believed that anxiety at work is a precursor of unproductive activity on the job and that conflict between individuals contributes to this stress. Therefore, the researcher thinks it's crucial to study how interpersonal conflict affects counterproductive behaviour via the medium of occupational stress. Thus, this study aimed to evaluate the influence of these factors on employees' counterproductive behaviour on the job at a subset of these institutions.

The specific objectives are to;

- i. Examine the effect of workplace conflict factors on employee counterproductive work behaviour in selected private universities in South-West Nigeria.
- ii. Evaluate the effect of Workplace conflict factors on employee outcomes in selected private universities in South-West Nigeria as moderated by organisational justice.

In line with these objectives, this study raised the questions that;

- i. In what ways do workplace conflict factors affect employee counterproductive work behaviour in selected private universities in South-West Nigeria?
- ii. How does workplace conflict factors influence employee outcomes in selected private universities in South-West Nigeria as moderated by organisational justice?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Hypotheses Development

Counterproductive work behaviour or deviant behaviours are examples of employee actions that management views negatively (Obalade & Akeke, 2020). Hasanati et al.'s (2018) research shows that interpersonal conflict in the workplace is positively related to disruptive conduct on the job. Corporate psychopaths, as described by Boddy (2014), have a major effect on workplace conflict, bullying, and the emotional well-being of employees, all of which have major effects on unproductive conduct on the job. Earlier research by Peng (2012) found that personality characteristics were more significant than other variables in predicting CWB among Chinese employees. Support personnel may be less likely to participate in an unproductive activity on the job if they are happy with their compensation, according to research published in 2019 by Lawal et al. (2019).

Smithikrai's (2008) research shows that positive traits like conscientiousness and agreeableness are inversely connected to CWB, regardless of the strength of the scenario. Furthermore, Kanten and Ülker (2013) found that unproductive actions are inversely related to many aspects of an organisation's atmosphere, including reward, kind, commitment, organised, and high quality. This study makes the following assumptions premised on the mixed outcomes of prior research: But the research (Tushabe, 2021) found that workers' intentions to leave the company significantly correlate negatively with factors including job advancement, pay, and recognition. According to Ayman (2018), there is no association between transactional managerial style and turnover intent among the directorates of the Amman Council. On the other side, there is an inverse interaction between management style and voluntary employee turnover policies. According to research by Gözükar, Hatipolu, and Güneş (2017), there is a positive influence of how leadership style affect employee happiness with performance evaluations. However, none of these previous studies have investigated provided an insight into the many sources of conflict in the workplace and an employee's

propensity to quit their present employment at private institutions in South-West Nigeria. Hence, the first hypothesis;

H₀₁: Workplace conflict factors have no significant effect on employee counterproductive work behaviour in selected private universities in South-West Nigeria

Also, numerous research have shown a correlation between justice climate and employee outcomes including work satisfaction, organisational commitment, and performance (Boateng & Hsieh, 2019; Efanga et al., 2015; Ogbechie & Adefisayo, 2018; Quratulain et al., 2019; Swalhi, Zgoulli, & Hofaidhllaoui, 2017). Cropanzano and Molina (2015) found that employees' views of justice were associated with increased levels of organisational dedication, productivity on the work, cordial interactions between managers and subordinates, and pro-social OCB, and negatively correlated with job stress, unhelpful behaviours on the job, and plans to leave the organisation (Song and Yang, 2020; Said et al., 2016)). According to Boateng and Hsieh (2019), procedural and distributive fairness were shown to have positive and substantial relationships with officers' commitment and work satisfaction. Employment fulfilment is correlated with individuals' perceptions of fairness in procedures and employee organisational loyalty (Quratulain et al., 2019). Both Song and Yang (2020) and others have shown that when workers are treated fairly in the workplace, they are more likely to show both cognitive and emotional commitment to the company. Perceived organisational support is most impacted by leadership justice, whereas affective commitment is most impacted by procedural justice. Khan, Saleem, and Idris (2020) found the same thing: a strong and positive connection between workplace injustice and employee loyalty. In the opinion of Efanga et al., (2015), both aspects of organisational justice and interpersonal conflict were strongly connected to work satisfaction.

The sole significant predictor of work satisfaction was found to be interactional justice, according to Ogbechie and Adefisayo (2018). The connection between procedural fairness and worker outcomes was modulated, according to research by Quratulain et al. (2019), by the PSM aspects of interest in policymaking (rational motive) and public interest (normative motive). However, this research has not shown how organisational justice moderates the influence of workplace conflict elements on employee outcomes. Therefore, the study's working hypothesis is:

H₀₂: Workplace conflict factors do not significantly affect employee outcomes in selected private universities in South-West Nigeria as moderated by organisational justice

2.2. Theoretical Framework

2.2.1. Social Learning Theory

This study is hinged on social learning theory. Modern social learning theory may be traced back to the groundbreaking research of Miller and Dollard (1941). McLeod (2016) argues that social learning theory views people are mindless automatons who fail to consider the relationship between their acts and results. Social learning theory asserts that individuals learn from one another via social modelling, observing, and emulation. Bandura (2018) posited that an individual's character is shaped by their environment, actions, and mental processes (in particular, their ability to entertain mental and verbal imagery).

Literature review by Muro and Jeffrey (2008) reveals that internal changes are at the heart of social learning, making it notoriously difficult to quantify and assess. Defining shared metrics to evaluate social learning as a process or result is difficult by lacking a unified understanding of social learning. In addition, Brady (2017) disclosed that the chronological ordering of divergent peer relationships and misbehaviour is one of the key challenges of

social learning theory. Engaging literature demonstrates that criticisms of the social learning theory include the following: (1) describing behaviour in the context of nurture as well as nature is limiting, (2) doing so attempts to overestimate the intricacy of human behaviour, and (3) the theory depends on the environment as the most significant influencer on behaviour. Furthermore, Loop (2018) said that this theory is flawed because it may go too far in asserting that society guides how a person behaves and acts and because it neglects the child's culpability for his actions. She went on to say that the theory's possible flaw is that it doesn't consider the child's development across every domain and that this is because the theory relies not on an individual trajectory of development and acquisition of knowledge that is temporal or age dependent.

McLeod (2016) gave the theory a favourable review and emphasised that, despite its flaws, it offers a robust and thorough explanation of employees' learning since it takes the function of mediational processes into account. In support of the social learning theory, Kurt (2019) argued that observation is crucial to learning. He went on to say that it not only aids in instruction but also in the pupils' ability to absorb, remember, and practice what they have been taught.

To summarise the relevance of social learning theory to management, we may say that it argues that financial incentives are not the only source of motivation. According to Brown (2021), proponents of the social learning theory think that workers may pick up on proper social conduct in the workplace by witnessing how the organisation reacts to the actions of other workers. Brown reemphasised managers' need to recognise that workers learn proper social conduct by witnessing how their superiors treat them in different scenarios. Therefore, the theory backs the idea that managers should set examples of professional conduct for their employees to follow. In accordance with the theory's central tenet, this is true since both complying and deviant behaviours emerge from the same learning process within the framework of societal framework, interaction, and environment.

According to the theory, employee outcomes in private universities will be enhanced when workers learn how to interact with others in the workplace by seeing how their employer treats them. For instance, where unfavourable attitudes and personality traits are condoned in the university, there is a tendency for other employees to copy the same, which will impede performance and affect other employee outcomes negatively. Likewise, suppose the university's leadership upholds ethical standards and communicates effectively with all employees. In that case, the employees will equally learn the ethical culture and how to communicate effectively within the university. This will consequently enhance positive employee outcomes in terms of performance, satisfaction with the job, reduced counterproductive behaviour, reduced turnover intention and increased employee commitment.

3. Research Methods

The methodology used in this study was a survey. The 'what is' and 'what was' questions asked in a survey enable researchers to explain the study scenario and provide the necessary facts. This research focused on the 2,533 professors and faculty members at a subset of private institutions in South-West Nigeria. Umukoro (2019) makes a case for why university professors and staff were selected as respondents: they are members of the "creative class" of their communities, which plays a crucial role in driving innovation and, ultimately, economic prosperity. Inferentially, their results are essential to the development and survival of 123 educational institutions. Since most universities in Nigeria are located in the South-West, that's where we've focused our attention. Lembani (2019) confirmed this rationale, writing that

private institutions are disproportionately located in the Southwestern region of Nigeria, an area with a high concentration of political and economic activity. Except for Ogun State (which has the most private universities in the South-West), where we chose two institutions (the oldest and the best rated), we chose the oldest private university in each South-West state to represent them in this research. Each state's universities were chosen on the basis that they are still standing after the first stages of university development. The suggested sample size (n) for this investigation was 334 based on the following parameters: 95% confidence level; population size (N) = 2,533; margin of error () = 5%. The sample size was raised by 40% (from 86 to 134) to account for attrition, as suggested by Odumosu (2020). Therefore, 334 + 134 = 468 participants were included in the final sample.

The chosen private institutions were able to provide replies thanks to the snowball sampling method. Due to the limitations of Covid 19, the researcher's inability to personally recognise every academic staff member in the selected universities, and a limited time frame for the study, the technique was used to gain access to participants (the respondents) who would otherwise be very difficult to reach. Primary data were used in this investigation. This study's major data collecting strategy relied on in-person interviews with respondents to acquire first-hand accounts that were unique, up-to-date, and trustworthy. Respondents were also given sufficient time to provide their replies. An adjusted structured questionnaire was used to collect the data for the investigation. (Table 1).

Table 1. Sources of Adapted Questionnaire

| Sources of Instrument | |
|--|--|
| Independent variable (Workplace Conflict Factors) | |
| Personality | Gosling, Rentfrow, and Swann (2003) |
| Rewards | Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, and Lance (2010); Morgan, Dill, and Kalleberg (2013). |
| Work Environment | Kanten and ülker (2013); Morgan et al (2013); Namutebi (2019). |
| Leadership Style (Ethical Leadership) | Brown, Treviño, and Harrison (2005) |
| Communication | Meintjes and Steyn (2006) |
| Dependent Variable (Employee Outcomes) | |
| Job Performance | Namutebi (2019) |
| Job Satisfaction | Wang and Browner (2019) |
| Counterproductive Work Behaviour | Namutebi (2019). |
| Turnover Intention | Brough and Frame (2004) |
| Commitment | Allen and Meyer (1990) |
| Moderating Variable | |
| Organisational Justice | Ogbechie and Adefisayo (2018). |

To ascertain and confirm the face and content validity of the instrument of this study, the researcher obtained the view of fellow researchers, the researcher's supervisors and other experts in the field of Human resources Management and statistics. It was advised that the questionnaire items be reworded, some removed, and the scale should be re-evaluated. This was taken into consideration, and the instrument was adjusted accordingly. They all evaluated the questionnaire for its usability and applicability for the study before it was uploaded online

for the pilot study.

The instrument was further subjected to construct validity, and the result is as stated in Table 1, which shows that the constructs (variables) were well transformed into a functioning and operating reality that aids the objective of the assessment.

The instrument was further subjected to construct validity, and the result is as stated in Table 2, which shows that the constructs (variables) were well transformed into a functioning and operating reality that aids the objective of the assessment. Several correlation coefficients over 0.3 in the correlation matrix indicated that the data were suitable for component analysis, and Exploratory component Analysis (EFA) was utilised to statistically confirm the concept validity. Sample size and instrument validity were evaluated using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. These tests establish whether the research instruments' statements measure what they claim to measure. The values obtained were more than the suggested value of 0.6 (Pallant, 2011), indicating that the research instrument of each variable measured the correct quantities. At the 0.001 level of significance, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity failed. Moreover, half of the variations shown in the items may be attributed to their respective constructions, as indicated by an AVE of 0.528 to 0.880 (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sanstedt, 2017). Convergent validity of the questionnaire was determined using several tests and values.

Table 2. Construct Validity Result

| Variables | No of items | KMO | Bartlett Test | AVE |
|----------------------------------|-------------|-------|---------------|-------|
| Personality | 5 | 0.652 | 0.000 | 0.528 |
| Rewards | 6 | 0.670 | 0.000 | 0.692 |
| Work Environment | 6 | 0.802 | 0.000 | 0.745 |
| Leadership Style | 6 | 0.730 | 0.000 | 0.808 |
| Communication | 6 | 0.719 | 0.000 | 0.713 |
| Job Performance | 6 | 0.740 | 0.000 | 0.764 |
| Job Satisfaction | 6 | 0.746 | 0.000 | 0.833 |
| Counterproductive Work Behaviour | 6 | 0.854 | 0.000 | 0.880 |
| Turnover Intention | 6 | 0.839 | 0.000 | 0.858 |
| Commitment | 6 | 0.702 | 0.000 | 0.824 |
| Organisational Justice | 6 | 0.789 | 0.000 | 0.740 |

Consistent measurement across the questionnaire's multiple items was ensured by testing the instrument's reliability. The dependability of the scale was calculated using Cronbach's alpha. Internal dependability may be assessed by using a statistic called Cronbach's Alpha (Bujang, Omar, & Baharum, 2018).

Higher Cronbach's Alpha values indicate that the items are measuring the same dimension and range from 0 to 1. Table 3 presents the results of the Cronbach's Alpha test for the research instrument's internal consistency. As shown in Table 3, the instrument also underwent a composite reliability test.

Table 3. Internal Consistency Reliability Result

| Variables | No of items | Cronbach's Alpha | No of items | Composite Reliability |
|-------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Personality | 5 | 0.613 | 5 | 0.8039 |
| Rewards | 6 | 0.849 | 6 | 0.9116 |

| Variables | No of items | Cronbach's Alpha | No of items | Composite Reliability |
|----------------------------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Work Environment | 6 | 0.843 | 6 | 0.8902 |
| Leadership Style | 6 | 0.864 | 6 | 0.9081 |
| Communication | 6 | 0.858 | 6 | 0.9128 |
| Job Performance | 6 | 0.791 | 6 | 0.9056 |
| Job Satisfaction | 6 | 0.911 | 6 | 0.9320 |
| Counterproductive Work Behaviour | 6 | 0.956 | 6 | 0.9652 |
| Turnover Intention | 6 | 0.928 | 6 | 0.9448 |
| Commitment | 6 | 0.762 | 6 | 0.9486 |
| Organisational Justice | 6 | 0.906 | 6 | 0.9091 |

Both descriptive and multivariate statistics were used in this study's analysis. Data attributes were summarised using descriptive statistics to highlight response variance across research participants. A Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) technique was utilised to test the hypotheses using Analysis of Moment Structure (AMOS) software version 28 to establish model coherence with the data and concurrently quantify impacts across constructs. Using structural equation modelling, we may test many hypotheses simultaneously (Altura et al., 2020).

3.1. Model Specification

There were three types of variables included in the analysis: those that were considered independent, those that were considered dependent, and those that were considered moderating. Personality, incentives, work environment, leadership style, and communication contribute to Workplace Conflict Factors (X). Employee Outcomes (Y) is a dependent variable that includes performance, contentment, disruptive behaviour, intention to leave, and dedication. Organisational Justice (Z) is a moderating factor.

$$Y_1 = f(x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4, x_5)$$

$$Y_1 = \beta_0 + \beta_1x_1 + \beta_2x_2 + \beta_3x_3 + \beta_4x_4 + \beta_5x_5 + e_1$$

$$CMT_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1PSN + \beta_2RWD + \beta_3WKE + \beta_4LDS + \beta_5COM + e_i \dots\dots\dots \text{Equation 5}$$

$$Y = f(X)$$

$$EO = f(WCF)$$

$$Y = f(x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4, x_5)$$

$$EOT_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1PS + \beta_2RW + \beta_3WE + \beta_4LS + \beta_5CM + e_i \dots\dots\dots \text{Equation 6}$$

$$Y = f(X, XZ)$$

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_zZ_1 + \beta_zX + \beta_zXZ_1 + e_1$$

$$EOT_i = \beta_0 + \beta_zORJ + \beta_zWCF + \beta_zWCF*ORJ + e_i \dots\dots\dots \text{Equation 7}$$

Where

$$Y = (y_1, y_2, y_3, y_4, y_5)$$

$$EOT = (JPF, JST, CWB, TIN, CMT)$$

$$X = (x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4, x_5)$$

$$WCF = (PSN, RWD, WKE, LDS, COM)$$

$$Z = ORJ$$

3.2. Apiori Expectations

In conformity with the hypotheses formulated, it is expected that workplace conflict factors (personality, rewards, work environment, leadership style and communication) will affect employee outcomes (job performance, job satisfaction, counterproductive work behaviour, turnover intention, and commitment) of the academic staff of selected private universities in South-West Nigeria in alignment with the social exchange theory. However, the effect could be positive in which case $\beta_1 - \beta_5 > 0$ or negative, $\beta_1 - \beta_5 < 0$.

Test of Normality

Table 4. Test of Normality using skewness and kurtosis

| Variables | Skewness | Kurtosis |
|----------------------------------|----------|----------|
| Personality | -.415 | -.235 |
| Rewards | -.815 | 2.306 |
| Work Environment | -.563 | .596 |
| Leadership Style | -.909 | 1.189 |
| Communication | -.387 | -.085 |
| Job Performance | -.466 | -.162 |
| Job Satisfaction | -.698 | .662 |
| Counterproductive Work Behaviour | .213 | -.671 |
| Turnover Intention | .324 | -.927 |
| Commitment | -.222 | .161 |
| Organisational Justice | -.500 | -.086 |

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Hypothesis One (Ho1):

Workplace conflict factors do not significantly affect employee counterproductive work behaviour in selected private universities in South-West Nigeria.

To examine the third hypothesis, we used full structural equation modelling (SEM) to examine the relationship between counterproductive work behaviour (the dependent variable) and workplace conflict factors (the independent variables). Table 5 and Figure1 detail the findings, drawing attention to the path coefficients, standard errors, adjusted R-squares, T-statistics, p-values, and model fit estimation statistics. The conclusion reached about this speculation is also given.

Table 5. Summary of interactions Between Workplace conflict factors and Counterproductive Work Behaviour

| | | | Estimate | S.E. | C.R. | P |
|------------------|------|-----------|----------|-------|--------|-------|
| Counterworkbehav | <--- | Persnlty | 0.061 | 0.219 | 0.786 | 0.432 |
| Counterworkbehav | <--- | Rewards | 0.018 | 0.228 | 0.163 | 0.87 |
| Counterworkbehav | <--- | WorkEnv | -0.278 | 0.24 | -1.985 | 0.047 |
| Counterworkbehav | <--- | LeadStyle | -0.1 | 0.144 | -1.352 | 0.176 |
| Counterworkbehav | <--- | Communtns | 0.012 | 0.224 | 0.113 | 0.91 |

*** indicates $p = 0.000$

Source: SPSS AMOS Results (2023)

Employees at a few private institutions in South-West Nigeria were surveyed to determine whether workplace conflict elements (factors such as one's character, motivation, workplace, management method, and interpersonal skills) were associated with counterproductive job conduct. Employees at certain choice private colleges in South-West Nigeria were shown to be adversely yet substantially impacted by their work environment ($\beta = -0.278$, $t = -1.985$, $p = 0.047$). There is a negative correlation between a positive work atmosphere and unproductive activity. However, leadership style ($\beta = -0.1$, $t = -1.352$, $p = 0.176$) had a significant negative effect on employees' counterproductive work behaviour, while personality ($\beta = 0.061$, $t = 0.786$, $p = 0.432$), rewards ($\beta = 0.018$, $t = 0.163$, $p = 0.87$), and communication ($\beta = 0.012$, $t = 0.113$, $p = 0.91$) was insignificantly positive. This finding indicates that selected private universities in the South-West should focus more on the work environment to reduce or prevent counterproductive work behaviours in the universities. Less attention should be paid to the employee's personality traits, rewards, leadership style and communication to attain the best employee outcomes in preventing or reducing counterproductive work behaviour. The modified R^2 value for "workplace conflict factors" reveals that they explain 9.2% of the variability in workers' unproductive conduct at work in selected private institutions in South-West Nigeria. The results showed that when all the components were considered, there was a propensity to impact only a 9.2% change in the unproductive work behaviours of workers at chosen private institutions in the South-West of Nigeria. All the fit indices, such as CFI, SRMR and RMSEA, were used to determine how well the model suited the route. The goodness of Fit statistics for the structural model were as follows: $P_{close} = 0.015$, $SRMR = 0.0548$, $RMSEA = 0.056$, $CFI = 0.915$, $GFI = 0.844$, $CMIN/DF = 2.115$ and $CMIN = 1063.921$). There was no major deviation from the advised ranges for the model fit indices. The resulting structural regression model may be written as:

$$CWB = \beta_0 + 0.061PSN + 0.018RWD - 0.278WKE - 0.1LDS + 0.012COM \dots \text{eq. 4.3a (Predictive Model)}$$

$$CWB = \beta_0 - 0.278WKE \dots \text{eq. 4.3b (Prescriptive Model)}$$

Where:

CWB = Counterproductive work behaviour

PSN = Personality

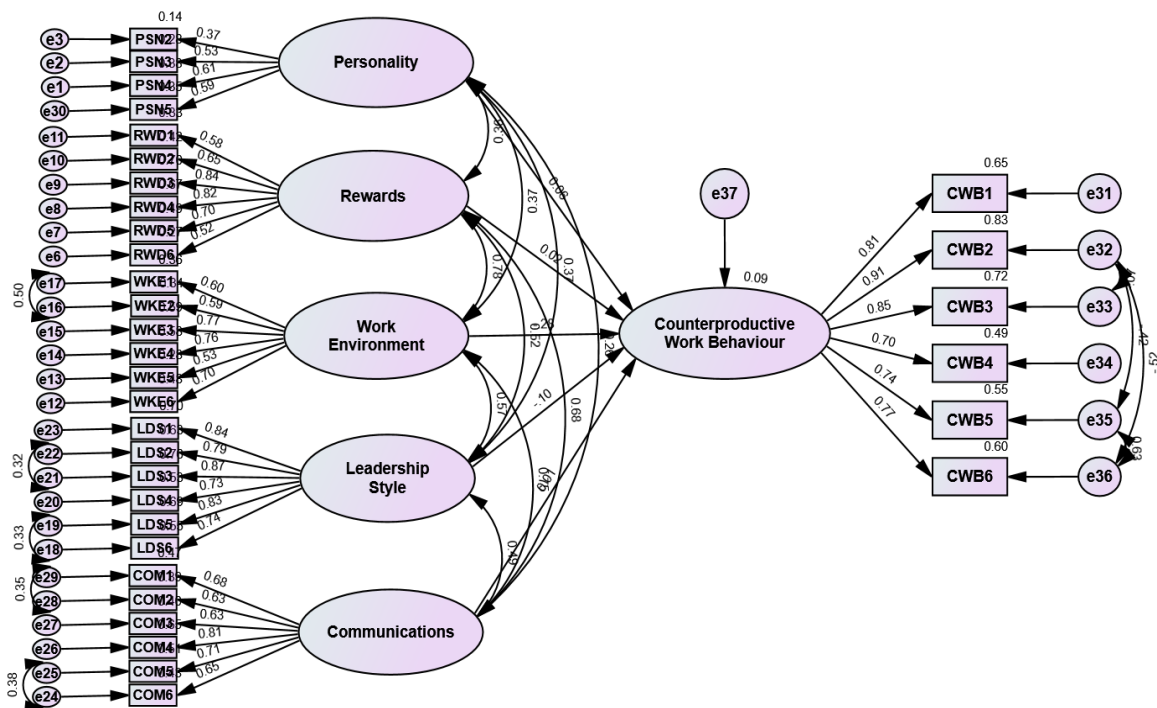
RWD = Rewards

WKE = Work environment

LDS = Leadership Style

COM = Communication

Employees' disruptive actions at work may be predicted by looking at the relationship between communication, leadership style, work environment, rewards, and personality in the workplace (equation 4.3a). However, personality, incentives, management style, and dialogue did not play a role in the results. According to the prescriptive model (equation 4.3b), modifying the workplace environment by one-unit results in a 0.278 reduction in unproductive conduct for workers at a few chosen private colleges in South-West Nigeria. At the 5% significance level used in this investigation, the t -value for the variable was more than the 1.96 standard value, indicating that workplace conflict factors significantly affect employees' counterproductive work behaviour at selected private universities in South-West Nigeria. As a result, we cannot accept the third null hypothesis (H_{01}), which claims that the variables contributing to workplace conflict have no substantial impact on employees' unproductive conduct in a subset of private universities in South-West Nigeria. The updated R^2 value, indicator loadings, and structural route coefficients are all summarised in figure 1.



$P_{close} = 0.015$, $SRMR = 0.0548$, $RMSEA = 0.056$, $CFI = 0.915$, $GFI = 0.844$, $CMIN/DF = 2.115$ and $CMIN = 1063.921$

Figure 1: SEM Structural Path Coefficients – Workplace Conflict Factors and employee outcomes

Source: AuthorsAnalysis (2023)

4.2. Discussion

Full structural equation modelling for the impact of workplace conflict factors on employee outcomes at selected private universities in South-West Nigeria yielded statistically significant results (Adj. $R^2 = 0.74$; $P_{close} = 0.015$, $SRMR = 0.0548$, $RMSEA = 0.056$, $CFI = 0.915$, $GFI = 0.844$, $CMIN/DF = 2.115$ and $CMIN = 1063.921$, $p < 0.05$). Workplace conflict characteristics were shown to be significant determinants of employee outcomes at certain Southwestern Nigerian private institutions. Conceptually, many scholars (Berta et al., 2018; Gupta and Gupta, 2020; Lien, 2017; Miedaner et al., 2018; Said et al., 2016; Wilkins et al., 2017) have examined the relationship between workplace conflict factors and employee outcomes (job performance, job satisfaction, counterproductive work behaviour, turnover intention, and commitment) in different sectors, countries and with varying findings.

This study's results are consistent with those of other research on employee outcomes, such as that conducted by Said et al. (2016), who found that personality, organisational structure, and communication conflicts all have a role in the productivity of UITM Terengganu's non-academic employees in Dungun. Further findings from the research confirmed that communication is the most important component in conflict and the primary cause of negative effects on work performance. It's in line with Gupta and Gupta's (2020) larger finding that managers' extraversion, anxiety, diligence, receptivity to experience, and agreeableness all have a role in how they perform on the job. This study's results are consistent with those of Lien (2017), who found that lecturers' appreciation and openness to feedback significantly increased their work happiness.

While Worimegbe et al. (2021) claimed that variances in employees' commitment might be explained by their unique traits and work experiences, it was shown that individuals' commitment to their organisations was influenced by the support they received from their managers and peers. In agreement with some findings of Onoyase (2017) on the investigation of motivation and job performance of lecturers in Nigerian universities, Onoyase et al. (2017) found that lecturers in Nigerian tertiary institutions were not motivated by their work environment, which included things like effectively furnished workplaces, well-equipped seminar accommodations, and the presence of Information Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure. With the results of this research corroborated by conceptual, empirical, and theoretical contributions from the existing body of literature, it was determined that variables contributing to workplace conflict substantially impacted employee outcomes at a subset of private colleges in South-West Nigeria.

4.3. Hypothesis Two (H₀₂):

Workplace conflict factors do not affect employee outcomes in selected private universities in South-West Nigeria as moderated by organisational justice.

Full structural equation modelling (SEM) using the maximum likelihood estimation procedures was utilised in testing hypothesis seven with employee outcomes (mean of job performance, job satisfaction, counterproductive work behaviour, turnover intention, and commitment) as the dependent variable, workplace conflict factors (communication, leadership style, work environment, rewards and mean of personality,) as the independent variable and organisational justice as the moderating variable. Table 6 and Figure 2 summarise the findings, drawing attention to significant values for the path coefficients, standard error squared, T-statistics, p-values, and the model fit estimation statistic. The conclusion reached about this speculation is also given.

Table 6. Summary of interactions between Workplace conflict factors and Employee Outcomes as moderated by Organisational Justice

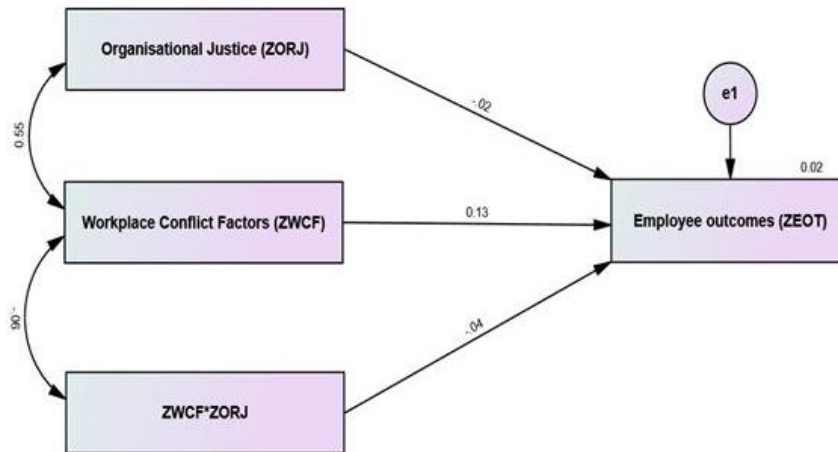
| | | | Estimate | S.E. | C.R. | P |
|------|------|-----------|----------|------|--------|-------|
| ZEOT | <--- | ZORJ | -0.017 | .063 | -0.268 | .0789 |
| ZEOT | <--- | ZWCF_ZORJ | -0.039 | .044 | -0.743 | .0458 |
| ZEOT | <--- | ZWCF | 0.13 | .064 | 2.043 | O.041 |

*** indicates $p = 0.000$

Source: SPSS AMOS Results (2023)

Organisational justice attenuated the influence of workplace conflict elements on employee outcomes at a subset of private universities in South-West Nigeria, as shown in Table 4.25 of the SEM regression analysis. Employee outcomes were unaffected by organisational fairness ($\beta = -0.017$, $t = -0.268$, $p = 0.789 > 0.05$). Similarly, the linkage between organisational justice and workplace conflict factor did not affect employee outcomes of selected private colleges in South-West Nigeria ($\beta = -0.039$, $t = -0.743$, $p = 0.458 > 0.05$). This result shows that neither organisational justice (ZORJ) nor combining ZORJ with workplace conflict variables (ZWCF* ZORJ) impacted employee outcomes. In summary, the fit indices (CFI, SRMR and RMSEA) decided how well the model suited the route. Goodness of Fit statistics for the structural model were ($P_{close} = 0.302$, $CMIN = 2.192$, $SRMR = 0.0285$, $RMSEA = 0.058$, $CFI = 0.991$, $GFI = 0.997$, $CMIN/DF = 2.192$, $P > 0.05$). Organisational justice (ZORJ; $t = -0.268$, $p = 0.789 > 0.05$) and how it interacts with workplace conflict (ZWCF* ZORJ; $t = -0.743$, $p = 0.458 > 0.05$) were both found to have t-values lower than the 1.96 standard value at the 5% significant level, which is the decision rule used in the structural path analysis,

suggesting that workplace conflict factors do not affect employee outcomes in selected private universities in So H02, that workplace conflict elements do not effect employee outcomes as regulated by organisational justice in selected private institutions in South-West Nigeria, is not rejected. Figure 4.25 shows a summary of the structural route coefficients, indicator loadings, and corrected R2 that will be explored further below.



Pclose = 0.302, CMIN = 2.192, SRMR = 0.0285, RMSEA = 0.058, CFI = 0.991, GFI = 0.997, CMIN/DF = 2.192,, $P > 0.05$). Organisational justice (ZORJ; $t = 0-0.268$, $p = 0.789 > 0.0$

Figure 2. SEM Structural Path Coefficients – Workplace conflict factors and Employee Outcomes as moderated by Organisational Justice
Source: Researcher's Field Survey Results (2023)

4.4. Discussion

The results reveal the effect of workplace conflict factors on employee outcomes in selected private universities in South-West Nigeria as moderated by organisational justice. The t-value for organisational justice and the hypothesis were tested using a full SEM model. The results revealed that workplace conflict factors do not affect employee outcomes in selected private universities in South-West Nigeria as moderated by organisational justice ($Adj. R^2 = 0.017$; Pclose = 0.302, CMIN = 2.192, SRMR = 0.0285, RMSEA = 0.058, CFI = 0.991, GFI = 0.997, CMIN/DF = 2.192, $P > 0.05$). Organisational justice (ZORJ; $t = 0-0.268$, $p = 0.789 > 0.0$). Comparing Figure 4.24 with Table 4.25 and Figure 4.25 shows that workplace conflict factors had a positive effect ($R^2=0.074$) on employee outcomes (Figure 4.24). However, in Table 4.25 and Figure 4.25, it was revealed that although workplace conflict factors affected employee outcomes, the effect had reduced ($R^2=0.017$) with the introduction of the moderating variable organisational justice (ZORJ) and the interaction variable (ZWCF*ZORJ) which were both not significant based on the result of the analysis. The findings, therefore, revealed that organisational justice did not moderate the effect of workplace conflict factors on employee outcomes of universities in South-West Nigeria.

Empirically several scholars (Boateng & Hsieh, 2019; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Cropanzano, & Greenberg, 1997; Monanu et al., 2015; Ogbechie & Adefisayo, 2018; Quratulain et al., 2019; Shalini & Sinha, 2018; Sultana et al. (2021) Swalhi et al., 2017; Wiriattmaja et al., 2021) have demonstrated that important relationships exist between perceptions of fairness, workplace conflict factors and the different measures of employee outcomes. Relating the findings of this study to the research by Boateng and Hsieh (2019), it was revealed that

distributive and interactional fairness was not found to predict commitment. Also, Ogbechie and Adefisayo (2018) revealed that interactional justice was the only significant predictor of job satisfaction. On the other hand, Leader-member exchange (LMX) was shown to partly mediate the relationship between all aspects of justice and employee outcomes, with procedural justice being the most reliable indicator of employee outcomes in banks operating in the public sector and the least effective driver in private sector banks, according to research by Shalini and Sinha (2018).

From the viewpoint of intent to leave, Wiriatmaja et al. (2021) found that managerial ethics, career equitable distribution, and confidence in leader have a substantial impact on turnover intent that is and that trust in leader regulates the influence of career distributive justice. Heron et al. (2018) found similar results, finding that both organisational justice facets and interpersonal disputes were significantly related to overall job satisfaction. Different studies have shown that more equitable organisations have happier, more productive employees and fewer conflicts. The results of this study, which found that workplace conflict factors did not influence employee outcomes as moderated by organisational justice in selected private universities in South-West Nigeria, add to the growing body of evidence demonstrating the lack of consensus in this field and pointing to the need for more investigation. While we did not find a moderating impact in this investigation, future studies may reveal such an effect.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Workplace conflict characteristics were shown to substantially affect employee outcomes at a subset of private institutions in South-West Nigeria. This study concludes that employees at selected private universities in South-West Nigeria are affected in various ways by workplace conflict factors (communication, leadership style, work environment, rewards and mean of personality). The study concludes, in broad strokes, that addressing the causes of workplace conflicts (workplace conflict factors) has the potential to improve individual employee outcomes and organisational outcomes at private universities. These considerations are important at private institutions since they may help avoid conflicts and improve working conditions. The results of this research also lend credence to the idea of reciprocity, the cornerstone of the social exchange theory (SET). This means that when private universities hire academic staff based on desirable personality traits, pay them competitive salaries, provide a pleasant working environment, promote ethical leadership, and have an efficient and effective communication system, they will benefit from increased productivity and decreased conflict among their faculty and staff.

This research suggests that universities that want to foster employee loyalty must develop and execute effective incentive systems. To motivate workers as much as possible, the incentive system should consider all forms of motivation (monetary, physical, emotional, and psychological). Employees are more likely to be invested in the university if they clearly understand its mission and financial health; thus, this information should be available. Employees' input should be sought and valued and given timely access to all relevant information. It is recommended that the entirety of workplace conflict factors used in this study be taken seriously and worked upon by the owners and managers of private universities to achieve maximum outcomes for employees because all of the workplace conflict factors have contributed uniquely to different indicators of employee outcome. Those desiring to partner with private universities, such as investors, parents and intending students, should actively seek information on the existence and intensity of issues relating to these workplace conflict factors in the private university they seek to partner with. This ensures that they get

value for their investment in the institutions and do not find themselves entangled in a university riddled with conflict arising from these factors and having poor employee outcomes.

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