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# ORGANIZATIONAL DEVIANCE: ORGANIZATIONAL SPIRITUALITY THE PANACEA

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## Abstract

*This paper investigates how organizational spirituality can cure and eradicate organizational deviance in the organization. Causes and remedies of organizational deviance were mentioned. The concept of organizational spirituality and organizational deviance were extensively discussed. The Agency theory by Stephen and Mitnick was used to explain the positive influence of organizational spirituality on organizational deviance. The secondary method of data collection was used. It was concluded that the organizational spirituality is a strong remedy and cure to organizational deviance. It was recommended that open communication system should be established in order to give employee sense of belonging and involvement, constant and forceful ethical behavior training should be introduced so as to reduce deviant behavior such lateness, stealing, properties vandalization and sexual harassment and unethical and deviant behaviour should be punished and ethical behaviour should be rewarded accordingly.*

**Keywords: Organizational Deviance, Organizational Spirituality, Workplace Misconduct, Spiritual Leadership**



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## 1.0 Introduction

Organizations are not reluctant to practice spirituality owing to its religious connotation. The terms spirituality at work, spirit at work, workplace spirituality and spirituality in the workplace are used interchangeably in the organizational behaviour literature. Organizational spirituality is not related to a particular religion or religious group but it is the awareness that employees have inner life (personal needs and values) which are fostered by meaningful work in the form of neighbourhood and togetherness. Spirit at work is consistent drive for the attainment of purpose in life. Neck and Millian (1994) supported that spirit at work is a continuous striving for the achievement of a generic perception of reality and purposeful work in the organization. That is to say, spirituality is the feeling of being connected, with one's full self, co-workers and the organization at large.

Organizational deviance is an activity which deviates from formal goals required standards and expectations which leads to lower productivity than expected (Brady, 2010). Ali (2016) also noted that deviant behaviour is sharing of the confidential information with unauthorized people, stealing from workplace, ratting the workplace and ignoring the manager decisions. Organizational deviant behaviours are sexual harassment, lying, disobedience, gossiping, theft and sabotage as well as sambo personality behaviour.

In the organization, deviant behaviour to the employees is called interpersonal deviations. This occur when individual or group of individual go against or harm the individual interests through harassment, stealing of personal property, verbal abuse accusing others and physical attack on group members. Again, deviant behaviour in the organization is called organizational deviations. This occurs when members of the organization intentional violate rules, vandalize properties in the organizations and destroy the image of the organization.

Several studies have explained the relationship between organizational spirituality and organizational deviance in different sectors and countries. Astute, Maryati and Harsono (2020) carried out a study on the effect of workplace spirituality on deviant behaviour and employee performance; the roles of job satisfaction. The study revealed that workplace spirituality affect workplace deviant behaviour and job satisfaction. Ahmad and Omar (2014) carried out a study on reducing deviant behaviour through workplace spirituality and job satisfaction. The paper revealed that workplace spirituality negatively relates to deviant behaviour and positive relates to job satisfaction. Again, Ali (2016) also studied organizational deviance and multi-factor leadership. The results show that organizational deviant negatively relates to transformational and interactional leadership styles and a positive relationship between organizational deviance and laisszer –fair leadership styles.

This paper is out to explain how organizational spirituality can reduce organizational deviance. It also solves the problem of deviant behaviour, low commitment, job satisfaction and poor performance in the organization.

## 2.0 Review of Related Literature

### 2.1 Theoretical framework

#### 2.1.1 Agency theory by Stephen Rose and Barry Mitnick (1976).

This theory sees employees as agents and employers as principals. The relationship between employees and employers are best explained by agency theory. The theory explain that if the employees are given the opportunities, it will behave deviance and if employers given

opportunities, deviant behaviour will be reduced through proper monitoring and implementation of control mechanisms (Mitnick, 2013). According to this theory, deviant behavior can be checked and curtailed with a strong spiritual workplace. This theory is suitable for the study because it describes relationship between employers (principals) and employees (agents). It vividly explains the effect of workplace spirituality on deviant behaviour in the organization because a good relationship with employees will enhance a productive workplace and reduce counter-productive behaviour.

## 2.2 The Concept of Organizational Deviance

Organizational deviance is the mismatch of workers behaviour with the rules and regulations of the organization. Ali (2016) supported that organizational deviance is defined as mismatch of employees' behaviour with the rules and expectation of the organization. Organizational deviance is also any intentional act exhibited by an individual or groups of individual that violates vital policies, rules and regulations in the organization. It is an unethical behaviour such counterproductive behaviour which are capable of threaten survival and performance of an organization.
Organizational deviance can be positive or negative to some extents. Organizational deviance is positive and beneficial to the organization when employees condemn poor management, disobey non-functional orders, criticize injustice and unfair treatment as well as go against informal processes and procedure in the organization. Organizational deviant behaviour such as gossiping enabled the manager to attain vital and useful information about the occurrences in organization. Deviate behaviour also promotes fast decision making process because it allowed disobedient to rules that are not inline the quick goals achievement.

In the organization, deviance behaviour may be either constructive or destructive and positive or negative in nature (Muati, 2011). In the same, Apperbeam, Iaconi and Matousek (2017) also classified organizational deviance as positive or negative and constructive or destructive. Deviance behaviour is positive or constructive when workers involve in active innovative behaviour that go against the corporate culture and rules which also enhance creativity and general performance posture deviant behaviour also criticizing incompetent manager and non-adherence to dysfunctional directives from managers. On the other hand, negative and d estructivebehaviour is when workers intentionally embezzle, harass and vandalize properties in the organization.

Organizational deviance can be conceptualized as political deviance, production deviance, property deviance and personal aggression (hostile or aggressive behaviour). Osibanso, Falola, Akiribode and Adenisi (2015) noted that the above forms of organizational deviance can harm the organization reputation and have negative outcome in the organization. Deviant behaviour in the workplace evolved as a result of so many factors such as job stress, unfair treatment, low salary, group conflict, job dissatisfaction and poor management.

## 2.3 Causes of Deviant Behaviour

1. Poor management
2. Resistance to organizational change
3. Organizational Bankruptcy
4. Weak Leadership/ high organizational politics
5. Organizational conflict

### 2.4 Ways to Reduce Deviant Behaviour

1. Establish open communication system
2. Create sense of belonging through job involvement and effective participation
3. Punish unethical behavior and reward ethical behaviour
4. Assertiveness and consistent training on the negative effects of deviant behaviour on employees and the entire organization performance.

### 2.5 The concept of Organizational Spirituality

Organizational spirituality is the understanding that employee have inner life (persona values and needs as well as feelings) and is nourished by meaningful work and a good work condition. According to Gupta, Kumar and Singh (2013) organizational spirituality is about employee having strong connection and attachment to the organization through sense of belonging and purposeful work. The paper identified sense of belonging, meaningful work, values alignment and transcendence as dimensions of organizational spirituality.

Some benefits of workplace spirituality are (a) a spiritual organization will become a place for meaning – base work and purpose – driven. (b) a spiritual organization will replace love-based culture to fear-based culture (c) spirituality enables management to value workers based on who they are (d) it increases employee morale, loyalty and employee job satisfaction as well as generic productivity of the organization (e) it allows managers to treat subordinates in a respectful and responsible way because workers are seen as very important resource (f) it establishes a genuine willingness to reflect on the purpose of life and alignment of values with that of the organization (g) spirituality in the workplace enable decision making process and management practices to be consistent with work spiritual value such as love, respect, honesty and trust (h) it enable employees to bring their soul, spirit and heart to work they do because it serves a greater purpose in life.

Organizational spirituality is divided into three levels such as individual level, group level and organizational level. Spirituality in the organization is very crucial and useful because it connect personal values to the organizational values which in turn reduces unwanted deviant behaviours such as stealing, gossiping, lateness, absenteeism, favouritism, sexual harassment, physical violence, sabotage and verbal harassment.

### 2.6 Organizational Spirituality as a Panacea Organizational Deviance.

There is a link between organizational spirituality and organizational deviance because the causes of deviant behaviour in the workplace can be vividly minimized through the introduction of spirituality in the organization (Nwizia, 2021). Li and Chen (2018) noted that factors that lead to deviant behaviour can be reduced through workplace spirituality because organizational spirituality positively influences organizational deviance. Organizational spirituality limits and goes against deviants behaviours as well as creates sense of belonging among employees. Ahmad and Omar (2014) supported that organizational spirituality enables employees to control their behaviour and avoid counter-productivity behaviour. Septa (2018) also maintained that organizational spirituality generates ethicalbehaviour and reduce deviant behavioursuch as stealing in the organization.

Organizational spirituality promote employee positive work attitude such as job satisfaction, job involvement and employee commitment which reduce lateness and absenteeism. Nwizia (2021) stressed that organizational spirituality boost employee willingness to stay in the organization and provide emotional job involvement to employees. He further stated that

organizations that support a spiritual work environment will benefits from employees and achieve a less prone to deviant behaviour. Deviant behaviour is an intentional act and also personal interest activities that aimed at achieving goals through informal channels. It is behaviours that go against organizational rules and regulations as well as policies and procedures that guide behaviours. Spiritual employees and managers are against deviant behaviour because a spiritual organization encourages the alignment of workers objectives and values to the organization. It creates oneness, harmony, and conflict free work environment. Nwizia (2021) support that organization that establishes alignment between employee value and organizational value will enjoy employee effective commitment.

Organizational spirituality can reduce organizational deviance through the employee personal development and training, building of mutual trust among employees and between employees and employers, employee motivation (good working condition and satisfactory/fair compensation), provision of job security and supportive work environment, alignment of employees values with organizational values, creating sense of belonging and oneness among worker, creating a meaningful work, love and care and formulating disciplinary actions against deviant behaviour. Obisi cited in Osibanjo et al., (2015) supported that deviant behaviours can be reduced through good working atmosphere, job security, recognition, opportunity for personal growth, supported organizational culture and workplace harmony.

When the above are not provided by the organization, employees tend to express their grievance and displeasure through a negative activities political, property and production deviance as well as personal aggression. It is therefore, crucial for organizations to build a spiritual workplace that will consider the needs and feelings of employee also provide work environment that gives meaningful work (sense of purposeful work) to the employees.

## 3.0 Methodology

The theoretical research method was used in this study. This method enhances the investigations of assumptions on previous works of other scholars related toorganizational deviance andorganizational spirituality.

## 4.0 Conclusion

The paper concludes that the organizational spirituality is a strong remedy and cure to organizational deviance. It was revealed that spirituality in the organization promotes open communication system and employees alignment with organizational value which on the other hand reduces deviant behaviours.

### 4.1 Recommendations

1. Open communication system should be established in order to give employee sense of belonging and involvement.
2. Constant and forceful ethical behavior training should be introduced so as to reduce deviant behavior such lateness, stealing, properties vandalization and sexual harassment.
3. Unethical and deviant behaviourshould be punished and ethical behaviour should be rewarded accordingly.

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