What goes around comes around: The contributions of abusive supervision and equity sensitivity to counterproductive work behaviour

Ike E. Onyishi
Department of Psychology
University of Nigeria, Nsukka
Ikeonyishi@yahoo.com

Fabian O. Ugwu
Department of Psychology
Benue State University, Makurdi
&
Pamela N. Anike
Department of Psychology
University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Abstract

A survey of 215 workers drawn from the banking sector in Enugu metropolis was conducted to explore the contributions of abusive supervision and equity sensitivity to counterproductive work behaviour. Questionnaire was used to elicit information from the participants. Results of regression analyses show that there was a significant relationship between abusive supervision and counterproductive work behaviour. Also there was a significant relationship between equity sensitivity and counterproductive work behaviour. Implications and limitations of these findings were discussed and directions for further research were suggested.

In the present day global economic recession that has seen the collapse of many businesses, broadening of production capacity seems to hold the key to the survival of many organizations. But several issues seem to diminish organizations' chances of maintaining production capacity and/ or improving it. Such an issue, as has been identified by researchers, is counterproductive work behaviour (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997; Spector, Fox, Penney, Bruursema, Goh, & Kessler, 2006), viewed as behaviour that is intended to have a far-reaching implication on organizations and their members. It can include overt acts such as aggression and theft or more passive acts, such as purposely failing to follow instructions or doing work incorrectly. Counterproductive Work Behaviour (CWB) has been conceptualized in different ways by different researchers such as organizational aggression (Neuman & Baron, 1998; Fox & Spec tor, 1999),

antisocial behaviour (Giacalone & Greenberg, 1997), delinquency (Hogan & Hogan, 1989), deviance (Hollinger, 1986; Robinson & Bennett, 1995), retaliation (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997), revenge (Bies, Tripp, & Kramer. 1997), and mobbing/bullying (Knorz & Zapf, 1996). Researchers (e.g., Giacalone & Greenberg, 1997; Murphy, 1993) have also considered lying and stealing or negative aspects of performance as part of a constellation of counterproductive behaviours that includes arson, bribery, blackmail, discrimination, fraud, violence, sabotage, harassment of co-workers and even some form of whistle-blowing.

Counterproductive work behaviour is one of such vindictive retaliatory behaviours employees engage in to reciprocate the unfair treatment meted out to them by the management, which are detrimental to the organisation (Bonnan, Ponner, Allen, & Motowidlo, 2001). It consists of volitional acts that harm or are intended to harm organisations or people in organisations (e.g., aggression, hostility, sabotage, theft, and withdrawal) (Aquino, Lewis. & Bradfield, 1999). Aquino, Lewis and Bradfield also maintain that the term is conceptually similar to constructs such as incivility, workplace aggression, workplace deviance, and retaliation. Counterproductive work behaviour encompasses a wide range of workers' negative behaviours that threaten the survival, productivity and other legitimate objectives of an organisation. The most researched counterproductive work behaviour include absenteeism (Hacker. 1997), theft (Greenberg, 1990; 1993), sabotage (Sharlicki & Folger, 1997), drug use (Hogan & Hogan, 1989), and overt acts of aggression or extreme apathy (Douglass & Martinko, 2001; Early & Steffan, 1986; Martinko, Gundlach & Douglass, 2002).

CWB probed the behaviours of anyone injuring an organization or other members in that organization (Spector & Fox, 2002). For example, stealing, shrinking back, attacking, and being absent from duty without reason (Penny & Spector 2005) are all viewed as CWB. Penny and Spector also asserted that CWB has attracted researchers' attention because such behaviour generally exists in any organization, and can cause enormous adverse effects to the organization, for example in lost productivity, increased insurance costs, added labour costs, an increased employee turnover rate (Baron & Neuman, 1996; Benminson, 1994; LeBlanc & Kelloway, 2002; Vigoda, 2002), and employee work dissatisfaction (Keashly , Trott & MacLean, 1994). It also has also been shown to increase work pressure (Penny & Spector, 2003). Several relevant factors will cause employees to engage in CWB, for example, organizational justice, psychological agreement violations and work stress, etc. (Liang, 2002; Zheng, 2003; Lai, 2003; Penny & Spector. 2005).

Spector et al., (2006) proposed five dimensions of counterproductive work behaviours which include (a) targeted behaviours against others comprising of behaviours directed towards co-workers and others with a motive to harm them physically and psychologically through threats, nasty comments, making fun, and undermining one's performance, (b) production deviance is the purposeful failure to perform job tasks, the way they are required to be performed, (c) sabotage is the purposeful damage to or defacing the company property or equipment (d) theft is the stealing from organization or others, It includes acts like taking something home belonging to employer or employees etc without permission, and (e) withdrawal behaviour consists of acts like coming late on job, absenteeism, leaving early from job, taking longer breaks than authorized etc.

Engaging in counterproductive work behaviours can be seen as an emotion regulation strategy (Penney & Spector, 2008). Emotion regulation focuses on how behaviour can be directed towards altering one's emotional experiences. These counterproductive behaviours may be the result of similar psychological processes evidenced in withdrawal behaviours (Borman, Ilegen, Klimoski & Weiner, 2003). Spector (1997) argues that these acts may be the result of reactions of frustration.

Spector and Fox's (2005) stressor-emotion model of counterproductive work behaviour which is based on bringing together human aggression and occupational stress, suggests that counterproductive work behaviour is a response to emotion-arousing situations in organizations. Studies have indicated that counterproductive work behaviour was related to general measures of negative affect (Pox, Spector & Miles, 2001; Miles, Borman, Spector & Fox, 2002). The stressor-emotion model also stated that it is not only the anger that is associated with counterproductive work behaviour, but many forms of negative emotions played a causal role in the unfolding of these behaviours. The common theme about CWBs is that they are harmful to the organization by directly affecting its functioning or property, or by hurting employees in a way that will impede the performance of their work role, which often translate to organizational ineffectiveness.

Researchers (e.g., Barclay, Skarlicki, & Pugh, 2005; Cohen-Charash & Mueller, 2007; Folger & Skarlicki, 1997) have examined various antecedents of counterproductive work behaviours and reported that perceived injustice and emotions play a crucial role in the occurrence of these behaviours. There are, however, many negative discrete emotional states that serve as antecedents of CWB, which may influence attitudes and behaviours of people at work. Among possible antecedents of CWB, we chose abusive supervision and equity sensitivity as predictors of counterproductive work behaviour, for obvious

reasons. Given the ever-intensifying business competition in the banking sector, especially since the consolidation and post consolidation era, has placed huge demand on the management and the entire bank workers. For the firms to achieve their set goals, management may have resorted to various forms of abuses to compel their employees to be more proactive, more result-oriented and show more commitment. This treatment on the employees is more likely to leave on the employees, a great deal of negative emotional experiences in the organizations. On the other hand, the seminal equity theory by Adams (1963) suggests that inequity motivates people to make cognitive and behavioural adaptive responses. More so, studies on fairness have linked perceptions of unfairness to negative emotions (e.g., Skarlicki & Folger, 1997). Zohar (1995) specifically demonstrated the role of organizational justice in the job stress process as a role stressor, in the elicitation of both negative emotion and consequent strain responses.

Studies have demonstrated that some supervisors often engage in behaviours that are tyrannical (Ashforth, 1994), bullying, (Hoel, Rayner, & Cooper, 1999), undermining (Duffy, Ganster, & Pagon, 2002), or abusive (Keashly, Trott, & MacLean, 1994). Also workplace supervisor aggression includes behaviours, ranging from psychological acts (e.g., shouting) to physical assault (Dupre & Barling, 2003). Baron, Neuman, and Geddes (1999) grouped aggressive workplace behaviour into three different categories, including, expressions of hostility (e.g. hostile verbal or symbolic behaviours, such as 'the silent treatment'), obstructionism (i.e., behaviours that are designed to hamper the target's performance, such as refusing to provide needed resources), and overt aggression (e.g., assaults, destruction of property). Researchers have demonstrated that the most frequent manifestations of insider-initiated aggression are not acts of overt aggression but less dramatic psychologically aggressive acts, such as spreading rumours about and dirty looks to colleagues (e.g., Baron et al., 1999).

According to Hoobler and Brass (2006), abusive supervision is a subjective assessment made by subordinates regarding their supervisors' behaviour toward them over time. It is an unacceptable organisational behaviour (Sackett & DeVore, 2001), in that it falls within the scope of inappropriate verbal actions that are contrary to organizational interests. Supervisors who are coercive, quick to lose their temper, intimidate or display arrogance towards their subordinates or assume their subordinates to be guilty until proven innocent are likely to be viewed as displaying such hostile behaviour (Bies, 2000). According to Ashforth (1994), abusive supervision is displayed when managers use authority or position for personal gain, administer organizational policies unfairly, discourage initiative, and behave in a manner that may reflect indifference such as speaking

rudely to subordinates in order to elicit desired task performance, or, as in the example provided above, wilfully and publicly displaying hostility or belittling subordinates in order to hurt their feelings. The present study adopts Tepper's (2000) definition of abusive supervision as subordinates' perceptions of the extent to which their supervisors engage in the consistent display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviours, excluding physical contact.

Behaviours that describe this definition include: using derogatory names, engaging in explosive outbursts (e.g., yelling or screaming at someone for disagreeing), intimidating by use of threats of job loss, withholding needed information, aggressive eye contact, the silent treatment, and humiliating or ridiculing someone in front of others (Keashly, 1998). A small but growing body of empirical research suggests that abused subordinates report greater job and life dissatisfaction, intentions to quit their jobs, role conflict, and psychological distress, compared with their non abused counterparts (Ashforth, 1997; Duffy et al., 2002; Keashly et al., 1994), and that subordinates' perceptions of unfairness explain their responses to abusive supervision (fepper,2000). Hence, abusive supervision represents a source of injustice that has serious implications for organizations and employees (Bies & Tripp, 1998). Also, more researches (e.g., Dalal, 2005; Tepper, 2000; Neuman & Baron, 1998; Robinson & Greenberg, 1998; Gruys, 1999; Spector & Pox, 2002) found that abusive supervision predicted counterproductive work behaviour.

A critical issue about this supervisor behaviour concerns subordinates' behavioural responses to abusive supervision (Zellars, Tepper, & Duffy, 2002). The issue receives some attention in theoretical treatments, that is, employees may respond to uncivil behaviour with further incivility (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). If these types of behavioural spirals are possible, it is perhaps reasonable to further expect that subordinates of abusive supervisors reciprocate their supervisor's hostility in some fashion (e.g., Duffy et al., 2002). Indeed, there is considerable theoretical and empirical support for the notion that individuals who feel threatened (e.g., as the target of abusive behaviour) or perceive a loss of control strive to preserve a sense of autonomy (e.g., Wright & Brehm, 1982). As Ashforth (1997) noted, employees are likely to "react (directly or indirectly) against perceived causes of frustration to restore the situation to what was expected" (p.129). However, characteristics of the supervisor-subordinate relationship (e.g., power differentials) suggest that an abusive "tit for tat" spiral may be unlikely as individuals do not ordinarily reciprocate identical actions of a powerful abuser (Lord, 1998). In other words, a subordinate is unlikely to attempt to restore a sense of personal autonomy by engaging in abusive behaviour directed at the supervisor. Doing so is unlikely to halt the abuse and may even trigger more intense hostility on the instigator's part (Tepper, Duffy,

& Shaw, 2001). The abused employee might begin to fashion strange ways of paying the managers back in their own coin by indulging in counterproductive work behaviour that will in turn live the organization with a slim chance of success.

In organizational life, it is easy to imagine frequent events which give rise to social comparisons subsequently leading to some specific behavioural responses. Salary increments, bonuses, promotions, allocation of scarce organizational resources and rewards etc. are all potential candidates for social comparisons among colleagues. A number of scholars (e.g., Greenberg, 1990; Skarlicki & Folger, 1997) have argued that if organizational decisions and actions are deemed unfair, the employees experience feelings of outrage and resentment. Greenberg (1993) has shown employee theft as a reaction to underpaid equity. Some of the other negative reactions to perceived unfairness include retaliation (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997), revenge (Bies & Trip, 2001), counterproductive work behaviours (Fox et al., 2001) and sabotage (Ambrose, Seabright & Schminke, 2002).

Several studies have linked both forms of justice perceptions with counterproductive organizational behaviours. Skarlicki and Folger (1997) summarized research, which indicates that employees may respond to perceptions of unfair treatment with negative emotions, such as anger, outrage, and resentment (Folger, 1993), desire for retribution, and a range of direct and indirect behavioural responses such as theft (Greenberg, 1990), vandalism, sabotage, reduction of citizenship behaviours, withdrawal, and resistance (Jermier, Knights, & Nord, 1994).

The employees' perception of fairness of their supervisors tends to be related to productivity. According to equity theory (Adams, 1963, 1965) individuals evaluate the fairness of their situation relative to that of others by assessing the ratio of their own outcome (e.g., salaries, rewards) to impact (e.g., effort skill) in comparison to the corresponding ratios of referent others (e.g., co-workers). If the outcome/impact ratio of individuals and their referent others is not equal, then inequity is said to exist and the workers may become motivated to repress it.

Applying the theory to the study of work deviance, when employees compare, the treatment meted to them by their supervisors with that meted to other employees; if it is inconsistent, they find a way to restore equity and even the scores. One of the ways of making it all squared with organizations or management is by engaging in work deviance or as a matter of fact counterproductive behaviour in the work place. The most commonly studied response to inequity are behavioural in nature; and include raising or lowering

workers inputs (Greenberg, 1988), or in extreme cases, quitting a job (Greenberg, 1987). The question of why individuals subjected to the same inequitable situations react differently has become a recent focus of investigation in equity theory. One way to research this phenomenon is to examine the impact of individual differences on reactions to inequity in the workplace (Nowday, 1987).

A construct that seems to expand the equity theory and which posits that individual react in consistent but different ways to perceived equity and inequity is referred to equity sensitivity (Huseman, Hatfield, & Miles, 1985; 1987; Miles, 1989). Equity theory stipulates that individuals are motivated when they compare their work inputs against their outcomes relative to the same ratio of others (Adams, 1963). If the comparison is unequal, individuals will be motivated to restore equity using a number of mechanisms. However, subsequent equity researchers have recognized that individuals vary in their sensitivity to the violations of equity. This has led to the extension of the original equity theory to include a newer construct called equity sensitivity (Huseman. Hatfield & Miles, 1985; 1987).

The equity sensitivity construct posits that individuals could be categorized into three different groups in relation to their perception of equity- *Benevolents*, *Sensitives*, *Entitleds*- (Huseman. Hatfield & Miles, 1987; King, Miles & Day, 1993) and that different reactions came out from these groups based on their score on the equity sensitivity instrument (ESI). Benevolents are those whose scores are higher on ESI, but are more tolerant of situations in which they are being under rewarded (King, Miles & Day, 1993). They are rather more satisfied from contributing to their organization, value the work itself more than others do, and are seen as organizational' givers' (Huseman, Hatfield & Miles, 1987). Because they have a more input-focused exchange ideology (King, Miles & Day, 1993), they are assumed to be less likely to respond negatively to under- reward situations (Akan, Allen, & White, 2009). Entitleds are those scoring low on ESI, and they express a more outcome-focused ideology and are said to be 'takers' by nature. They place more value on pay as an outcome and less importance on the work itself (King, Miles & Day, 1993). Thus, they are assumed to seek over-reward situations more than others, and experience dissatisfaction when under-rewarded. In short, entitleds are more interested in the transactional nature of the employment relationship and are less tolerant of any unfavorable outcome discrepancies (King & Miles, 1994). Instead, they prefer the equity ratio to be skewed in their favour (Akan, Allen, & White, 2009). The third category (those whose scores are around the middle on the ESI), comprises those who are called equity sensitives. People in this group prefer their ratio of outcomes to inputs to be equal to that of their comparison others. They fit the assumptions of the

original equity theory (Akan, Allen, & White, 2009). Furthermore, O'Neill and Mone (1998), Compell and Fiske (1959), Williams (1989), Adams and Jex (200-1 revealed that equity sensitivity significantly related to counterproductive work behaviour.

The purpose of our study was to explore abusive supervision and equity sensitivity as possible predictors of counterproductive work behaviour among bank employees. Our specific objectives are: (1) to investigate whether abusive supervision will predict counterproductive work behaviour among bank employees and, (2) to establish whether equity sensitivity will predict counterproductive work behaviour among bank employees. We therefore, hypothesized the following:

Hypothesis 1: Abusive supervision will significantly predict counterproductive work behaviour of bank employees.

Hypothesis 2: Equity sensitivity will significantly predict counterproductive work behaviour of bank employees.

Method

Participants

Two hundred and fifteen (215) participants drawn from 10 commercial banks in Enugu metropolis participated in the study. They consisted of United Bank for Africa (UBA) Plc., First bank of Nigeria, Plc., Finbank Plc., Bank PHB, Plc., Fidelity bank, Plc., Oceanic bank, Plc., Intercontinental bank, Plc., Diamond bank, Plc., Afribank, Plc., and Zenith bank, Plc. One hundred and twenty six (126) of the participants were males, while 89 were females. One hundred and one (101) of the participants were married, 111 were single, 2 were widows, while 1 was a divorcee. Also, 65% reported having a B.sc/B.A, 20% reported having OND/NCE and GCE/WAEC, 10% reported having masters and 5~" reported having other professional qualifications. Their ages ranged from 24 - 50 years, with a mean age of 37.51. The average organizational tenure was 6.-; years, while the average job tenure was 5.3 years.

Instruments

Abusive Supervision Scale

The IS-item Abusive supervision scale developed by Tepper (2000) was used to measure the extent to which subordinates experience abusive behaviour from

their boss. Tepper (2000) content-analyzed an initial pool of 20 items, using procedures described by Scbriesheim and Hinkin (1990), by creating a check list by interspersing these items with 20 items adapted from measures of physical abuse in spousal and dating relationships. He then administered the check list to 68 of M.RA degree candidates with instructions to classify the items according to category: non-physical abuse, physical abuse and other non-abusive behaviour or another kind of abuse. The M.B.A students put a 1 in the category that best described the item, and if they felt more than one category described the item; put a 2 in the second best category. For computational purposes, (Topper 2000) recorded the students' ratings with l's receiving 2 points and 2, receiving one point. He then retained items from the non-physical abuse scale that received 70 or more of their possible points. Sample items include; "My boss ridicules me," My boss tells me my thoughts or feelings are stupid". The response scale was a 5 point likert format which includes: (1) I cannot remember him/ her ever using this behaviour with me, (2) he/ she very seldom uses this behaviour with me, (3) she/he occasionally uses these behaviour with me, (4) he/she uses this behaviour moderately often with me and, (5) he/she uses these behaviour very often with me. Higher scores indicated a high extent of abusive supervision behaviour. Cronbach's alpha of .88 of the scale was obtained for the present study.

Equity Sensitivity Instrument (ESI)

Equity sensitivity instrument developed by Huseman, Hatfield and Miles (1985) was used to measure equity sensitivity. It employs a forced choice format, asking respondents to allocate 10 points between two response choices (A & B) for five pairs of statement for each item; one response choice is the 'entitled' response, while the other response choice is the 'benevolent' response. The procedure described by Huseman, Hatifield and Miles (1985) was followed for scoring the instrument i.e. scores or points allocated to the benevolent response are summed up. In this study, scores ranged from 14 to 47 (Mean = 27.36, SI) = 5.23). The ESI scores were treated as continuous scores as recommended by Sauley & Benedian (2000). Husemna, Hatfield and Miles (1985) reported a Cronbach alpha of .83 for the equity sensitivity instrument. Cronbach alpha of .68 of the scale was obtained for the present study.

Counterproductive Work Behaviour Scale (CWBS)

CWBS developed by Bennett & Robinson (2002) was used to measure counterproductive work behaviour. It is an 11-item scale that follows the Likert-type response format ranging from 1 = never to 5 = always. All items are positively worded. Sample items include: "I come in late to work without permission," "I usually curse people at work," "I neglect following my boss's

instructions". Bennett & Robinson (2002) reported a reliability coefficient of .86. Cronbach alpha of .86 of the instrument was obtained for the present study.

Procedure

Two hundred and fifty (250) copies of each of the questionnaires were distributed to all the employees who volunteered to participate in the randomly selected organisations. These organisations were selected through the multistage sampling technique. The names of all the 17 commercial banks located in Enugu metropolis were written on pieces of papers and folded, 10 were randomly picked from the 17 banks for the study. The various branches used among the 10 banks were selected through simple random sampling. Out of the 250 copies of the questionnaire administered, 220 were completed and returned, representing a response and return rate of 88. Out of these copies returned, 5 were discarded due to improper completion and the remaining 215 copies were used for the data analysis.

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Results

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Table 1: Descriptive statistics and inter-correlations among the study variables (predictor: Abusive supervision and equity sensitivity, control: gender, marital status, age, education, organizational tenure and job tenure, and criterion (dependent variable) counterproductive work behaviour.

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1 CWB	20.20	5.49									
2 Gender			-.05								
3 Marital status			-.12*	-.03							
4 Age			-.00	.28***	.40***						
5 Education			.07	-.15**	-.06	-.17*					
6 Org'l tenure			.00	-.16**	-.30***	-.46***	.20**				
7 Job tenure			-.06	-.05	-.14*	-.20**	-.09	.30***			
8 Abusive supervision	24.02	8.64	.51***	-.01	-.11*	.01	-.20**	-.06	.12*		
9 Equity sensitivity	23.59	6.24	-.08	-.12*	.01	-.04	.02	-.03	.08	.01	

Note: A total of 215 employees completed the questionnaires. Gender (male = 1, female = 2); marital status (married = 1, single = 2, widow = 3, divorced = 4); age (old = 1, young = 2); education (low = 1, high = 2); organizational tenure (short = 1, long = 2); Job tenure (short =1, long = 2). Abusive supervision and equity sensitivity are coded so that higher scores indicate higher abuse or sensitivity.

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Table 2: Hierarchical Regression and Test of Moderation

Steps	1	2	3
Variables			
Gender	-.09	-.05	-.06
Marital status	-.15**	-.08	-.08
Age	.07	.06	.05
Education	-.07	.03	.03
Organizational tenure	-.02	.03	.02
Job tenure	.05	-.01	-.00
Abusive supervision	.51**	.51**	
Equity sensitivity	-.09*		
R Square	.03	.27	.27
R Square change	.03	.24	.01
F change	F(6, 208) = 1. 02	#F(7, 207) = 66.87**	F(8, 206) = 2. 28#
F values	F(6, 208) = 1.02	#F(7, 207) = 10. 70**	F(8, 206) = 9. 71**

Key: * = p < . 05; ** = p <.001; # = Not significant

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The result of the analysis show that the control variables explained an insignificant 0.01 of the variance in counterproductive work behaviour (adjusted R square). This suggests that when the entire control variables were combined they poorly relate with CWB. Out of all the control variables only marital status was significant, (β = -.15, P < .05).

Abusive supervision explained 27.1% of the variance in CWB, above that of the control variables. This was significant, (β= .51), $F(7,207)$ = 10. 70, p < .001. This result reveals that abusive supervision significantly predicted CWB. Furthermore, equity sensitivity accounted for 27% of the variance in counterproductive work behaviour, above the control variables and abusive supervision. This was also significant, (β= -.09), $F(8, 206)$ = 9. 71, p < .001.

Discussion

As we anticipated, abusive supervision significantly predicted counterproductive work behaviour. This implies that the more employees experience abusive supervision, the more they engage in counterproductive work behaviours as a way to reciprocate such abuse. This is consistent with earlier research findings. For instance, Dalal (2005), Topper (2000), Rebinson & Creenberg (1998), Spector and Fex (2002) Ncuman and Baron (1998) and Gruys (1999) found a significant

relationship between abusive supervision and counterproductive work behaviour. The present result is equally consistent with previous research results such as Ashforth (1997), Duffy et al. (2002), Kcashly cl al. (1994), Bies and Tripp (1998), Anderson and Pearson (1999) that established that abusive supervision contributes to counterproductive work behaviour. One theory that can be used to explain this result and which guides employee/ supervisor relationship within the organization is the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). Employees engage in behaviours that are less beneficial to the organization when they perceive that their supervisors abuse them.

The second hypothesis that equity sensitivity will significantly predict counterproductive work behaviour among bank employees was also confirmed. This finding is consistent with the findings of King and Miles (1994), King, Miles, and Day (]993), Akan, Allen, and White (2009) that found that perceived inequity, predicted various negative job behaviours, which may be related to counterproductive work behaviour. The results of the present study is also in agreement with that of O'Neill and Mone (1998), Compell and Fiske (1959), Williams et al (1989), Adams and Jex (2004), which found that equity sensitivity and counterproductive work behaviour are related.

Several implications could be drawn from the results of this study. Since it has been found that abusive supervision and equity sensitivity predicted counterproductive work behaviour within the workplace, it can further be asserted that if organizations desire to maximize profit through diligent and consistent hard work from employees they should look forward to, recruiting skilful managers who understand what it takes to work with diverse individuals from different cultural backgrounds and ethnic groups. Also, supervisors and managers should be consistently trained on the best method and techniques of working with subordinate/ employees. When trained on the best method they could reduce the risk of abusing subordinates. Furthermore, as fallout of this study that when employees perceive inequity in the organization, they tend to engage in counterproductive work behaviour, organizations should endeavour to address all forms of inequity where they exist and make effort to improve on fair treatment of employees in our organizations.

The present study had some problems, which might limit the generalizability of the results. One limitation is that data were collected from single source data. Data from several sources would have been more desirable since it would eliminate or minimize common method bias. Also, the study did not look into the different dimensions of equity sensitivity and counterproductive work behaviour. Based on these limitations, drawing inferences will be done with caution.

However, some recommendations are worthy to be offered for further studies. Researches that will be designed to examine the antecedents of counterproductive behaviours should do that longitudinally to be able to establish cause and effect. Further research should examine the different dimensions of equity sensitivity and counterproductive work behaviour. This will offer a clearer understanding of these concepts.

Despite the limitations of the research, the study is one of the first attempts to investigate the contributions of abusive supervision and equity sensitive in counterproductive work behaviour among bank workers in Nigeria. As Nigerian banks begin to re-strategize after the consolidation exercise and globzl1 financial meltdown that led to profit and job losses in many Nigerian banks, effort at searching for ways of reducing negative behaviours of bank employees that result in less beneficial organizational behaviours seems paramount. Improving supervisor-employee relationships in the banking sector is, therefore, necessary in reducing feelings of abuse by employees and may also create a friendly environment that the employees may perceive as fair. It is envisaged that such situation would create positive feelings among bank employees that would in turn make them to become more committed to their organizations - commitment that would enable them engage in more productive behaviours.

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