# Transactional Leadership, Effective Commitment, and Workplace Deviance: Does Onboarding Experience Moderate the Relationship? Evidence from Nigeria

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**Abstract**
Workplace Deviance (WD) as a global phenomenon has become pervasive among academics and a thorn in the flesh of the management of Nigerian high institutions. How to mitigate it has become a major concern to policymakers and researchers. Based on the precepts of social exchange and organisational support theories, we examined the relationships between Transactional leadership (TL), Affective commitment (AC) and WD. Using a moderated mediation model, this paper also examined how Onboarding experience (OE) moderates the mediated relationship between TL and WD through AC. Partial least square-structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was used to analyse data elicited from 308 participants in a cross-sectional design conducted across federal polytechnics in Northwestern Nigeria. The data revealed that an employee's commitment mediated the relationship between TL and WD. Additionally, the direction of this mediated interaction was moderated by OE. The current study adds a novel perspective to the literature on deviant workplace behaviour with its moderated mediation model that investigates AC and OE as underlying processes via which TL affects WD. Theoretical and practical implications for enhancing AC and OE are discussed.
**Keywords:** Workplace Deviance, Transactional Leadership, Affective Commitment, Onboarding Experience.

**Introduction**
In public and commercial organisations, WD, otherwise known as deviant workplace behaviour (Robinson & Bennett, 1995), is a global concern (Lugosi, 2019; Tanyolac, 2020). An organisation's well-being and the interests of its stakeholders are jeopardised by what is known as volitionally damaging workplace behaviour(Bennett & Robinson, 2000). According to Robinson and Bennett (1995 p.556), WD is the "voluntary behaviour that violates significant organisational norms and in so doing threatens the well-being of an organisation, its members, or both". Bennett and Robinson (2000) identified two types of WD-organisational and interpersonal deviances. Organisational deviance is often defined as deviant behaviour that focuses on the organisation's operations and quality. These include absenteeism, illegal use of organisational property, sabotage, theft of firm property, arriving

late to work, and departing early(Brooks, 2012). Interpersonal deviance is an abnormal behaviour that focuses on the organisation's stakeholders (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). Interpersonal deviance includes bullying, talking about coworkers, and physically or verbally abusing a coworker or client (Sarwar et al., 2020). The expense of either of the two dimensions is massive (Tanyolac, 2020). For example, a recent study found that fraud alone may cost companies 3.7 trillion dollars worldwide (Association of Certified Fraud Examiners, (ACFE), 2016). It has also been estimated that depressive and anxiety-related illnesses associated with aggressive workers cost the United States an estimated 1.15 trillion US dollars annually (Michalak & Ashkanasy, 2020).

Furthermore, according to previous surveys, more than 56% of hospitality employees in the United Kingdom have been harassed by a customer and roughly 27% by their boss (Topping, 2018). Similarly, U.S. studies show that 66% of women and over 50% of males have been harassed by a manager, with larger numbers reporting harassment from coworkers (Sherwyn & Wagner, 2018). Moreover, in some African nations, studies indicate that female student are sexually harassed by their lecturers (Erinosho et al., 2021; Ijitona et al., 2018; Muasya, 2014; Steiner & Spear, 2020). Consequently, Western hotel businesses have seen a rise in staff turnover (Lugosi, 2019), and according to Olufemi (2020), female student dropout rates are exceptionally high in some Nigerian high schools. Many researchers have thus questioned if these employee misbehaviours are contributing to these rising staff turnover rates and student dropouts (Lugosi, 2019; Nneka & Nwagbata, 2020). Considering these developments, analysing the extent and reasons for driving employee deviation in the educational sector is essential.

Empirical research from all over the world has linked WD to four groups: personal/psychological, situational/organisational, interpersonal, and job-related (Lugosi, 2019; Tanyolac, 2020). For instance, literature has claimed that WDs reflect the distinct personality traits, "The Big Five" (Amin et al., 2018b; Braje et al., 2020). Specifically showing that emotionally stable, tolerant, trustworthy, and responsible people are likely to display lower levels of WD (Braje et al., 2020). The conflict between work and family is also a significant predictor (Malisetty & Kumari, 2016; Sayyida & Untarini, 2020). Similarly, employees' deviant workplace behaviour can also be influenced by spirituality and religion (Haldorai et al., 2020). Though the main effects of organisational factors on organisational outcomes are generally well supported by research (Patanjali & Bhatta, 2022). However, their role in predicting WD is relatively negligible, creating a considerable knowledge gap which this study intends to fill.

The worrisome prevalence of WD in Nigeria, particularly in higher education institutions characterised by extortion, absenteeism, exam misconduct, sexual harassment known as "sex for grades", etc. (Amin et al., 2018a; Erinosho et al., 2021; Olufemi, 2020), is an indication that something is fundamentally wrong with the leadership style and employee orientation in that context (Hendricks & Louw-Potgieter, 2012; Zheng et al., 2020). We draw from the literature's seeming negligible attention to the leadership-WD relationship in Nigeria, and the recent research findings that suggest that positive stimulus (reward) and negative reinforcement (punishment) have a significant relationship with employee behaviour in Nigeria (Olowookere et al., 2021), to investigate the impact of leader reward and punishment behaviour known as transactional leadership (Bass & Bass) on the WD. Furthermore, previous studies linking employee misbehaviour with leadership style (Amin et al., 2018a; Zheng et al., 2020) have typically failed to look into the interaction of other variables, such as employee commitment and his first experiences in the workplace. Therefore, to better understanding of its key

predictors, this research also looks at the moderating role of employee onboarding experience in the indirect effect of TL style and WD in which AC plays a mediating role among Nigerian academics. Consequently, the moderated mediation model we utilized in this study reflects the nature of the link between leadership style and WD and enhances our knowledge of its underlying mechanism. Therefore, this study is organised in the following way to achieve the objectives: literature review and hypotheses development underpinned by the social exchange and organisational support theories. After that, the methodology, result, and analysis are provided, followed by a discussion of the findings and their implications. Finally, some closing observations are made at the end of this work.

**Theory and Hypotheses Development**
**Unpinning Theory**
This research which is centered on the outcome of a quality employer-employee exchange relationship and perceived organisational support has been underpinned by the social exchange theory (SET) (Blau, 1964) and its offshoot, the organisational support theory(SST)(Eisenberger et al., 1986). Social exchange theory, built around the concept of mutuality (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), suggests that people engage in social interactions that entail tangible or intangible transactions (Casimir et al., 2014). Economic or social transactions might be thought of as part of that interactions. Economic transactions entail tangible exchanges that result in obligations and commitments (Marique et al., 2013). According to Casimir et al (2014), the two interactions are the foundation of high-quality relationships between employees and their transactional leaders and between employees and their firms. The tie between the two is reciprocity, in which an employee strives to repay the interchange relationship for what he receives (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Consistent with the assumptions of social exchange theory, employees form connections with their employers based on social interactions or psychological contracts, and their impression of the company's commitment to them impacts their commitment to the company (Afshari & Gibson, 2016; Kim et al., 2016), which is in line with the reciprocity norm (Eisenberger et al., 2001). Employees who believe their employers value their contributions and care about their well-being are more likely to perform well in their jobs (Casimir et al., 2014; Cetin et al., 2015) and resist the urge to engage in illegal or harmful behaviour (Aryee et al., 2002). In contrast, a subordinate's vindictive behaviour is triggered in response to perceived unjust treatment from a superior (Greenberg, 2018).

Similarly, organisational support theory postulates that staff members develop general perceptions of how much the company values their contributions and is concerned about their well-being (Kim et al., 2016). Based on the TL contingent reward behaviour and leader's reciprocity norms, such perceived organisational support would elicit employees felt an obligation to be concerned about the organisation's welfare and assist the organisation in achieving its goal. Employees could pay off this debt through a stronger emotional bond with the organisation and a stronger desire not to harm its interest (Eisenberger et al., 2001).

**Transactional Leadership and Workplace Deviance**
Transactional leadership refers to a leadership style in which the leaders openly announce their expectations for an exchange connection between the leaders and the followers. Leaders set clear expectations and reward or penalise their followers based on whether or not they fulfil the agreed-upon goals. According to Judge and Piccolo (2004), TL has three components: contingent reward, management by exception-active, and management by

exception-passive. Contingent reward refers to a leader setting up positive transactions or exchanges with his or her followers: Leadership sets standards and rewards people who meet them. The degree to which a leader responds to the outcomes of leader-follower interactions by taking remedial action is referred to be management by exception-active. Adekanmbi (2019) asserts that the difference between Management by exception-active and Management by exception-passive management is the time of the leader's action. Active leaders monitor their followers' behaviour, anticipate issues, and act before they become major issues. Passive leaders wait until the behaviour has generated problems before intervening (Bass & Bass, 2008).

Podsakoff and Kuskova (2010) also distinguished two types of TL styles: contingent reward and contingent punishment. They define contingent reward behaviour as the leader's giving of positive feedback in the form of recognition, praise, and acknowledgement to those workers who display good performance, show advances in performance or exhibit desirable behaviours. Contingent punishment behaviours, on the other hand, are characterised as a leader's supply of negative feedback in the form of reprimands, criticism, or disapproval to employees who display poor or decreasing performance or undesirable behaviours.

Reward and punishment contingencies explain the effect of TL (Deichmann & Stam, 2015; Walumbwa et al., 2008). Previous studies have found that contingent reward and punishment leadership behaviour improves organisational citizenship behaviour(Judge & Piccolo, 2004) and is negatively related to unproductive behaviour  (Ali, 2016). Conversely, Litzky et al (2006); Valentina (2021); Yao et al (2014) show that the more the TL style is used with employees, the more stressed they become and the more likely they are to engage in unproductive behaviour that can harm the organisation. While Mekpor (2017) found no significant association between TL and WD in 237 Ghanaian bank workers.

Despite the contradictory results, we support our hypotheses with the precepts of the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and its offshoot- the organisational support theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986). According to these theories, which are based on the principles underlying the leader-follower exchange relationship and reciprocity (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005); and are also a valuable framework for understanding employee misbehaviour, human relationships are formed through the use of a subjective cost-benefit analysis in which employees prefer to favourably pay back actions that have been rewarded in the past, and the more frequently a particular behaviour has resulted in a reward, the more that has been repeated and reinforced (Abbasi & Baradari, 2020; Walumbwa et al., 2008). On the other hand, employee perceptions of negative exchange relationships or unjustified treatment may induce retaliatory measures targeted at harming the organisation or its agents (Aryee et al., 2002; Greenberg, 2018). The two theories' central premise is that if a leader treats his or her employees well. The employee perceives organisational support; the employee will tend to reciprocate by engaging in extra-role behaviour and suppressing unproductive behaviour that could harm the workgroup or organisation(Abbasi & Baradari, 2020; Li & Zeng, 2019; Walumbwa et al., 2008). Hence, the following hypothesis is based on various research data and theoretical speculations above

*H1: Transactional leadership is negatively related to* workplace deviant behaviour

**Transactional Leadership and Affective Commitment**
Affective commitment is essentially referred to as "the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organisation(Meyer et al., 2002). The critical

elements in the definitions of affective commitment include firm conviction in the organisation's values and ideals, a willingness to work on its behalf, and a desire to stay with it (Meyer et al., 1993). Consequently, according to a study, people with a high level of AC are more likely to act in ways that benefit the company (Cetin et al., 2015).

Previous studies have shown that the perception of organisational support and fairness is the primary determinant of employee commitment (Casimir et al., 2014). According to Lee and Wei (2017), TL successfully boosts employee commitment across cultures. In a TL climate, a reward or compliment is bestowed when a task is completed satisfactorily (Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Lee & Wei, 2017). literature reveals that workers expect an acknowledgement from the company after they have done their best effort, boosting the concept of reciprocity (Eisenberger et al., 2001; Kim et al., 2016). According to Lee and Wei (2017), workers who witness the interactional justice of working with transactional leaders would feel obligated to reciprocate the kindness of their transactional leaders. In light of these considerations, despite Litzky et al. (2006), who show that transactional leadership behaviour leads to negative stressors, other studies supported the social exchange and organisational support theories of reciprocity, arguing that positive leader-member exchange relationship boasts employees' AC to their firms and very likely to display citizenship behaviour (Abasilim et al., 2019; Budur, 2022; Rahman et al., 2022). Based on the findings mentioned earlier, TL has the potential to impact employee AC to the organisation's goals and values. Hence it is hypothesised that:

*H2: Transactional leadership style is positively related to Affective commitment*

**Affective Commitment as a Mediator**
Affective commitment, described as a person's emotional and sentimental tie to an organisation, has three key features: a conviction in and acceptance of the organisation's principles and aims; readiness to work toward the organisation's goals; and the desire to keep the connection with the organisation going (Porter et al., 1974). How can a leader's use of contingent rewards and punishments foster employee AC in the organisation, and what are the implications of that commitment for the firm? Budur (2022); Walumbwa et al (2008) contend that contingent compensations in exchange for work lead to more outstanding employee commitment to an organisation. According to the social exchange and organisational support theories postulations (Aryee et al., 2002), employees who are given incentives to perform better at work in exchange for a reward would feel obligated to return the favor by improving their performance in order to help the organisation achieve its objectives (Aryee et al., 2002; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Similarly, when employees see procedural justice as a result of contingently provided negative feedback (punishment), they are more likely to acquire emotional feelings of attachment and support for the organisational principles, which leads to extra-role and positive conduct (Kim et al., 2016). For example, Trevino (1992) observed that onlookers instinctively assess the appropriateness of leaders' penalties. Their assessments of the punishment's distributive and procedural fairness might have various affective, attitudinal, and behavioural effects in the workplace (Wang & Murnighan, 2017).

Consequently, when leaders support their employees by providing contingent rewards for good work and contingently giving deserved feedback for poor performance, AC to the leader's course is enhanced (Afshari & Gibson, 2016; Walumbwa et al., 2008). Employees with a high level of AC have a strong emotional tie to their organisations and hence are more

motivated to stay and contribute to their success (Meyer et al., 2002). According to Gill et al. (2011), employees with great AC are more likely to have a positive affect and less negative affect. This likely involves a decreased willingness to engage in detrimental employee misbehaviour. On the other hand, negative affect has been connected to the occurrence of employee misbehaviour both conceptually and experimentally (Dalal, 2005; Koopman et al., 2020). We hypothesise the following based on the preceding:

*H3: Affective commitment is negatively related to Workplace deviance.*
*H4: Affective commitment mediates the relationship between Transactional leadership style and workplace deviance.*

**Onboarding Experience as a Moderator**
Onboarding training is a vital method in which recruits are typically formally welcomed and provided with required knowledge and resources, as well as informally coached and aided by their coworkers to be able to calm down and perform well during this critical time of uncertainty and excessive worry (Klein et al., 2015). Broadly, employee onboarding is defined as the formal as well as an informal process of orienting recruits to their new jobs, familiarising them with the organisation's goals, beliefs, regulations, duties, and processes, and socialising them into the culture of the company (Bauer, 2010; Sharma & Stol, 2020). Prior empirical studies suggest that employees' first and fundamental attitude within the first six months of OE is that of perceived organizational support and AC (Bauer, 2010; Klein et al., 2015). Study after study shows that effective onboarding leads to increased job satisfaction, a clear sense of organisational support, a full-blown AC to the job, and a consequent reduction in the desire to leave the company and other withdrawal behavior (Chan et al., 2021). Given that the goal of onboarding is to help employees feel more at ease in their new job, a complete OE is said to improve employees' perceptions of leadership support and attachment to the organisation (Meyer & Bartels, 2017; Sharma & Stol, 2020), facilitate citizenship behaviour (Walumbwa et al., 2008), and thus reduce the likelihood of WD (Cetin et al., 2015). Meyer and Bartels (2017) revealed that after 6 and 12 months, workers who had a complete OE that reinforced social and leader support reported higher levels of perceived organisational support and AC than those who had not and were also less likely to harm their organisation with withdrawal behavior (Chan et al., 2021).

We use the precepts of social exchange and organizational support theorie to explain the OE interactional link in the relationship between AC and WD. According to the reciprocity principle of social exchange and perceived organisational support (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Kim et al., 2016), perceived leader support through a successful OE inspires workers to respond favourably toward their employer through positive reciprocity (Aryee et al., 2002). Given the established findings that AC reduces turnover intention and unproductive behaviour (Baysal et al., 2020; Fazio et al., 2017; Gill et al., 2011), it is natural to conclude that OE buffers the mediating effect of AC in the TL-WD relationships. Furthermore, the impact of TL-induced emotional commitment on WD is stronger when the leader implements an effective onboarding training program for his employees, as opposed to when the employees are onboarded or left in a swim or sink practice (Ssempebwa et al., 2016). Based on the preceding, we hypothesised that

H5: Onboarding experience is negatively related to the Workplace deviance

H4: Onboarding experience moderates the mediated relationship between Transactional leadership and workplace deviance through Affective commitment, such that this mediating effect is more potent when employees are effectively onboarded than when employees are not effectively onboarded.
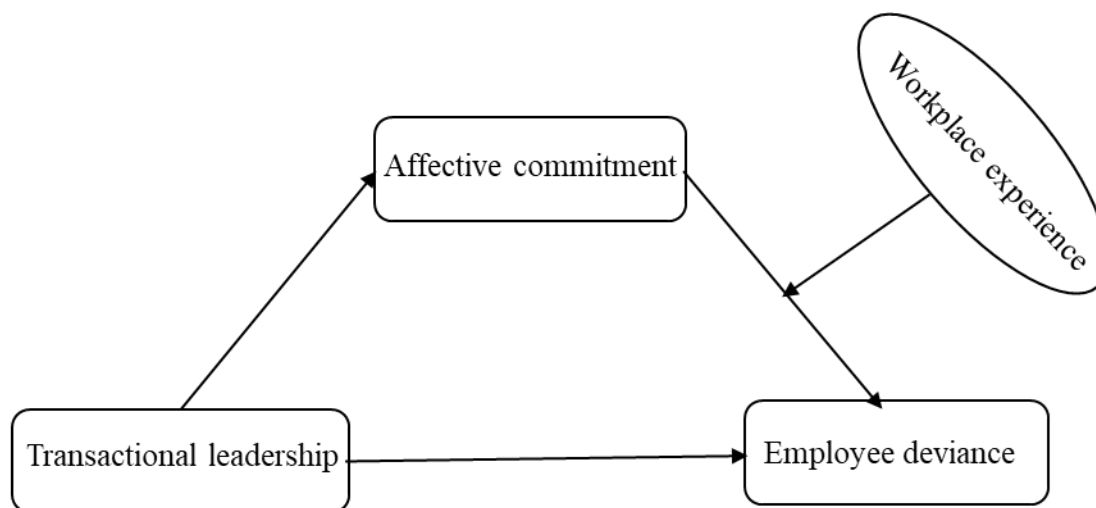


Figure 1 Research Framework

**Methodology**

 Due to travel constraints caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, a web-based online survey was employed to collect data from 308 Nigerian federal polytechnic academics. According to Geldsetzer (2020), during times of crisis, such as a disease outbreak or natural disaster, the availability of online resources presents a valuable potential for efficiently reaching far-flung populations and collecting data that previously would not have been possible. Furthermore, the direct measurement of deviant behaviour in the workplace is complicated because workers are hesitant to report their aberrant behaviour unless their responses are fully anonymous. Therefore, a snowball technique was employed to increase the reliability and accuracy of the responses since it allows referrals from persons who share a trait of research interest with the target population (Berndt, 2020). Moreover, the federal polytechnics were chosen to reflect the diversity and breadth of the country (Majekodunmi, 2013).

A rating scale with anchors from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" has been used. WD was measured by a scale developed by (Bennett and Robinson, 2000). However, in line with Dalal (2005), a composite measure was used instead. Eleven items relevant to the academic setting were used out of the 19 items in the original scale. "Dragged out work in order to gain overtime" is an example of an item that was discarded because it was found inappropriate for the academic setting in Nigeria (Adeoti et al., 2021). Furthermore, to explore TL as an independent variable, the present study used 11 items evaluating contingent reward and punishment behaviour from (Farh et al., 1987). They utilised a significantly modified version of the questionnaire by (Podsakoff et al., 1982). The affective commitment was measured as a mediator variable with six items developed by (Meyer et al., 1993). "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organisation" was an example of the items adopted in the current study. Two of the scale's items were reversed scored. Tian et al (2014) used a similar metric and found internal consistency coefficient alpha of 0.73. The OE was measured

as a moderator variable using ten composite measures of onboarding levels created by Bauer (2010) and validated numerous times in various behavioural and job outcomes studies (Meyer & Bartels, 2017; Scholar & Bowers, 2019). The response rate was 89.2%, the average age of the respondents in this study was approximately 40 years, and their average work experience was approximately 11 years.

To confirm the survey's content validity, a pilot test with 20 academic staff from one of the federal polytechnics allowed the instruments to be fine-tuned (Alexander et al., 2012). Ethical problems must be addressed in any research involving human participants. One of the ethical concerns was the participants' protection (Adeoti et al., 2021). Before agreeing to participate in the study, the participants were informed that their participation was completely optional and that they may opt-out at any moment throughout the survey. They were also guaranteed that they would not suffer any financial, bodily, mental, or social harm, that their identities would be kept anonymous, and that their replies would be kept private.

## Results

### Measurement Model

We used the two-step model-building method developed by Anderson and Gerbing (1988) to test the suggested model. In order to assess the structural model, we first looked at the measurement model, which comprised the latent constructs and their observable variables. Analyses were conducted to see whether the relevant scales had adequate levels of validity(convergent and discriminant validity) and reliability prior to evaluating the hypothesised links. Convergent validity is the degree of consistency across two or more measures of the same theoretical construct assessed using multiple approaches (Hair et al., 2020). In reflective measurement models, convergent validity is typically assessed using outer loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) (Bashir et al., 2019). Items with outer loadings less than 0.60 were first verified against each variable. For loadings less than 0.50, indicators such as WD10, AC06, and OE04 were omitted (Hair et al., 2010). Even though they had low loadings, AC02, OE01, OE02, WD01, and WD02 (see Table 1) were kept since AVE was within the threshold level of 0.50 (Henseler et al., 2015) in the presence of these indicators.

Discriminant validity refers to the extent to which one construct differs from others (Henseler et al., 2015). Following the recommendations of Hair et al (2020); Henseler et al (2016), Fornell-Larcker Criteria (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) and Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) (Henseler et al., 2015) were used to evaluate the discriminant validity as presented in Table 2 which confirmed that all model components are distinct (Hair & Alamer, 2022). On the construct reliability, Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability were used to assess construct reliability (Peterson & Kim, 2013). Table 1 demonstrates that all the alpha coefficients, composite reliability values, and AVE were greater than their cutoff values (Hair et al., 2020), justifying the measurement model's reliability and validity.

### Structural Model Assessment

After the measurement model had been validated, a path analysis was performed to evaluate the proposed hypotheses for this enquiry. With a resample size of 5,000, a non-parametric bootstrapping method was employed to get the coefficients and related t-values for the structural model. Before testing the hypotheses, we evaluated the model's predictive relevance using the $Q^2$ value and the predictive accuracy using the coefficient of determination ($R^2$) recommended by (Hair and Alamer, 2022). The $R^2$ value must be higher than or equal to 0.1. (Hair et al., 2020). The results in Table 3 demonstrate that all $R^2$ values

are greater than 0.1, indicating that the model's predictive power is well-established. Furthermore, $Q^2$ establishes the predictive value of the endogenous elements. The model is significant for prediction when the $Q^2$ is higher than 0. The results show that the predictive relevance of the constructs is significant (see Table 3). In line with Henseler et al. (2016), the study model's standardised root means square residual (SRMR), which was used to assess model fit, was determined as the root mean square variance between the observed correlations and those that the model implied. The SRMR for the model was 0.07, which is less than the necessary value of 0.08, indicating that the data fit the model well (Henseler et al., 2015).

Table 1
Reliability and Validity Results

| Constructs | Items | loadings | Cronbach alpha | Composite Reliability | AVE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **TL** | | | **0.955** | **0.961** | **0.692** |
| | TL01 | 0.716 | | | |
| | TL02 | 0.808 | | | |
| | TL03 | 0.847 | | | |
| | TL04 | 0.861 | | | |
| | TL05 | 0.897 | | | |
| | TL06 | 0.772 | | | |
| | TL07 | 0.891 | | | |
| | TL08 | 0.881 | | | |
| | TL09 | 0.802 | | | |
| | TL10 | 0.862 | | | |
| | TL11 | 0.793 | | | |
| **AC** | | | **0.878** | **0.907** | **0.673** |
| | AC01 | 0.745 | | | |
| | AC02 | 0.466 | | | |
| | AC03 | 0.936 | | | |
| | AC04 | 0.936 | | | |
| | AC05 | 0.917 | | | |
| **OE** | | | **0.883** | **0.917** | **0.533** |
| | OE01 | 0.639 | | | |
| | OE02 | 0.640 | | | |
| | OE05 | 0.767 | | | |
| | OE06 | 0.725 | | | |
| | OE07 | 0.711 | | | |
| | OE08 | 0.737 | | | |
| | OE09 | 0.811 | | | |
| | OE10 | 0.794 | | | |
| **WD** | | | **0.903** | **0.919** | **0.534** |
| | WD01 | 0.597 | | | |
| | WD02 | 0.674 | | | |
| | WD03 | 0.747 | | | |
| | WD04 | 0.718 | | | |

| | |
|---|---|
| WD05 | 0.739 |
| WD06 | 0.750 |
| WD07 | 0.830 |
| WD08 | 0.812 |
| WD09 | 0.684 |
| WD11 | 0.732 |

Table 2
*Discriminant validity results*

| Latent constructs | Fornell–Larcker criterion | | | | Heterotrait–monotrait ratio (HTMT)) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 1. AC | 0.82 | | | | | | | |
| 2. OE | 0.485 | 0.73 | | | 0.607 | | | |
| 3. TL | -0.044 | -0.029 | 0.832 | | 0.063 | 0.062 | | |
| 4. WD | 0.033 | 0.102 | -0.531 | 0.731 | 0.067 | 0.098 | 0.562 | |

Table 3
*Model(full) results summary*

| Hypotheses | Relationships | β | SE | t-value | p-value | Findings | $R^2$ | $Q^2$ | SRMR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| H1 | TL→WD | -0.394 | 0.102 | 3.851 | P<01 | Supported | $R^2$ WD = 0.44 | Q2-WD = 0.15 | 0.078 |
| H2 | TL→AC | 0.776 | 0.027 | 28.265 | P<01 | Supported | $R^2$ AC = 0.60 | $Q^2$-AC = 0.004 | |
| H3 | AC→WD | -0.260 | 0.109 | 2.385 | 0.017 | Supported | | | |
| H4 | OE→WD | -0.367 | 0.196 | 1.871 | 0.031 | Supported | | | |
| H5 | TL→AC→WD | -0.201 | 0.086 | 2.348 | 0.019 | Supported | | | |
| H6 | OE x AC→WD | -0.199 | 0.070 | 2.846 | 0.002 | Supported | | | |

Abbreviation: WB, workplace deviance; TL Transactional leadership; OE, Onboarding experience; AC, Affective commitment.

Table 4
*Indirect effect model*

| Total effect (TL →WD) | | Direct effect (TL →WD) | | The indirect effect of TL on WD | | | | | | | Findings |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Coefficient | p-value | Coefficient | p-value | | Coefficient | SD | t-value | p-value | VAF | B1[2.5%; 97.5%] | |
| -0.595 | 0.000 | -0.394 | 0.000 | H5: TL →A | -0.201 | 0.086 | 2.348 | 0.019 | 40% | -0.369; -0.035 | Supported |

| C |
| --- |
| → |
| WD |

**Abbreviation: WD workplace deviance TL Transactional leadership AC Affective**

Table 5

*Moderated mediation and conditional mediation results*

| Moderated Indirect Relationship | Direct Effect | Indirect Effect | Confidence Interval Low/High | P-Value |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| TL -> AC-> WD | -0.235 (3.041) | -0.296 (1.861) | | 0.031 |
| Low level of OE | | 0.043 | -0.100;0.268 | 0.303 |
| High Level of OE | | -0.159 | -0.357; -0.078 | 0.006 |
| Mean Level of OE | | -0.058 | -0.211;0.076 | 0.188 |
| Index of Moderated Mediation | | -0.199 | -0.294; -0.100 | 0.002 |

**Abbreviation: WD workplace deviance TL Transactional leadership AC Affective OE Onboarding experience.**

**Structural Model Analsis**
**Direct Effect Analysis**
As mentioned earlier, the significance level in the hypothesised relationships was checked using the bootstrapping approach, which produced a p-value of 0.000 and confirmed the significant negative relationship between TL and WD (β =-0.595), providing evidence in favour of H1. Table 3 provides a synopsis of the results obtained from evaluating the various hypotheses and indicates that all the hypotheses were supported. As can be seen from the results, the independent variables TL and AC explain 44 per cent of the variation in the dependent variable (WD). The results suggest that the research model's predictive quality and accuracy are about average (Hair et al., 2020).
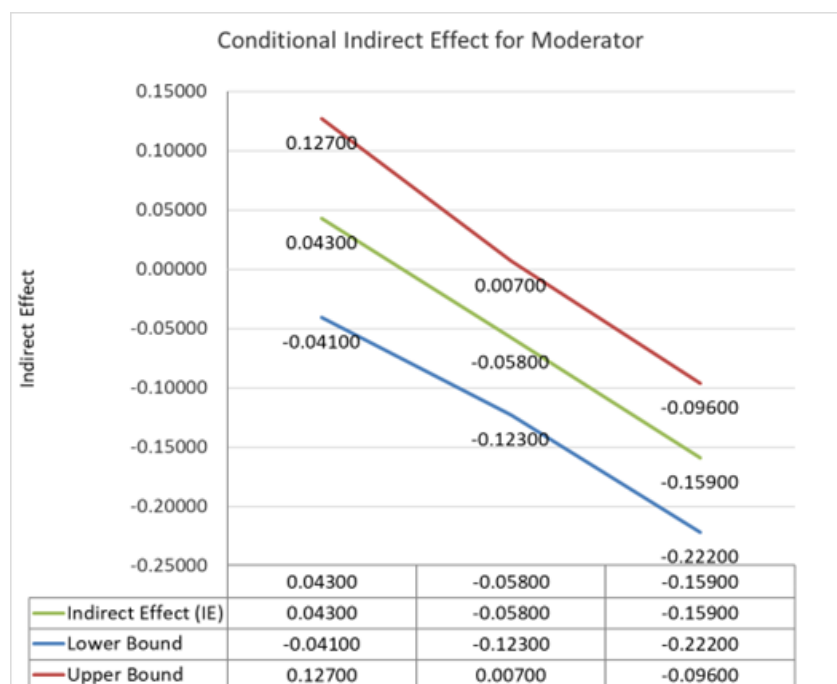
**Mediation Analysis**
According to academics, bootstrapping is one of the most thorough and effective techniques for determining the mediation effect garnering increasing attention (Adeoti et al., 2021; Zaman et al., 2021). Based on recommendations by Preacher and Hayes (2008), we used Smart PLS 4 and the 5000-resample bootstrapping to examine the direct and indirect effects of the mediating model and show the t-values. When AC (mediator) was excluded in the model, Table 4 demonstrates a significant negative direct association between TL and WD (β = -0.595, t = 0.052, p = 0.0001). The connection remained significantly negative when the mediator was added to the model (β = -0.394, t =0.102, p = 0.001). We did find that the link was more robust without the mediator, in any case. Additionally, as expected, H2 was supported by a positive connection between TL and AC (β = 0.776, t=28.265, p = 0001). A negative correlation between AC and WD was expected by hypothesis H3 (β = -0.260, t=2.385, p=0.017). Additionally, the indirect impact findings support H4 by demonstrating that TL

significantly predicts WD through AC negatively ($\beta$ = -0.201, t = 2.348, p = 0.019). These findings show that AC partially mediates the connection between TL and WD, which underpins our H4 hypothesis (see Table 4).

**Moderated and Conditional Mediation Analysis**

Using SmartsPLS 4 PROCESS model, a second test was run in this study to determine the significance of the conditional indirect impact. The findings in Table 5 show that the moderated mediation effect's index value of OE was significant. The test of moderated mediation based on the index term (Hayes, 2015) demonstrated that OE moderated the indirect effect of TL on WD [$\beta$ = -0.199, t=2.846, p=0.001]. Additional hypothesis tests were conducted to determine if the conditional indirect effect was statistically significant. The findings in Table 5 showed that for schools with an effective and high OE, AC mediated the association between TL and WD ($\beta$ = -0.159, t = 2.513, p = 0.006). But there was no evidence of an indirect effect for schools with a moderate level of OE($\beta$ = -0.058, t = 0.885, p=0.188) or low level of OE ($\beta$ = -0.043, t = 0.516, p=0.303). As a function of OE, the indirect effect's size was more negative.

This demonstrates that the negative indirect effect of TL on WD through AC has increased along with the level of OE. The moderated mediation hypothesis is therefore supported. The results are further supported by slope analysis (Figure 2), which demonstrates that when OE increases, so does the indirect impact of TL on WD via AC. The findings show that the mediation was moderated, meaning that the moderator further increased the negative effect.



| | 0.04300 | -0.05800 | -0.15900 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Indirect Effect (IE) | 0.04300 | -0.05800 | -0.15900 |
| Lower Bound | -0.04100 | -0.12300 | -0.22200 |
| Upper Bound | 0.12700 | 0.00700 | -0.09600 |

Transactional leadership

Figure 3. Moderated mediation plot

**Discussion**

This study's nobility lies in its moderated mediation model that examines how OE may alter the association between TL and WD through AC. In essence, the study sought to understand how TL behaviour, which is well known to have a positive impact on a range of employee

attitudes (Abasilim et al., 2019; Afshari & Gibson, 2016; Dai et al., 2013; Walumbwa et al., 2008), can be used to control undesirable behaviours when combined with the effects of other variables. To begin, the results confirm the hypothesised inverse link between TL and WD, demonstrating that employees are highly unlikely to engage in counterproductive behaviour in an organisation ruled by transactional leaders. This is consistent with earlier studies of this nature, such as that of Ali (2016), who found that TL style, by its contingent reward behaviour can reduce employee deviance. Our findings lend credence to the core claims of social exchange and organisational support theories, which hold that the relationship between an employer and an employee is an exchange in which fair treatment is expected to be reciprocated. Accordingly, employee perception of leader support and care results in extra-role behaviour and suppression of harmful attitudes (Kim et al., 2016)

Further evidence of a positive association between TL and AC was provided by the results in Table 3, which amply validated earlier findings (Afshari & Gibson, 2016; Budur, 2022). When employees feel cared for and supported by their employer through contingent reward behaviour, they are more likely to remain loyal to him (Kim et al., 2016). This pattern of results serves as additional evidence for the social exchange model that underpins employee work-related actions as a kind of payment for the leader's fair treatment of them in the form of rewarded behaviour and a positive attitude. The predicted negative effect of AC on WD discovered in the current investigation (see table 3) is not unprecedented because similar findings have already been made in various circumstances, albeit with inconsistent outcomes (Amin et al., 2021; Qazi et al., 2019).

Furthermore, Table 3 reveals a significant negative association between OE and WD, as expected. This is in addition to the moderator role that OE was expected to play in the indirect effects relationships (Table 4). Previous studies have rarely discovered such a link, but several studies have identified significant positive work and employee behaviour outcomes of a successful OE (Asfaw et al., 2015; Chan et al., 2021; Meyer & Bartels, 2017). With these developments, our findings have made the following contributions:

**Theoretical Contribution**
This study recognises the importance of the organisational support theory (Eisenberger et al., 2001) and the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) in comprehending the motivational foundation of employee job outcomes. As a result, the findings of the indirect effects have specifically confirmed the fundamental concepts of the organisational support and social exchange theories and the results of prior studies like (Wu et al., 2020). The arguments in these two interconnected theories suggest that if a leader treats their staff well, and the staff perceives organisational support or procedural justice, such as a leader's contingent reward for good deeds and being accommodated, the staff will typically reciprocate by acting outside of their roles and suppressing unproductive behaviour that could harm the workgroup or organisation (Abbasi & Baradari, 2020; Aryee et al., 2002; Walumbwa et al., 2008).

In addition to providing new insight into the role of the OST and SET in explaining WD, which literature is highly scarce on, the current study linked two traditionally independent research fields, TL and WD, in a moderated mediation model, thereby creating new avenues for enhancing the development of each field. Leadership style and WD are widespread organisational phenomena in the context of education. Earlier research has shown that leadership style significantly influences employee behavioural outcomes (Amin et al., 2018a; Walumbwa et al., 2008; Zheng et al., 2020). However, it is crucial to do empirical research to identify a suitable leadership style to address the issue of deviant behaviours among

academics, given the worrisome rise in misbehaviour among Nigerian academics (Adeoti et al., 2021). Coincidentally, according to a recent study, Nigerian workers are primarily motivated by reward and punishment (Olowookere et al., 2021), hence, contingent reward leadership behaviour seems to be an appropriate concept to study in the Nigerian context. This finding, therefore, adds TL as one important antecedent of WD.

This study's other major contribution is its identification of AC as a mediator of the association between TL and WD. Thus, it further established the mediating function of AC (Tian et al., 2014; Wu et al., 2020). The results add to the AC literature by suggesting TL as a new predictor of the AC in this scenario. Furthermore, generally, the impacts of inefficient onboarding programs have been limited to withdrawal behaviour in prior studies (Chan et al., 2021; Meyer & Bartels, 2017). To extend the OE literature, we have added the WD measure of well-tested metrics (Bennett & Robinson, 2000).

Another striking contribution of this research is the moderated mediation model that applies the OST and SET to define the mediation and moderation paths. This model gave a theoretical framework for how an independent variable (TL) might affect a dependent variable (WD) through a mediator (AC). It sheds light on the study of other predictors of WD in which AC may mediate the relationship. As for the moderator, OE moderated the mediating effect of AC, the indirect relationship between TRL and WD. High levels of OE boasted the mediating effect of AC (Tian et al., 2014; Wu et al., 2020).


**Practical Contribution**

This study offers management guidance on adopting a transactional leadership style to inspire and foster a sense of justice among academics to address WD. Our findings suggest that the leadership of high schools should demonstrate a greater sense of fairness and openness by rewarding good behaviours and fairly sanctioning lousy performance. Furthermore, school management should concentrate on the influence of situational factors. Simultaneously, new employees should be effectively onboarded to enhance the understanding of their roles and responsibilities, school rules and regulations, conditions of service, and harmful results of WD behaviour, and establish harmonious and healthy internal relationships.

In addition, a decent and high-quality education is required for sustainable development, according to agenda target 4 of the 2030 United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development (Owens, 2017). That could be achieved unquestionably with the mitigation of workplace unproductive behaviour s in schools

**Limitations and Future Studies**

The current research has made significant contributions but has some drawbacks. First, using cross-sectional data limits our ability to make causal inferences. Future researchers are encouraged to use longitudinal design to show causality over time and learn more about the relationship between predictors (TL) and outcomes (WD). Moreover, this study used self-report measures to evaluate deviance in the workplace. According to Podsakoff et al (2003); Tehseen et al (2017), self-reporting is linked to the common method variance. Participants in this study may have under-reported their deviance on survey questionnaires despite efforts to guarantee anonymity and improve scale items (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). It is recommended that supervisor evaluations and peer reporting of WD be utilised to mitigate social desirability and bias (Patten & Newhart, 2017). Moreover, academic staff from federal polytechnics were used for the samples of this study. Consequently, the findings are not

generalisable. Future studies ought to focus on state polytechnics and non-academic workers. In addition, the same study methodology can be investigated and applied in various other domains outside of the realm of education. Furthermore, although theories (notably, SET and OST) guided the selection of this moderated mediation model (using AC and OE), there are many other interactive elements through which TL may affect WD. Future research can look into potential moderators in TL-WD connections. For instance, formal organizational controls (particularly deterrence effects) may reinforce the inverse relationship between TL and WD (Chen et al., 2012; Zheng et al., 2020). Additionally, the association between TL and WD may change depending on individual characteristics or personalities (Amin et al., 2018b) and self-regulatory efficacy (Kura et al., 2015).

## Conclusions

The current study was inspired by the increasingly unfavourable attitudes of academics in Nigeria to analyse their scope and identify effective remedies. The research's findings indicate that WD in schools can be significantly decreased by switching to a stick-and-carrots leadership style that enhances motivation and commitment. A fascinating finding was that a high level of OB enhances the negative indirect link between TL and WD in the workplace, even though some conditional mediations have not been supported.

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