
Five-Factor Model (FFM) and Deviant Work Behaviours among Academic Staff of Nigerian Universities: A Conceptual Model

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Abstract: *This is a conceptual paper about understanding the impact of the big five-factor model on deviant work behaviours among academic staff of universities in Nigeria located in the north-western zone. Deviant work behaviours are employee free-will behaviours that transgress organizational norms and do negatively affect goals and effectiveness of the organization, its members, or both. Generally, literature reveals lack of comprehensive empirical research regarding the relationship between personality factors (big five) and deviant behaviours in the academia. Thus, studies about how these behaviors interact with each other remain critical for all organizations, especially those in Nigeria where limited related research studies were observed. Specifically, literature available, especially the internet-based, reveals absence of empirical studies on Nigerian academic staff deviant work behaviours and the impact of the big five personality factors. This paper attempts to close this gap by proposing a model that would explain the role of the big five personality factors in influencing deviant work behaviours of faculty members in some selected universities in Northwestern Nigeria.*

Keywords: *Big Five Personality Factors, Deviant Workplace Behavior, Five-factor Model, Personality.*

1. Introduction

It is widely believed that performance is considered a function of employees' workplace behaviors (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993; Campbell, McHenry & Wise, 1990). Job performance involves "those actions and behaviors that are under the control of the individual and that contribute to the achievement of the organization's objectives" (Rotundo & Sackett, 2002, p. 66). Literature reveals that there are two components of overall performance in the job namely formal tasks (task behaviors) and informal tasks that are defined outside the job analysis (discretionary behaviors). Deviant workplace deviance (DWB) is defined as employee free-will behavior that transgresses organizational norms and consequently puts the functioning of that organization, or its members, or both, at risk (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Examples of DWB behaviors in academic environment include dodging class, sexual harassment, embarrassing colleagues, or students.

DWB plays an important role in determining overall organizational performance (Bennett & Robinson, 2000; Filipczak, 1993). Deviant work behavior (DWB) consists of voluntary acts that break major organizational norms and threaten the welfare of the organization and/or its members. Robinson and Bennett (1995) identified four types of deviant behavior: (1) production deviance which involves damaging quantity and quality of work; (2) property deviance which involves abusing or stealing company property; (3) political deviance which involves badmouthing others or spreading rumors; and finally (4) personal aggression which involves being hostile or violent toward others.

Generally, workplace deviant behavior (DWB) is a pervasive and expensive problem for organizations (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). In the U.S. organizations, research indicated that 75% of employees steal from their employer at least once (McGurn, 1988). It has also been estimated that 33% to 75% of all U.S. employees have engaged in deviant work behaviors such as theft, fraud, vandalism, sabotage, and voluntary absenteeism (Harper, 1990). DWB leads to huge financial cost and therefore poses a serious economic threat to organizations. Regardless of the type, deviant workplace behavior has accounted for a tremendous financial cost and even permanent damage to a workplace environment (Appelbaum, Deguire & Lay, 2005). Bensimon (1994) reported that the annual costs of workplace deviance were estimated to reach as high as \$4.2 billion for workplace violence alone, \$40 to \$120 billion for theft (Buss, 1993; Camara & Schneider, 1994), and \$6 to \$200 billion for a wide range of delinquent organizational behavior (Murphy, 1993).

There are numerous DWBs that employees can engage in, such as lying (DePaulo & DePaulo, 1989), spreading rumors (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997), withholding effort (Kidwell & Bennett, 1993), absenteeism (Johns, 1997) and outright violence (Appelbaum et al., 2005). Therefore, employees may choose from among deviant behaviors within a family that are functionally equivalent, least constrained, most feasible, or least costly, given the context (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). If an individual engages in one behavior from a family, he or she is more likely to engage in another behavior from that family than to engage in a behavior within another family. However, employees may engage in behavioral switching within families because the behaviors within each are substitutable and functionally equivalent (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Therefore, employees may engage in one or several behaviors from a wide set (Bennett & Robinson, 2000).

Considerable research effort has been put toward determining the antecedents and consequences of DWB. Various studies suggest a wide range of factors responsible for deviant work behavior (Bennett, 1998, Robinson & Bennett, 1995; Robinson & Greenberg, 1999), ranging from reactions to perceived injustice, job dissatisfaction, role modeling and thrill-seeking. Globally, the primary function of any educational system and its teachers is to promote learning among players within the system (Alam, Hoque, & Oke, 2010; Oke, Okunola, Oni, & Adetoro, 2010). If organizational members fail to perform their roles or tasks, it will be very unlikely that the organizational goals will be achieved. Indeed, past studies have confirmed that work behavior measured in terms of employee cooperation, conformity, commitment, morale and participation, are part of the conditions for measuring the achievement of organizational efficiency and goals (Ojo, 2009). However, success of university and indeed all tertiary institutions depends not only on the task behaviors of faculty members but on their non-work behaviors. Therefore, how well the university's goals will be achieved will largely be affected by the non-work behaviors such as decreasing DWB.

In Nigeria, the public, parents, government and researchers have unanimously agreed that academic activities, particularly teaching and facilitation, have deteriorated in Nigeria's institutions of higher learning. Most often, this problem has been labeled on lecturers, pointing that they have fallen short of their job and public expectations. For example, Oke et al. (2010) have reported that some administrators of schools and universities express concern over increasing nonchalant attitude of teachers in carrying out their duties. Some of these bad attitudes include habitual late-coming; frequent absence from school without good reasons; refusal to teach students even when on ground; and dodging classes. Generally, these negative behaviors by teachers result in a poor atmosphere in the schools and universities (Williams, 1993). More specifically, it has been revealed from a study of employers conducted to evaluate the quality of graduates from Nigerian tertiary institutions, that the quality of the graduates is deteriorating (The Scholar, 2001). It is common, in Nigeria, to learn from the public and grapevine that lecturers are responsible for poor performance of their students leading to production of half-baked graduates. Empirically, Oke et al. (2010) have argued that parents and the general public have attributed the poor level of students' performance to teachers' unwillingness to do their job well. Additionally, Shoyole (1998) has summarized the public impression on teachers in Nigerian tertiary institutions as "teachers are so high in demand, yet they are low in spirit" (p. 1). He further stated that teachers seem to have lost satisfaction for their work and all their zeal and energy appear to be largely directed to fighting for one thing or another.

Furthermore, many parents and members of the public look at academics in Nigerian universities as morally bankrupt. The public have some negative perception against the academics regarding sexual harassment, victimization of students and extortion of money from students. In fact, research has confirmed the public allegation of sexual harassment as a deviant behavior in Nigeria's institutions of higher (Imonikhe, Aluede & Idogho, 2012). Previously, the commission on the review of higher education in Nigeria (CRHEN, 1991), as reported in Ladebo (2001) has claimed that sexual harassment has been gradually assuming critical dimension in Nigeria's higher institutions of learning. On the other hand, in view of the destructive effects of non-task behaviors in form of deviant work behaviors, there is continuous need for understanding of factors that are responsible for negative deviant work behaviors from the faculty members of Nigerian universities. Therefore, the current study will investigate the effects of personality characteristics of lecturers of Nigerian universities.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to investigate the impact of the five personality factors on the performance of deviant workplace behaviors by academic staff of universities in the North-west political of Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives include:

1. To examine the extent to which emotional stability influence deviant work behaviors among lecturers in Nigerian universities?
2. To examine the extent to which extraversion influence deviant work behaviors among lecturers in Nigerian universities?
3. To examine the extent to which openness to experience influence deviant work behaviors among lecturers in Nigeria's universities?
4. To examine the extent to which conscientiousness influence deviant work behaviors among lecturers in Nigerian universities?
5. To examine the extent to which agreeableness influence deviant work behaviors among lecturers in Nigerian universities?

1.2 Statement of Hypotheses

Therefore, the following five Null hypotheses have been formulated for testing in this study.

Ho₁: Extraversion is not significantly related to deviant work behaviors among lecturers of universities in Nigeria.

Ho₂: Openness to experience is not significantly related to deviant work behaviors among lecturers of universities in Nigeria.

Ho₃: Conscientiousness is not significantly related to deviant work behaviors among lecturers of universities in Nigeria.

Ho₄: Agreeableness is not significantly related to deviant work behaviors among lecturers of universities in Nigeria.

Ho₅: Emotional stability is not significantly related to deviant work behaviors among lecturers of universities in Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

Workplace deviance occurs when an employee voluntarily pursues a course of action that threatens the well-being of the individual or the organization. Examples include stealing, hostile behavior towards co-workers, and withholding effort. Stealing and withholding effort are categorized as organizational deviance, whereas hostile and rude behaviors toward co-workers are categorized as interpersonal deviance. Research found that workplace deviant behaviors are related to the five-factor model of personality (Mount et al., 2002). Interpersonal deviance is negatively correlated with high levels of agreeableness. Organizational deviance is negatively correlated with high levels of conscientiousness and positively correlated with high levels of neuroticism. This implies that individuals who are emotionally stable and conscientious are less likely to withhold effort or steal, whereas those who are agreeable are less likely to be hostile to their coworkers.

Extraversion or positive emotionality is concerned with an individual's expressiveness, energy, and positive mood (Fleeson, Malanos, & Achille, 2002). Individuals identified with high levels of extraversion are characterized by warmth, gregariousness, and positive emotions (Harden, & Hitlan, 2005). Literature reveals significant relationship between extraversion and DWB (Colbert et al., 2004; Mount et al., 2002; Prinzie et al., 2010; Rogers, Seigfried, & Tidkea, 2006; Torrente, & Vazsonyi, 2012). Broadly, Lee, Ashton and Shin (2005) found extraversion trait to be a predictor of both destructive deviances directed at the organization and at individuals in the organization. More specifically, some previous studies have provided evidence that extraversion is positively related to antisocial or deviant

behaviors among youth including alcohol, drug abuse, vandalism, and theft (Torrente, & Vazsonyi, 2012). Another research conducted among students of information technology program indicated that the only significant variable among the Big Five personality factors for predicting criminal/deviant computer behavior was extroversion (Rogers, Seigfried, & Tidkea, 2006). Similarly, other studies have demonstrated that sexual promiscuity was highly related to extroversion across many, but not all, world regions (Brackett, 2001; Schmitt, 2004). Furthermore, research found that one plausible reason why extroverts engage in sexual promiscuity may include that they have a higher libido than introverts (Schmitt, 2004).

Openness is defined as openness to knowledge that implies intelligence as well as openness to experience and becoming artistically sensitive, creative, and imaginative (Caspi, Roberts, & Shiner, 2005). Individuals high in openness to experience are characterized by unconventional values and divergent thinking, being more emotionally expressive (both positive and negative), being more intellectual, and being more open to reexamine their value system (Harden & Hitlan, 2005). Similarly, individuals who are low on openness were reported to be too traditional, conventional, narrow-minded, intolerant of ambiguity, inflexible, prefer the status quo and dislike changes, or surprises (Goldberg, 1999). Thus, suggesting that individuals who are high in openness trait are expected to be critical in their approach, sensitive, creative, and imaginative. Furthermore, individuals high in openness trait might be negatively related to DWB because of their ability to quickly understand changing demands of novel situations at work, ability to understand and tolerate individuals who are different and their general preference for change and innovation (Goldberg, 1999).

Previous studies conducted in different context and settings (Harden, & Hitlan, 2005; Liao, Joshi, & Chuang, 2004; Mount & Johnson, 2006). Liao et al., (2004) found that this personality dimension was negatively correlated with organizational destructive deviance. Another study that used both self- and boss ratings conducted among Caucasian customer service employees in the US revealed that people who were low in openness engaged in more deviant behavior than those who are high in openness (Mount & Johnson, 2006). Similar study among medium-sized utility company employees in the US revealed that counterproductive behaviors are associated more with employees reporting low levels of openness to experience (Harden & Hitlan, 2005). Additionally, in a survey of employees working in franchised stores in the US, results demonstrated that openness to experience was significantly but negatively related to organizational deviance (Liao, Joshi, & Chuang, (2004).

Conscientiousness is defined as cognitive and behavioral control (Caspi et al., 2005). Individuals who score high on conscientiousness are usually persistent, neat, attentive, responsible and good planners (Caspi et al., 2005). Conscientious individuals are those who are naturally hardworking, achievement oriented, punctual, dependable, and careful (Colbert et al., 2004). Conscientiousness does affect DWB negatively because conscientious individuals are likely to exert more effort to achieve effectiveness, and are also likely to sustain a high level of effort even when they hold unfavorable perceptions of the situation at work (Colbert et al., 2004). Additionally, conscientious individuals are better workers than less conscientious people because they have self-control (Salgado, 2002). Thus, conscientious individuals may be able to control their behavior despite existence of negative work situations (Colbert et al., 2004). Furthermore, other studies (Ones & Viswesvaran, 1996; Yang & Diefendorff, 2009) demonstrated that when individuals who are conscientious experience negative emotions, because of their self-control, they refrain from engaging in retaliatory deviant behaviors than less conscientious individuals.

Various studies conducted across different settings have consistently revealed negative relationship between conscientiousness and DWB (Farhadi et al., 2011; Farhadi, Fatimah, Nasir, & Shahrazad, 2012; Berry et al., 2007; Dalal, 2005; Salgado, 2002; Schmitt, 2004; Waheeda & Hafidz, 2012). Using a sample of store managers and assistant managers of convenience stores in the USA, Colbert et al. (2004) found that the personality traits of conscientiousness, emotional stability, and agreeableness were negatively related to performance of DWB. Specifically, they demonstrated that the relationship between perceptions of the developmental environment and organizational deviance was stronger for employees scoring low in conscientiousness. Additionally, results from a survey involving a wide variety of jobs across heterogeneous organizations in Thailand indicated that DWB was predicted by personality characteristics

including low conscientiousness (Changa & Smithikrai, 2010). Similarly, Schmitt (2004) has demonstrated that across 10 world regions, sexual infidelity was universally associated with low conscientiousness. In addition, a study, conducted among employees of governmental and private sectors in Thailand, has indicated that, under a weak situation, conscientiousness has a stronger negative relationship with DWB when agreeableness is low than when it is high (Smithikrai, 2008). More recently, in a study conducted among Malaysian civil servants, conscientiousness was found to be significantly negatively correlated with workplace deviant behaviors (Fatimah et al., 2012).

Agreeableness is defined as an individual's warm-affection, gentleness, generosity, and modesty-humility (Saucier & Ostendorf, 1999). Agreeable people are known to be considerate, nurturing, kind, forgiving, and tolerant of others, thus, are not likely to engage in deviant behaviors against others even if provoked by negative perceptions of others' behaviors or the environment. Additionally, highly agreeable people are more likely to engage in helpful, courteous interactions with others even when provoked by negative perceptions of the work situation (Colbert et al., 2004). Similarly, agreeable individuals possess traits that facilitate positive social interactions (Graciano & Eisenberg, 1997). Moreover, highly agreeable employees refrain from DWB because they avoid hurting others and are submissive to rules (Bowling et al., 2011; Torrente & Vazsonyi, 2012). Furthermore, agreeable individuals have more positive relationships with others in the workplace, whereas disagreeable individuals may be more likely to exhibit interpersonally deviant behavior (Colbert et al., 2004; Mount et al., 1998).

Literature reveals consistent significant positive relationship between agreeableness and DWB (Bodankin & Tziner, 2009; Colbert et al., 2004; Farhadi et al., 2012; Mount et al., 2002; Schmitt, 2004; Torrente & Vazsonyi, 2012; Waheeda & Hafidz, 2012). Using employees of convenience stores in the US, Colbert et al. (2004) found that the relationship between perceived organizational support and interpersonal deviance was stronger for employees with low level of agreeableness. Also, in a study of workplace deviance among customer-service employees, Mount et al. (2002) found that agreeableness was the Big Five personality factor that had the strongest negative relationship with supervisor ratings of interpersonal deviance. Similarly, in a different setting, Mount et al. (2006) revealed that agreeableness had a direct negative relationship with interpersonal deviant work behaviors. In another study, findings have shown that agreeableness was related to interpersonal destructive deviance (Bodankin & Tziner, 2009). Agreeableness was found to be negatively correlated with deviant behaviors such as physical fights and vandalization of organizational property (Brackett & Mayer, 2003). Importantly related to this finding, three meta-analytic results have demonstrated that agreeableness personality trait is negatively related to deviant behavior in organizations (Berry et al., 2007; Dalal, 2005; Salgado, 2002).

Similarly, studies conducted in non-work settings have also demonstrated significant negative effect of agreeableness on individuals' deviant behaviors. For example, Schmitt (2004) has demonstrated that across 10 world regions, sexual infidelity was universally associated with low agreeableness. Similarly, using youths as sample, Torrente and Vazsonyi (2012) demonstrated that under conditions of low paternal control, the relationship between agreeableness and vandalism was statistically significant and negative. In a similar study, Miller, Lyman, and Lukefield (2003) who examined relationships among agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and antisocial behaviors including aggression, and personality disorder symptoms reported that all the three domains were significant predictors, but the facets of agreeableness were most consistently related to the antisocial behaviors (i.e. deviant behaviors).

Emotional stability is defined as an individual's predisposition regarding to low irritability, low insecurity and low emotionability (Salgado, 2002). Thus, an individual who is predisposed to experience negative emotions (i.e., a person low in emotional stability) is likely to engage in disproportionate amounts of DWBs. Several studies about the relationship between FFM and DWBs revealed consistent significant relationship among three FFM's traits (neuroticism/low emotional stability, conscientiousness and agreeableness) and DWBs (Bowling et al., 2011; Cullen & Sackett, 2003; Mount et al., 2006; Ones et al., 2003).

Some plausible reasons about the non-significant relationship between emotional stability and deviant workplace behaviors among lecturers were proffered as follows: First, all related previous studies (Berry et al., 2007; Dalal, 2005; Farhadi et al., 2012; Salgado, 2002; Torrente & Vazsonyi, 2012) that shown

significant relationship between emotional stability and DWBs were conducted in western cultures and more importantly in settings that were not academic. Second, lecturers who participated in this study might not have taken emotional stability to be an important personality characteristic that could impact on their relationship with others, or the institutions they work with. They might also not have considered measures of emotional stability important for career development and success. Third, another reason for the non-significant effect of emotional stability on deviant behaviors of lecturers in Nigeria's tertiary institutions of learning might be because emotionality is practically more difficult to understand, assess and measure compared to the other four personality factors. For example, emotional intelligence which is a correlate of emotional stability is found to be more difficult to measure than IQ which is a correlate of conscientiousness (Stys & Brown, 2004).

Generally, lecturers work in a relatively environment that freedom of expression and association (academic freedom) reign supreme. This unique experience may have provided lecturers with different perception and value systems by which they form their personality, particularly how they form their emotions and view the world around them. Because most of the personality traits could be impacted by environment and world views, it is critical to mention the kind of the work environment might have contributed to the current non-significant relationship between emotional stability and performance of DWB.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The Five-Factor Model of personality has become the most widely accepted and robust taxonomy of personality traits (Block, 1995). Related to this, James and Mazerolle (2002) stated that the conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion, emotional stability and openness to experience (Five-Factor traits) are the dispositions at the highest level of a hierarchy of personality traits. Understanding the relationship between personality characteristics and academic staff deviant behaviors may be central to understanding human tendencies of lecturers to engage in DWB, and perhaps sheds some light on managing strategies. The Big Five traits (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Conscientiousness and Agreeableness) represent core aspects of human personality and have strong influences on behavior (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Personality is adjudged to be a significant determinant of behavior in weak or ambiguous situations in which there are few situational constraints on behaviors (Mischel, 1973; Organ, 1994). More elaborately, it has been argued that when situational pressures or constraints on behavior are few, people are freer to express themselves and behave according to their characteristic tendencies, predispositions or innate traits. Against these theoretical backgrounds, universities in Nigeria are believed to be autonomous environment where freedom is relatively enjoyed by staff members, thus personality traits model can offer a useful explanation of academic staff deviant behaviors (DWB) in universities operating in Nigerian.

Furthermore, substantial evidence suggests that at least some features of the personality such as the Big Five affect workplace discretionary behaviors including OCB and DWB (Dalal, 2005). Personality theory is well established that individual traits such as trait anger, neuroticism, conscientiousness, and agreeableness are the causes of some forms of workplace deviance (Berry, Ones & Sackett, 2007; Mount, Ilies & Johnson, 2006; Salgado, 2002). It is most likely, that same influence of personality Big Five may be established in academic environment where lecturers freely interact with students, colleagues and the organization.

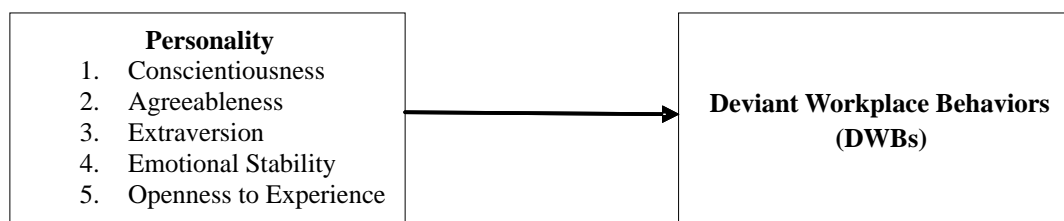


Figure 2.1: Research Framework

3. Research Methodology

This section discusses research methodology and procedure to be undertaken by this study (i.e., the research design). Specifically, this section discusses aspects of research design including population of the study, sampling size, and measures to be used in developing the research instrument.

3.1 Study Approach

A survey research design would be used in this study to gather the necessary data. This study employed survey study where questionnaire would be used to measure research participants' perception of their five personality characteristics and workplace deviance. Cross-sectional survey method was employed where a period of 6 months would be used in collecting the data. Cross-sectional survey method is chosen for this study to avoid long time consumption that characterized the longitudinal research (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010).

3.2 Population of the Study

Presently, Nigeria has 40 federal universities. However, this study focuses only the teaching staff of 26 federal owned universities in Nigeria. This is because they are well established with their functioning structures and systems for over 25 years. Thus, the population of this study consists of all academic staff of 26 federal universities in Nigeria. Estimate of population of lecturers in the 26 federal owned universities in Nigeria is 30,000 as at the year 2014 (Moshood, 2014).

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

In line with Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) scientific guide for determining sample size, the required sample size for the population of 30,000 academic staff across the 26 federal owned universities in Nigeria is 379 academic staff members. Regarding the sampling technique, this study would employ convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where subjects are selected because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). Convenience sampling is appropriate and justified for this study considering the fact that lecturers of Nigerian universities are dispersed across all the six Nigeria's geo-political zones in 34 states of the federation. Covering all the clusters is undoubtedly going to be very costly. Additionally, the choice of convenience sampling becomes a good option because of the difficulty to obtain sample frame for administering the study's instrument. Releasing official information about employees is considered highly confidential in Nigeria.

3.4 Measurement of Variables

This section explains the measurement and instrumentation of the main variables of this study. Thus, the measures and instrument for assessing the personality and DWB were discussed here.

3.4.1 Personality

The Big five traits would be assessed using some selected items from the popular Costa and McCrae's (1992) FFM measurement. Specifically, the Big Five factors (BFF) will be measured using 26 modified items. A 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from "Never" to "Always" will be used in ranking responses. Except conscientiousness, five items have been drawn from each of the big five factors. Previous studies have indicated strong reliability coefficients for the five personality dimensions; for example, Salgado (2002) established the BFF individual average reliabilities to be .81, .79, .74, .76 and .81, for emotional stability, extraversion, openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness, respectively.

3.4.2 Deviant Workplace Behaviors

The DWB instrument for this study includes 23-item scale designed to measure deviant behavior of academic staff of universities in Nigeria. In addition, a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from "Never" to "Always" would be used in ranking of responses. Specifically, the Bennett and Robinson (2000) work deviance instrument would be adopted with modifications. Some example of the scale items include: "I tell badly about my university in public, "I say things that hurt feelings of some colleagues at work, and "I force students to purchase reading materials where profits accrue to me". Previous study reported internal consistency of .75 (Zoghbi Manrique de Lara, 2008).

4. Conclusion

From the above conceptual analysis, research objectives, hypotheses, review of relevant literature, discussion of methods, it can be concluded that the proposed study is based on sound theoretical and literature framework. If empirically conducted, the study is expected to contribute to the body of knowledge both practically and theoretically. Practically, this study will assist Nigerian universities to better understand the value and influence of personality factors on deviant behaviors of lecturers. Hence, this knowledge can help them in employee recruitment, selection and training. Additionally, this study will be significant theoretically by providing knowledge about the Five-Factor Model and DWB in a new contextual framework (Nigeria).

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