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# Workplace Deviance Behaviors

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## Abstract

This research study employed a casual comparative approach to investigating the workplace deviance behaviors of educational leaders in the primary and high schools in Egypt. Random samples of 239 managerial employees in the primary and high schools were selected. The research study measures the workplace deviance behaviors of leaders. Chi-squares and t-test results revealed that no statistical differences were noted between the primary and high schools with regard to interpersonal deviance (ID), organizational deviance (OD), and workplace deviance.

**Keywords:** leader's workplace deviance, interpersonal deviance, organizational deviance

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## 1. Introduction

The past 10 years have fostered an increased interest in the unethical behavior exhibited by firms. Large corporations such as Enron, WorldCom, and Tyco have brought public attention to the inherent dangers of unethical business practices [1]; therefore, employee deviance, such as theft, withholding effort, and maltreatment of coworkers, is a pressing issue for most organizations [2].

Deviant workplace behaviors are becoming a cause for considerable concern in organizations across the globe [3]. Australian national poll reported that about 31% of workers had been verbally abused by their immediate supervisor and about 35% by a coworker [4]; also, the US Chamber of Commerce estimates that between 33 and 75% of all employees have engaged in other aggressive behaviors such as theft, fraud, vandalism, and sabotage, 75% of all employees steal at least once [5, 6], and about 95% of all organizations experience employee theft [7].

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Concept of workplace deviance

According to Wikipedia workplace deviance in group psychology may be described as the deliberate (or intentional) desire to cause harm to an organization—more specifically, a workplace. The concept has become an instrumental component in the field of organizational communication.

Also, workplace deviance has been defined as a voluntary behavior that violates significant organizational norms and, in so doing, threatens the well-being of the organization, its members, or both [8].

DeVore (2001) insists that workplace deviance related to any intentional behavior on the part of an organization member is viewed by the organization as divergent and contrary to its valid or legitimate interests. Workplace deviance can be explained as the intentional or planned desire to cause damage to an organization [9].

Neuman and Baron [10] noted that there is much conceptual overlap between workplace deviance and workplace aggression as both involve hostile intent and motive. Despite many similarities, several critical components distinguish deviant behaviors from other constructs. For example, workplace deviant behaviors:

1. Are not accidental, but instead voluntary and motivated; deviance is conceptualized as a reaction to experiences at work.
2. Violate norms established by leaders of the organization; therefore, deviance happened as a reflection of the employees' personality.
3. Can be targeted at organizational members or at the organization itself; therefore, the deviance happened as adaptation to the social context at work [11, 12].

The employees who are abused by their supervisors will be more likely to engage in deviant workplace behaviors, but also not all employees retaliate in deviance [13]; Hollinger's [14] division of deviant work behaviors into property and production deviance recognized distinctions between attacks on organizational processes and attacks on material resources of the organization, but did not recognize deviant behavior with respect to persons.

### 2.2. Deviant behavior definition

Deviant behavior may be acceptable or not from the legal standpoint, but, importantly, it contradicts general social norms. For example, verbally abusing a coworker, lying, taking credit for others' work, or unfairly claiming more resources for the self may be legal or not. However, one of its common examples is that these behaviors violate significant societal norms and have the potential to harm others [15].

Robinson and Bennett [8] identified deviant behavior among individuals—interpersonal deviant—as one of the two primary categories of such behavior [16].

But counterproductive work behaviors can be defined as a voluntary behavior that violates significant organizational norms and in so doing threatens the well-being of an organization, its members, or both ([8], p.556).

### 2.3. The dimensions of workplace deviance

Workplace deviance is enacted in a wide variety of forms that can vary from context to context [17].

According to Robinson and Bennett [8], they identified two dimensions of workplace deviance, severity and target; they use multidimensional scaling analysis as follows [18]:

*Severity:* The dimension of severity refers to the extent to which the deviant act violates important organizational norms and thus is perceived as more potentially harmful to the organization or its members. Relatively, minor forms of deviance include such behaviors as social loafing and unjustified absenteeism, whereas more severe forms might involve physical aggression or theft.

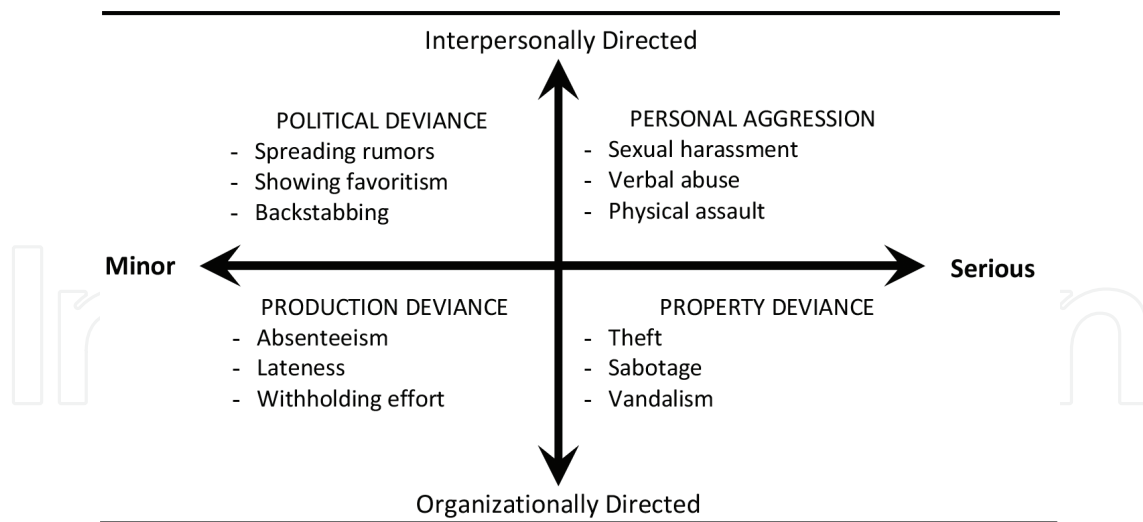
*Target:* The target dimension reflects whether the deviance is directed at the organization or organizational members. Organization-directed deviance might include, for example, vandalism, theft, or sabotage. In contrast, individual-directed deviance might include gossip or physical assault. Although a given act of deviance may harm both targets, organizational members will tend to direct their deviant actions at primarily an individual or an organizational target.

Bennett and Robinson [19] proposed two types of workplace deviance as shown in **Figure 1**. The first type, organizational deviance (OD), refers to deviant behaviors targeting the organization such as theft, sabotage, coming to work late without permission, or putting little effort into work; they see property and production deviances as both targeting the organization and labeling this organizational deviance. Conversely, the second type, interpersonal deviance (ID), pertains to deviant acts directed toward individuals in the workplace such as coworkers, supervisors, and subordinates and includes behaviors like making fun of others, playing mean pranks, acting rudely, arguing, and physical aggression; it is from behaviors targeted against other members of the organization [20].

For example, as shown in **Figure 1**, (a) production deviance related to offenses such as leaving early without supervisors' permission, promoting or participating in gambling within work premises, transmission or dissemination of obscene pornographic materials, and Internet surfing during work hours pertains to production deviance; (b) property deviance related to offenses such as obtaining office materials without permission, tampering, falsifying or forging of attendance card, and unauthorized use of company equipment pertains to property deviance; (c) political deviance related to offenses such as gossiping and rumor mongering represents political deviance; and (d) personal aggression related to offenses such as making malicious or obscene statements about another employee and acting disrespectfully toward supervisors pertains to personal deviance [3].

#### 2.3.1. Interpersonal deviance

Interpersonal deviance can occur when misconduct target(s) of specific stakeholders such as coworkers' behavior falling within this subgroup of employee deviance includes gossiping



**Figure 1.** A typology of workplace deviance. Source: Lawrence and Robinson [18].

about coworkers and assigning blame to them. These minor (but unhealthy) behaviors, directed at others, are believed to occur as some employees perceive a sense of entitlement often associated with exploitation. In other words, they feel the need to misbehave in ways that will benefit them [21].

2.3.2. *Organizational deviance*

Deviant behavior typically aimed directly at the organization is often referred to as organizational deviance. Organizational deviance encompasses production and property deviance. Workplace deviant behavior may be expressed as tardiness or excessive absenteeism. These behaviors have been cited by some researchers as withdraw behaviors; such behaviors allow employees to withdraw physically and emotionally from the organization [22].

2.3.3. *Production deviance*

All behaviors in which deviant employees partake ultimately have a negative impact on the overall productivity of the organization. For this reason, all are considered production deviance. Production deviance is the behavior that violates formally the prescribed organizational norms with respect to minimal quality and quantity of work to be accomplished as part of one's job [21].

2.3.4. *Property deviance*

A more serious case of deviant behavior harmful to an organization concern is property deviance. Property deviance is where employees either damage or acquire tangible assets without authorization [21]. This type of deviance typically involves theft but may include sabotage, intentional errors in work, and misusing expense accounts [22].

## 2.4. Negative effects of workplace deviance

Organizations stand to lose millions of dollars through employees' theft and sabotages. Those employees who are targets of workplace deviance are more likely forced to quit, suffer stress-related problems, have decreased productivity, low morale, and lose work time [23].

Researchers have found that employee thefts resulted in a loss of between five and ten billion dollars annually and all forms of deviance together accounted for approximately \$40 billion [5]. Accordingly, minimizing losses associated with workplace deviance is a priority for the current research and practice, yet few studies in this area have made any comprehensive comparison of broad to narrow variables and their relative merit [24].

Organizational deviance also extracts a significant human cost, employee performance, morale, and well-being which are all impacted by such deviant behaviors [25].

Deviant workplace behavior has accounted for a tremendous amount of revenue loss and even more permanent damage to a workplace environment. As an example, \$4.2 billion in legal expenses and decreased productivity were lost in 1992 [26]. Other costs include insurance losses, tarnished reputations and public relations expenses, lost repeat business, worker compensation, and increased turnover [27]. Workplace deviance causes enormous social and economic losses to organizations and their members [28]. It is costly for an organization to pay employees who are not working efficiently.

## 2.5. Causes of workplace deviance

Researchers on the nature and causes of workplace deviance have identified organizational justice as a significant predictor of deviance [29]. Organizational justice related to employees' perceptions of fairness in the workplace has a significant influence on individuals' motivation and performance at work [30].

If such individuals feel abused or unfairly treated, they will be more likely to engage in deviant behavior directed toward the organization in general and sometimes toward the offending manager or other employees [31]. Managers may try to limit employees' sensitivity and negative affective and behavioral reactions to mistreatment by providing subordinates with feedback in a respectful and constructive manner as well as opportunities to utilize and develop their skills and other competencies [32], because employees refrain from responding to perceived mistreatment with acts of deviance when they hold lower power positions relative to the perpetrator [33].

Studies have identified that organizational factors such as job stressors, organizational frustration, lack of control over the work environment, weak sanctions for rule violations, and organizational changes such as downsizing are causes of workplace deviance; also, studies have shown that individual employees' personality, for example, socialization and impulsivity constructs, are causes of workplace deviant behaviors [34].

Based on a self-determination theory perspective, the negative effects of abusive supervision on organizational deviance should lie in abusive supervision's ability to threaten the fundamental



psychological needs of the subordinate. By definition, abusive supervision encompasses behaviors which are likely to negatively impact an individual’s basic psychological needs [35].

3. Research methodology

The purpose of the research study is investigating of workplace deviance in the primary and high schools in Egypt. Therefore, the study is an attempt to answer the following question:

Are there significant differences between the primary and high schools with regard to work-place deviance?

3.1. Research hypothesis

There are significant differences between the primary and high schools with regard to work-place deviance. Hence, we developed our other hypotheses as follows:

**H1.**There are significant differences between the managerial employees in the primary and high schools with regard to interpersonal deviance.

**H2.**There are significant differences between the managerial employees in the primary and high schools with regard to organizational deviance.

3.2. Samples

The study was conducted among a broad sample of managerial employees in the primary and high schools at Dakahlia region.

In total, 356 people are the sample size of study that are divided into 293 of managerial employees in the primary schools and 63 of managerial employees in high schools at civilization cities at Dakahlia region; the study did not include schools in village counties.

A total of 356 questionnaires were distributed to managerial employees in the primary and high schools at civilization cities at Dakahlia region.

Two hundred thirty-nine of the questionnaires were returned, 138 females and 101 males participated, 188 of these were managerial employees in primary schools, and 51 of these were managerial employees in high schools at civilization cities. 67.1% of the sample is shown in **Table 1**.

	Number of managerial employees	Sample sizes	Respondent sample sizes <sup>a</sup>	Respondent percentage
Primary schools	4051	293	188	64.2
High schools	866	63	51	80.9
Total	4917	356	251	67.1

<sup>a</sup>Calculated from data.

**Table 1.** Study samples.

Measures	Cronbach's alpha <sup>a</sup>
Interpersonal deviance	0.81
Organizational deviance	0.85
Workplace deviance	0.84

<sup>a</sup>Calculated from data.

**Table 2.** Reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha).

### 3.3. Measure

The study used self-report measure—a workplace deviance scale [19]— which is based on two-factor model. It has been the most used measure of workplace deviance scale [31].

The scale consists of 19 items, 12 items measured organizational deviance (OD) and 7 items measured interpersonal deviance (ID). Respondents were asked to rate how often they engaged in each behavior, from 1 (never engaging in the behavior) to 7 (engaging in the behavior daily). Overall deviance was computed as the unit average of ID and OD scale scores. Responses on these items were summed to form a total deviance score.

The unit of analysis for this study is individual. A total of 293 managerial employees in the primary schools and 63 of managerial employees in the high schools at civilization cities at Dakahlia region were randomly selected to participate in this survey. The questionnaires were distributed to them and administered personally by the researcher after preparing the translation of the workplace deviance scale instrument into Arabic language.

### 3.4. Method of analysis

Frequency distribution was used to obtain a count of the number of responses associated with different values of one variable and to express these counts into percentage terms. Next, reliability analysis was conducted as an indication for the stability and consistency with which the instrument measures the concept and helps to access the goodness of a measure as shown in **Table 2**.

Lastly, SPSS Version 17 was used for the statistical data analysis. Mean and standard deviation values of all variables used in this study were used to determine the level that primary and high schools performed for the interpersonal and organizational deviance variables. Chi-square and t-test were performed in order to examine the hypothesis of the research, by examining whether the mean scores on the interpersonal and organizational deviance variables were statistically different for the primary and high schools.

## 4. Findings

The main research question that was explored is whether or not there are significant differences between the primary and high schools with regard to workplace deviance.



	Schools	Mean	SD	t-test		$\chi^2$ test	
Workplace deviance	Primary	3.34	0.93	t-Value	p-Value	$\chi^2$ Value	p-Value
	High	3.28	1.05	11.24	0.28	53.19	0.17

**Table 3.** Workplace deviance means, standard deviations, chi-square, and t-test.

The initial step in the data analysis was to compute descriptive statistics for the workplace deviance and its variables related to interpersonal and organizational deviance used in research.

As shown in **Table 3**, means and standard deviations depict that workplace deviance has mean values more than 3.5, which is the median value of the scale. We can find that on the base of the respondents' opinion the workplace deviance is over than the midpoint of scale. p-Value of the t-test and Chi-square more than 0.01 that refers to *nonstatistical differences* was noted between the primary and high schools with regard to workplace deviance.

Means and standard deviation values didn't perform workplace deviance; it can be seen that the mean scores are 3.34 for primary schools and 3.28 for high schools, and they were under the midpoint of 3.5 on the rating scale.

The second step in the data analysis was to compute descriptive statistics for the interpersonal and organizational deviance used in research.

5. Discussion and conclusions

As shown in **Table 4**, the t-test value for the interpersonal deviance measure was (5.21),  $p = 0.29 > 0.01$ . Therefore, there are no significant differences between the managerial employees in the primary and high schools with regard to interpersonal deviance measure; therefore, we reject hypotheses 1 (H1).

Means and standard deviation values didn't perform interpersonal deviance; it can be seen that the mean scores are 3.32 for primary schools and 3.26 for high schools, and they were under the midpoint of 3.5 on the rating scale.

Also, as shown in **Table 4**, the t-test value for the organizational deviance measure was (7.86),  $p = 0.22 > 0.01$ . Therefore, there are no significant differences between the managerial employ-

Measures	Mean		Standard deviation		t-Test	
	High schools	Primary schools	High schools	Primary schools	t-Value	p-Value
Interpersonal deviance	3.26	3.32	0.87	0.72	5.21	0.29
Organizational deviance	3.09	3.17	0.61	0.66	7.86	0.22

**Table 4.** Descriptive statistics and the results of the t-test for interpersonal and organizational deviance measures.

ees in the primary and high schools with regard to organizational deviance measure; therefore, we reject hypotheses 2 (H2).

Means and standard deviation values didn't perform organizational deviance; it can be seen that the mean scores are 3.17 for primary schools and 3.09 for high schools, and they were under the midpoint of 3.5 on the rating scale.

**Table 5** presents the descriptive statistics and the results of the t-test for interpersonal deviance variables.

The t-test value for the variable "made fun of someone at work" was (2.18),  $p = 0.11 > 0.01$ ; therefore, there are no significant differences between the managerial employees in the primary and high schools with regard to the mentioned variable.

Means and standard deviation values of the variable perform interpersonal deviance behaviors; it can be seen that the mean scores are 3.87 for high schools and 3.51 for primary schools for "made fun of someone at work" variable, and they were above the midpoint of 3.5 on the rating scale.

The t-test value for the variables "said something hurtful to someone at work," "made an ethnic, religious, or racial remark at work," "cursed at someone at work," "acted rudely toward someone at work," and "publicly embarrassed someone at work" ranges in-between 3.42 and 3.31, and P ranges in-between 0.21 and 1.42  $> 0.01$ ; therefore, there are no significant differences between the managerial employees in the primary and high schools about the mentioned variables.

Means and standard deviation values of the variable didn't perform interpersonal deviance behaviors for "made an ethnic, religious, or racial remark at work" variable; it can be seen that the mean scores are in-between 3.26 and 3.37 for primary and high schools, and they were under the midpoint of 3.5 on the rating scale.

Measurable variables	Mean		Standard deviation		t-Test	
	High schools	Primary schools	High schools	Primary schools	t-Value	p-Value
Made fun of someone at work	3.87	3.51	1.26	1.21	2.18	0.11
Said something hurtful to someone at work	3.31	3.42	1.08	1.04	1.42	0.21
Made an ethnic, religious, or racial remark at work	3.26	3.37	0.98	0.92	2.31	1.15
Cursed at someone at work	3.22	3.19	2.01	1.32	1.82	1.82
Played a mean prank on someone at work	3.18	3.75	1.77	0.98	1.67	0.00
Acted rudely toward someone at work	3.14	2.64	1.32	0.87	1.69	0.96
Publicly embarrassed someone at work	2.35	3.04	1.07	0.90	1.64	0.32

**Table 5.** The descriptive statistics and the t-test for interpersonal deviance variables.

The t-test value for the variables “played a mean prank on someone at work” was (1.67),  $p = 0.00 < 0.01$ ; therefore, there are significant differences between the managerial employees in the primary and high schools with regard to the mentioned variable.

Means and standard deviation values of the variable “played a mean prank on someone at work” perform interpersonal deviance behaviors for primary schools; it can be seen that the mean scores is 3.75, and it is above the midpoint of 3.5 on the rating scale. But means and standard deviation values of the variable didn’t perform interpersonal deviance behaviors for high schools; it can be seen that the mean scores is 3.18, and it is under the midpoint of 3.5 on the rating scale.

The findings of the present study agrees with Shamsudin et al.’s findings [36] explaining that 68.7% variance was found.

**Table 6** presents the descriptive statistics and the results of the t-test for organizational deviance variables.

The t-test value for the variables “taken property from work without permission,” “spent too much time fantasizing or daydreaming instead of working,” “falsified a receipt to get reimbursed for more money than you spent on business expenses,” “taken an additional or longer break than is acceptable at your workplace,” “neglected to follow your boss’s instructions,” “intentionally worked slower than you could have worked,” and “used an illegal drug or consumed alcohol on job” ranges in-between 1.85 and 2.63, and P ranges in-between 0.18 and 0.96,  $> 0.01$ ; therefore, there are no significant differences between the managerial employees in the primary and high schools about the mentioned variables.

Means and standard deviation values of the variable didn’t perform organizational deviance behaviors; it can be seen that the mean scores are in-between 1.88 and 3.27 for primary and high schools, and they were under the midpoint of 3.5 on the rating scale.

The t-test value for the variables “come in late to work without permission,” “littered your work environment,” “discussed confidential company information with an unauthorized person,” “put little effort into your work,” and “dragged out of work in order to get overtime” ranges in-between 1.44 and 2.54,  $P = 0.00 < 0.01$ ; therefore, there are significant differences between the managerial employees in the primary and high schools about the mentioned variables.

Means and standard deviation values of the variables “come in late to work without permission” and “littered your work environment” didn’t perform organizational deviance behaviors for primary schools; it can be seen that the mean scores are 2.88 and 2.93 for primary schools, and they were under the midpoint of 3.5 on the rating scale. But the means and standard deviation values of the same variables perform organizational deviance behaviors for high schools; it can be seen that the mean scores are 3.68 and 3.59 for high schools, and they were above the midpoint of 3.5 on the rating scale.

Means and standard deviation values of the variables “discussed confidential company information with an unauthorized person,” “put little effort into your work,” and “dragged out

Measurable variables	Mean		Standard deviation		t-test	
	High schools	Primary schools	High schools	Primary schools	t-Value	p-Value
Taken property from work without permission	2.73	2.82	0.92	0.62	2.63	0.29
Spent too much time fantasizing or daydreaming instead of working	3.06	2.68	0.95	1.16	1.85	0.38
Falsified a receipt to get reimbursed for more money than you spent on business expenses	3.18	3.24	1.03	1.14	1.88	0.18
Taken an additional or longer break than is acceptable at your workplace	3.03	2.85	0.98	1.25	1.94	0.71
Come in late to work without permission	3.68	2.88	0.85	1.17	1.44	0.00
Littered your work environment	3.59	2.93	1.34	1.28	2.22	0.00
Neglected to follow your boss's instructions	2.95	3.27	1.08	1.15	2.06	0.88
Intentionally worked slower than you could have worked	3.24	2.99	1.52	1.21	1.84	0.96
Discussed confidential company information with an unauthorized person	2.67	3.58	0.89	0.64	2.46	0.00
Used an illegal drug or consumed alcohol on job	1.88	1.96	0.98	1.41	1.93	0.47
Put little effort into your work	2.53	3.64	1.14	1.37	2.16	0.00
Dragged out of work in order to get overtime	2.43	3.77	1.07	0.86	2.54	0.00

**Table 6.** The descriptive statistics and the t-test for organizational deviance variables.

of work in order to get overtime” didn’t perform organizational deviance behaviors for high schools; it can be seen that the mean scores are in-between 2.43 and 2.67 for high schools, and they were under the midpoint of 3.5 on the rating scale. But the means and standard deviation values of the same variables perform organizational deviance behaviors for primary schools; it can be seen that the mean scores are in-between 3.58 and 3.77 for primary schools, and they were above the midpoint of 3.5 on the rating scale.

This finding supported that the managerial employees in the primary and high schools reported low personal and organizational deviance variable scores; they were under the midpoint of the rating scale.

Also, we found that nonstatistical differences were noted between the primary and high schools with regard to most variables related to personal and organizational deviance, and the means level of primary schools was slightly higher than the means level of high school for interpersonal deviance and organizational deviance.

## 6. Limitation

The first limitation is that the study depends on the opinion of managerial employees in schools, and the other employees like teachers were not included in the study, and the second limitation is that the data came from questionnaire surveys; therefore, some limitations are associated with it like general issues of questionnaire understandability and readability, and some of the respondents could have provided socially desired answers.

## 7. Future studies

More studies require for more definitive and qualitative measurements in order to learn more about workplace deviance behaviors, to make sure that the deviant behaviors are understood, and put easier strategies to manage and solve their issues and move toward the workplace deviance-free that should be. Also, future studies could examine the relationship between ethical leadership and workplace deviance in goods and services organizations.

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