



## Predictive Influence of Psychosocial Work Hazards on Work-Related Burnout and Organizational Deviance Among Primary School Teachers

Moses Onyemaechi Ede<sup>1\*</sup>, Daphney Mawila<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa

<sup>1</sup>[onyemaechi.moses@gmail.com](mailto:onyemaechi.moses@gmail.com), <sup>2</sup>[dmawila@uj.ac.za](mailto:dmawila@uj.ac.za)

\*Correspondence

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### Abstract

It is quite unfortunate that workers in developing countries experience job dissatisfaction accruing from hazardous work settings. These seemed to have posed mental and physiological stress on individuals, leading to unwholesome and unethical practices. Given these worrisome situations, this study investigated the relationship between psychosocial work hazards on work-related burnout and organizational deviance among primary school teachers. In pursuance of this aim, two research questions and hypotheses guided this study. A correlation design was employed in this study. A total of 254 primary school teachers participated in the study. Three scales that measured psychosocial work hazards, work-related burnout, and organizational deviance were used in assessing the participants. Pearson product-moment correlation and Linear regression statistics were used to analyze the research questions and hypotheses. The correlation analysis results revealed that psychosocial work hazards are associated with work-related burnout and organizational deviance among primary school teachers. Also, the results showed that psychosocial work hazards have a significant influence on work-related burnout and organizational deviance among primary school teachers. Practice implications for sustainable development were highlighted.

### How to Cite this Article

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## INTRODUCTION

From over four decades ago to the present day, employees in developing nations have often made the transition from rural life to a different lifestyle in the workplace. This shift includes a change from natural food dependence to factory-based diets, as well as a transition from non-standardized or uncivilized ways of living to standardized and civilized systems (Ede, 2014; Ede et al., 2019; El-Batawi, 1987). This period of adjustment in work-life can be challenging for some employees, while others adapt more easily to the new work environment. Unfortunately, workplace hazards can sometimes hinder successful adjustment, presenting themselves as psychosocial substances that workers are susceptible to. This can lead to workplace absenteeism, aggressive behavior, and other psychosocial disturbances (Baharom et al., 2017).

As globalization and industrialization continue to expand, people are increasingly vulnerable to inappropriate behavior, particularly in the workplace. This behavior is often referred to as deviant workplace behavior (DWB), which involves deliberate actions by employees that contradict the organization's core values and ethical standards, ultimately hindering organizational goals (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Reports have shown that teachers in Nigeria frequently miss school, raising concerns among scholars about the impact on the learning environment (Bipath et al., 2019; Ede et al., 2022). This deviant behavior undermines efforts to create a positive learning environment and academic success for students. Additionally, evidence suggests that teachers in South Africa often exhibit negative attitudes towards students with disabilities, which can further impact the implementation of inclusive policies in schools (Dibakwane, 2018; Ramdeo, 2006).

Deviant workplace behavior is unethical and goes against the values of the teaching profession, as teachers may be unwilling to work with students with disabilities (Dibakwane, 2018). This aligns with previous studies on teachers' attitudes towards educational policies, which have shown that negative perceptions can hinder successful implementation (Giessen-Hood, 1999). The negative effects of deviant behavior in the workplace have been associated with decreased productivity, job satisfaction, and organizational output in various countries, including Pakistan, Zimbabwe, and Nigeria (Bukhari & Ali, 2009; Chirasha & Mahapa, 2012; Monanu et al., 2015; Rehman & Anjum, 2013).

Psychosocial work hazards, such as work-related stress, play a significant role in the development of deviant behaviors in the workplace. These hazards can lead to physical and mental exhaustion, impacting employees' ability to cope with work demands (Work Safe, 2020). Teachers, in particular, may perceive schools as hostile environments, leading to avoidance of official responsibilities and engagement in unethical behaviors as a coping mechanism (Bipath et al., 2019). This lack of adherence to professional codes of conduct and ethical standards among teachers in developing countries may be attributed to work stress and poor psychological well-being (Abiogu et al., 2021; Ogba et al., 2020; Vazi et al., 2013). Understanding the impact of psychosocial factors on workplace behavior is crucial for addressing and preventing deviant behaviors among employees, particularly in educational settings.

Relating the critical importance of occupational health and job stress as aspects of workplace hazards to the theory of Preventive Stress Management (PSM) developed by Quick et al. (2013), it is stated that organizations that prioritize employee well-being can prevent potential organizational distress (Quick et al., 1997). Therefore, it is significant to this study to uphold principles that support the quality of work-life for employees, as this is key to sustaining occupational health and ensuring efficient worker output.

As part of the assumptions, the theorist shares that preventive stress management principles must be implemented at every level of the organization. However, the effectiveness of PSM is not independent of the quality of leadership. The proponent believes that leaders have a strong impact on creating and promoting positive occupational health for the smooth operation of an organization (Macik-Frey et al., 2009). Additionally, they maintain that workers can effectively manage job stress, physical and psychological fatigue, and exhaustion at work if a supportive work environment is established for them (Quick, 1992).

It is imperative for leaders not only to build successful companies but also to cultivate a positive and joyful work environment (Quick & Quick, 2004). PSM strongly suggests the importance of measuring the effects of stress on workers both within and outside the workplace. If an employee does not respond positively to job demands and pressures, they may experience psychological, behavioral, and medical forms of work stress, which they may perceive as hazards in the workplace.

Most workplaces face hazards, particularly those with psychological and social roots, that pose risks to employees. In Nigerian schools, teachers are reported to exhibit unethical behaviors, likely influenced by both internal and external pressures, leading to feelings of insecurity and avoidance of professional duties. This trend raises concerns and points to the necessity of further research to prevent its escalation. Current literature does not fully clarify whether psychosocial workplace factors, such as stress and poor psychological well-being, contribute to unprofessional behavior among teachers. While previous studies have established connections between stress and negative well-being, as well as between stress and role issues, there is a scarcity of quantitative research examining the relationship between psychosocial hazards and deviant behaviors in educational settings. Moreover, the role of sociodemographic factors in mediating teacher well-being amidst workplace hazards remains underexplored. Notably, there is a gap in research focusing on whether psychosocial hazards can predict burnout and deviant behaviors among primary school teachers in Nigeria. Consequently, this study aims to determine the predictive influence of psychosocial work hazards on work-related burnout and organizational deviance among these educators.

The general purpose of the study is to establish this predictive influence, with specific objectives to investigate the relationship between psychosocial work hazards and organizational deviance, as well as between psychosocial work hazards and work-related burnout. This investigation is guided by research questions that seek to explore these relationships. Additionally, two research hypotheses are outlined, specifying that there will be no significant relationship between psychosocial work hazards and organizational

deviance, and no significant relationship between psychosocial work hazards and work-related burnout, all tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

## METHOD

A cross-sectional study design was employed to gather data on psychosocial work hazards, workplace deviant behaviors, and associated demographic moderators among Nigerian primary school teachers. After obtaining approval from the University of Nigeria, the researchers sent letters to school headteachers requesting permission to involve their teachers in the study. Informed consent was secured from participants, reiterating their voluntary participation and confidentiality of their responses. The research was conducted in Enugu State, Nigeria, which comprises 17 local government areas and includes both public and private primary schools.

The study included 254 licensed primary school teachers actively engaged in teaching and meeting specific criteria. To assess organizational deviance, the Work Deviance Behavior Scale (WDBS) was utilized, comprising 19 items with established reliability ( $\alpha = 0.79$ ). Additionally, a 25-item Burnout Inventory measured burnout levels, demonstrating good internal consistency ( $\alpha = 0.82$ ). The Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire (COPSOQ), consisting of 30 items, evaluated psychosocial factors and showed satisfactory reliability ( $\alpha = 0.77$ ).

Data collection was completed within a week, allowing each participant 90 minutes to complete the questionnaires. The researchers utilized both online platforms and physical administration in classrooms to ensure broad accessibility. For data analysis, hierarchical multiple regressions and Pearson's correlation were applied to assess hypotheses and investigate relationships among variables, following Urbina's (2014) guidelines on statistical methods in research.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1. Descriptive and Linear Regression Statistics of Predictor and Residual Variables**

	Mean	SD	N	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
WDBS	61.14	34.19	254				
				0.157 <sup>a</sup>	0.025	.021	33.83590
COPSOQ	108.43	33.55	254				

(R<sup>2</sup>) = Coefficient of Determination

The results in Table 1 show that the correlation coefficient between psychosocial work hazards and work deviant behavior among primary school teachers was 0.157. This implies a positive, high relationship between psychosocial work hazards and work deviant behavior among primary school teachers. The coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) associated with the correlation coefficient of 0.157 was 0.025, indicating that psychosocial work hazards account for up to 25% of work deviant behavior among primary school teachers. The mean and standard deviation provide further justification

for the variations, indicating that 75% of the variation in work deviant behavior among primary school teachers is attributed to factors other than psychosocial work hazards.

The results also show that psychosocial work hazards contribute to work deviant behavior and work burnout among primary school teachers. There is a significant relationship between psychosocial work hazards and work deviant behavior, as well as work burnout, among primary school teachers. These findings are consistent with previous studies that reported a positive association between psychosocial work hazards and deviant behavior in workplaces (Ede et al., 2022). Additionally, C. I. Okeke et al. (2024) found that Nigerian workers do not have positive psychological well-being, while C. Okeke et al. (2022) reported that psychosocial work hazards are prevalent among teachers in elementary schools. Cox et al. (2000) state that a strong body of research supports a link between exposure to psychosocial hazards at work, or a combination of psychosocial and physical hazards, and a range of health outcomes at both individual and organizational levels.

**Table 2. Regression Analysis of Significant Relationship Between Psychosocial Work Hazards and Work Deviance Behaviour Among Primary School Teachers**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	7275.524	1	7275.524	6.355	.012 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	288506.842	252	1144.868		
	Total	295782.366	253			

a. Dependent Variable: WDBS

b. Predictors: (Constant), COPSQ

Table 2 presents the obtained F-ratio of 6.355 with a corresponding precise probability value of 0.012. In order to test the hypothesis, this probability value of 0.012 was compared with the 0.05 level of significance, and since 0.012 is less than 0.05, it was determined to be significant. As a result, the null hypothesis—that there is no meaningful relationship—was rejected. Thus, the researchers draw the conclusion that among primary school teachers, there is a strong correlation between psychosocial work hazards and work deviant behavior.

**Table 3. Descriptive and Linear Regression Statistics of Predictor and Residual Variables**

	Mean	SD	N	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
MBI	68.21	15.77	254				
COPSQ	108.43	33.55	254	.348 <sup>a</sup>	.121	.118	14.81180

(R<sup>2</sup>) = Coefficient of Determination

The result in Table 3 shows that the correlation coefficient between that psychosocial work hazards are associated with work burnout among primary school teachers was .348. The result implies that there exists a positive high relationship between

psychosocial work hazards and work burnout among primary school teachers. The outcome additionally disclosed that the correlation coefficient of .348 was correlated with a coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) of .121. Up to 12% of primary school teachers' work burnout may be attributed to psychosocial work risks, according to the coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) of .12. The mean and standard deviation are also further justifications for the variations. This is an indication that 75% of the variation in work burnout among primary school teachers is attributed to other factors other than psychosocial work hazards.

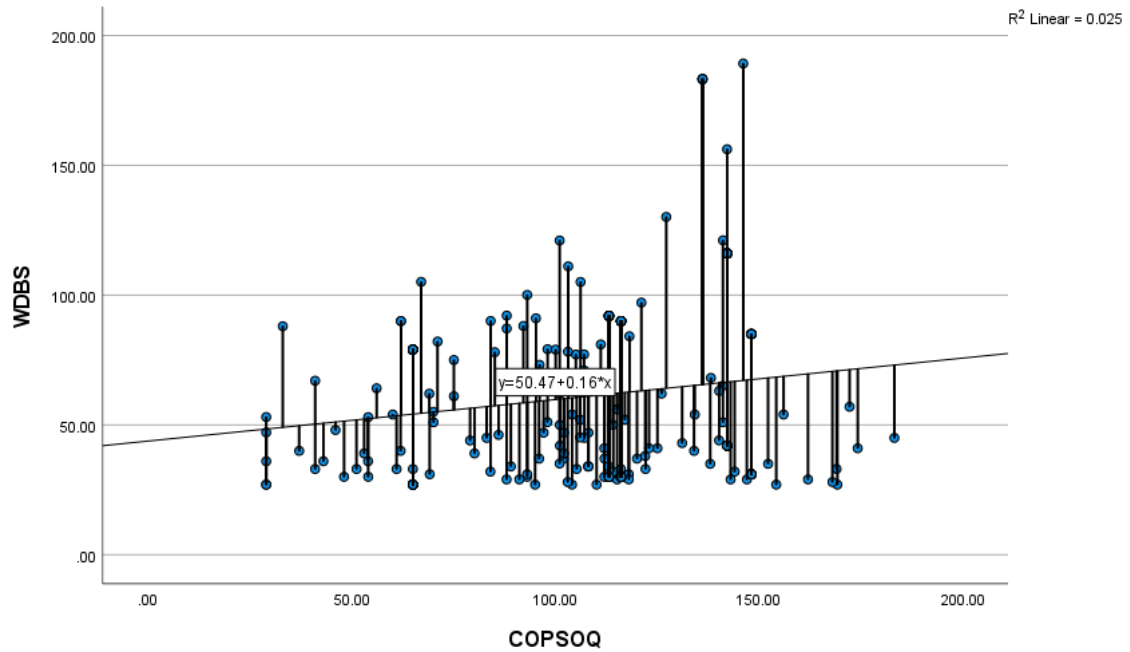
**Table 4. Regression Analysis of The Significant Relationship Between Psychosocial Work Hazards and Work Burnout Among Primary School Teachers**

Model		Sum of Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	7619.684	1	7619.684	34.731	<.001 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	55286.118	252	219.389		
	Total	62905.802	253			

- a. Dependent Variable: MBI  
 b. Predictors: (Constant), COPSOQ

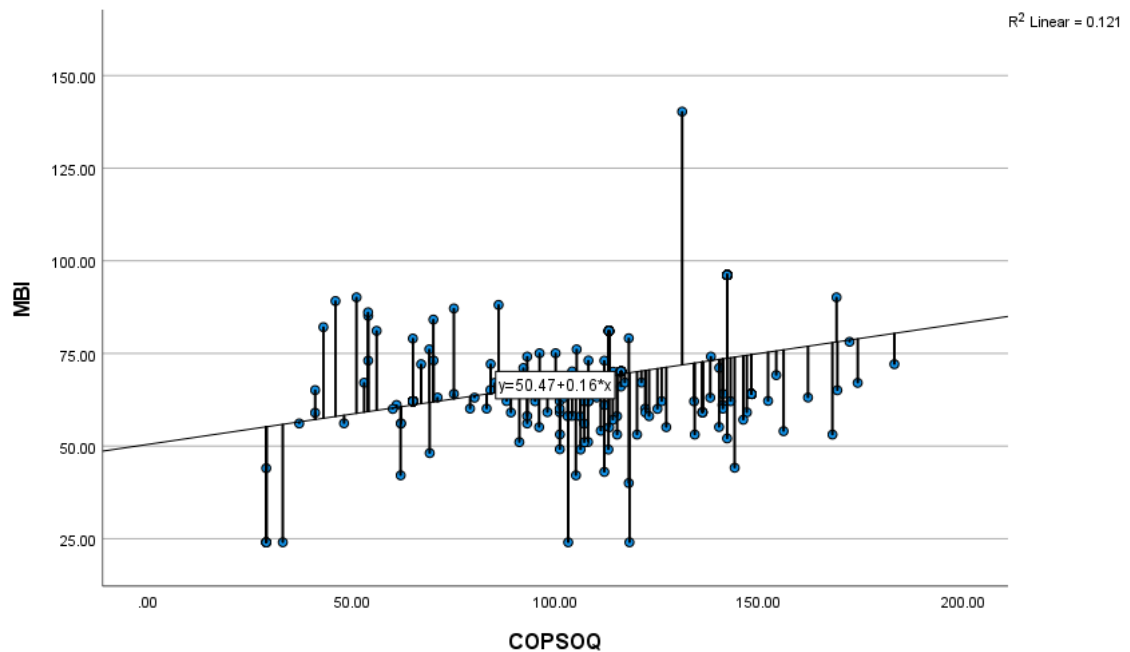
Table 2 presents the obtained F-ratio of 34.731, accompanied by an exact probability value of less than .001. Since <.001 is less than 0.05, the probability value of 0.01 was compared to the level of significance of 0.05 for testing the hypothesis, and it was determined to be significant. As a result, the null hypothesis—that there is no meaningful relationship—was rejected. Thus, it is concluded that among primary school teachers, there is a noteworthy correlation between psychosocial work hazards and work burnout.

According to past studies, workplace psychosocial risks may have a negative effect on workers' physical, mental, and social well-being (Bonde, 2008; Bosma et al., 1998; Chen et al., 2005; Fischer et al., 2005; Tennant, 2017; Wieclaw et al., 2008). Additionally, the psychosocial working environment may have a direct or indirect effect on the health of the organization (Spurgeon et al., 1997; Vahtera et al., 2004, 2004; van den Berg et al., 2009). Psychosocial and physical dangers can affect one's health both physically and psychologically. The information suggests that at least two distinct pathways could mediate these health effects: an indirect stress-induced pathway and a direct channel (Cox et al., 2000). Empirical evidence has demonstrated favorable relationships between aspects of the overall work climate and the safety climate, and it is widely recognized that the psychosocial environment has a significant impact on health (Bond et al., 2007; Neal et al., 2000). Safety behavior has also been linked to supportive psychosocial conditions that have the previously indicated traits (Nahrgang et al., 2011; Parker et al., 2001). Based on the findings, cautions should be taken interpreting the outcomes of this study considering that sample size was drawn from only teachers. These teachers cannot be used to generalized to all worker populations in Nigeria.



**Figure 1. Regression Plot of Psychosocial Work Hazards and Burnout**

Figure 1 illustrates the direction of residual (work deviance behaviour) as associated with the predictor variable (psychosocial work hazards). The slope is close to the intercept value of 50.00 indicating the basis for predicting burnout.



**Figure 2. Regression Plot of Psychosocial Work Hazards and Burnout**

Figure 2 demonstrates the direction of residual (work burnout) as associated with

the predictor variable (psychosocial work hazards). The slope is intercepting at 50.00 indicating the basis of predicting burnout.

### **Implications, Future Directions, and Limitations**

Given that the work deviance behaviours and burnout in primary employees are due to a poor working environment, it, therefore, implies that occupational health therapists and career counsellors should assist in cushioning the effects of the psychosocial work hazards on the occupational well-being of Nigerian employees. The therapeutic benefits of the occupational practitioners who are rooted in psychology and counselling have been documented in past studies (Ede et al., 2023; Nwokeoma et al., 2019; Ogakwu et al., 2022). In all, the importance of career experts in assisting primary school teachers experiencing burnout, as well as those engaging in deviant behaviours, cannot be glossed over.

It also implies that career workers may feel that as the work conditions are not favourable, there is no need doing the right things in the workplace. Hence, the organization may lose the quality of work that is expected to be produced. This suggests that organisational therapists and career counsellors should work harder to provide orientational programmes, seminars, and workshops to organizational leaders and staff on how to reduce the level of psychosocial work hazards. If not, as psychosocial work hazards are increasing, work deviant behavior among primary school teachers would be increasing. When this situation is involved, the organization (school) may close.

Given the hazardous conditions teachers are exposed to, this study recommends training teachers in stress management to help them cope with stress-induced situations. Educational policymakers should consider reforming school policies to improve working conditions. Future research should explore other demographic variables or conduct longitudinal studies related to psychosocial work hazards, work-related burnout, and organizational deviance.

Like other quantitative studies, the present study has some conceptual, theoretical, and methodological weaknesses. Conceptually, the study should have covered a broader scope by considering other possible demographical and psychological variables that account for work deviance and burnout. Theoretically, the study did not present if the findings of the present study support specific theory or not. In terms of method, the study failed to sample other population, that is, the use of primary school teachers is a limitation. Based on the methodological flaws, caution should be taken in interpreting the outcomes of this study.

### **CONCLUSION**

The hazardous working environment in most developing countries like Nigeria and its concomitant social and psychological characteristics have become too alarming that called for more research. Based on this study was conducted and the result concluded that psychosocial work hazards account for work deviance behaviour and work burnout among primary school teachers. There is a significant relationship between psychosocial work hazards and work deviant behaviours among primary school teachers. There is a



significant relationship between psychosocial work hazards and work burnout among primary school teachers. Therefore, we recommended that organizational and individual behavioural mechanisms that account for the adverse effects of the risky work environment should be controlled and handled.

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