

# Workplace Bullying and Survival of Small Businesses: Implications for National Development

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## **Abstract**

*A number of studies have attempted to examine the workplace outcomes of workplace bullying using large organisations. However, given the structural, cultural and strategic differences between large and small organisations as well as the indispensable role of small businesses to the economy, more needs to be done in order to unravel the implications of workplace bullying within small businesses. This study is therefore aimed at examining the effect of workplace bullying on small business sustainability. The study is based on a survey of selected small businesses offering janitorial services in Lagos State. Employing stratified sampling technique to draw a sample of 400 respondents, the analysis of quantitative data using simple linear regression shows significant effect of workplace bullying on small business sustainability ( $B=0.606$ ;  $R^2= .357$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). The findings imply that small businesses should adopt human resource policies and practices to tackle workplace bullying. In view of the findings, the study recommended the sustained implementation of organisational justice as panacea for stopping workplace bullying and increasing small business sustainability*

**Keywords:** bullying, small businesses, national development, sustainability of SMES

## **Introduction**

Evidence in literatures indicates that small businesses expected to be the engine of growth and development in third world economies have faced quite a lot of challenges such as achieving business survival in a competitive business environment (Adebisi & Gbegi, 2013, Obiwuru, Okwu, Akpa, & Nwankwere, 2011). These challenges which are usually associated with most small businesses engaging in precarious employment are accentuated by, job uncertainty, un-conducive work environment, workplace bullying, workplace conflict, low wages, job insecurity, high labour turnover, employee retention issues and negative deviant behaviours such as lateness, theft, and sabotage (Buowari, 2015). In other words, employees encountering these vicissitudes at the workplace may find it cumbersome to examine the business environment, assemble intellectual information, and make proper and instant decisions when encountering different opportunities and market threats to improve competitive advantage compared to other competitors.

Consequently, in the face of employment instability as a result of bullying in a precarious working environment, continuous monitoring, gathering and

analysis of information about changing organisational culture, organisational justice, employees' and customers' preferences and competitors' strategies to gain competitive advantage and ensure business survival has become increasingly burdensome considering the fact that humans are the leading assets at the workplace. To underpin this, Peter Drucker's "knowledge workers" was one of the first suggestions that human capital would be a critical source of competitive advantage (Erickson & Rothberg, 2009).

In furtherance to this, Seleim and Khalil (2011) found that knowledge management has a critical influence on competitive advantage, improved resource alignment and small business viability. In addition, Gracanin, Kalac, and Jovanovic (2015) argued that in modern business environment, knowledge about how to treat employees is the most significant resource. That is, suitable market positioning and development of small business strategies are unlikely without taking cognisance of workplace bullying, employees' silence, other forms of workplace ill treatment, competition both current and potential, related information.

The general problem is the inability of some small businesses to cope with fluctuations in the ever changing business environment and deal with issue of properly utilising its human capital to gain competitive advantage through good organisational culture and competitive intelligence (Nenzhelele & Pellissier, 2014). The specific business problem is that some small businesses have inadequate information on factors that could enhance business survival and competitive advantage (Buowari, 2015). Information about treatments melted on employees and competition at the present time is a critical component for both, tactical and strategic decision making of every business (Gracanin, Kalac, & Jovanovic, 2015). The incapacity to be creative and innovative in information gathering about how to handle employees' and their utilization may be among the reasons that are responsible for the unprecedented rate of business failure of both large and small businesses in recent years. To lend credence to this, low levels of marketing skill, poor employees' management, inadequate support to human resources, fierce competition, corruption, and other business-related issues have been identified as challenges facing small businesses.

U.S. Small Business Association informs that the failure rates for small businesses in 2014 were as high as 50% to 80% within the first 5 years of establishment. In the U.K. even fewer reach that milestone, with the Office for National Statistics reporting 41%. To buttress this, scholars have argued that the death of small and large business is on the increase in Nigeria and estimated that two businesses die daily and sadly government and most business owners have not been able to proffer solutions to this obnoxious economic threat (Etuk, Etuk, & Baghebo, 2014). More so, other studies in Nigeria observed that 80% of small businesses fail within the first 5 years while a few survive, strive and grow to maturity (Adebisi & Gbegi, 2013; Aremu & Adeyemi, 2011). This is a threat to economic growth of Nigeria as small businesses are estimated to be responsible for over 50 % of new jobs created globally, contribute about 50% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Nigeria, employ more people than do large businesses, therefore, its failure rate can influence unemployment rate (Aroloye, 2017; Benneh Mensah & Nyadu-Ado, 2012; Croucher, Stumbitz, Quinlan, & Vickers, 2013; Obiwuru, Okwu, Akpa, & Nwankwere, 2011).

Owners of small businesses in Lagos State, Nigeria have hitherto concentrated primarily on the effectiveness and efficiency of their human capital and analysis of customers' preference to survive in the business environment. However, the influx of

entrepreneurs into the small business in recent years due to factors such as free entry and free exit, weak union affiliates and lack of effective government regulation, has increased competition and the enthusiasm to survive. A report released by V-connect in 2016 showed that there are for example over one hundred and fifty cleaning services companies in Lagos State, Nigeria alone. In addition, this proliferation according Uwem, Egwuonwu, Kabuoh and Ekwoaba (2016) has negatively affected the quality of service delivery of most small businesses. Hence, there is need to observe and analyze the dynamics and trends in the business environment through organisational justice to ensure survival of businesses.

Organisations are established with the aim of utilizing various available human and non-human resources effectively to enhance their productivity. Conversely, human resources are the leading assets in the drive to achieve organisational survival and employee's self-actualisation. To lend credence to this assertion, Khalid, Irshad, and Mahmood (2012) posited that high quality, resourceful and productive employees are essentially the bedrock of any successful organisation and national development. More so, bullying of productive employees have enhanced death of many organisations and hinders economic development. Also, Sharma & Sharma (2014) noted that better wages/salaries and organisational justice is a sine quo non higher productivity, positive economic growth, huge profitability and improved social progress.

However, in recent years, many organisations all over the world have been facing several challenges trying to sustain their businesses for a long period of time. Some of these challenges which often lead to premature business failure include inability to level up successful innovations, inadequate investment and financial support, difficulty in defining an effective business model to support new business ideas and make them profitable, incapacity of the business to take risks, workplace bullying and lack of talented employees among others (Schiliro, 2015).

The basic problem is that employees working in organisations in Lagos State are experiencing a lot of bullying, harassments and distinctive obstacles in the attempt to enhance their productivity. To buttress this, Hanaysha (2016) pointed out that in contemporary times, majority of organisations are facing the challenge of how to improve employee-employees and employee –managers' relationship. Likewise, Bamidele, Akinbolade and Nuhu (2016), noted that organisations in Lagos, Nigeria are facing certain challenges such as double taxation, hike in

tariffs, traffic jams, deficiency in public-private institutions cooperation and embargo on the use of spaces, which is mitigating their abilities to successfully offer essential services, generate profits and contribute more to GDP and national development.

Small businesses have become a major part of the Nigerian economy employing in excess of hundreds of thousand personnel (Keku and Akingbade, 2003), with banks, oil companies, telecommunications, some government agencies etc employing their services (Bamidele, Akinbolade, & Nuhu, 2016). Small and medium businesses operating in Nigeria were 17 million as at 2012; the sector employed in that year 32.41 million workforce (contribution of 25% to employment) and contributed 46.5% to GDP (Enterprise Base Line Survey, 2012; Pro-poor Growth Promotion Programme, 2012; Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency (SMEDAN), 2012). Year 2013 saw the sector occupying and playing important role in national development by employing 59, 741, 211 Nigerian (84.02% contribution to employment), contributed 48.47% to GDP and 7.27% to the country's total export (SMEDAN, 2013; Nigeria Bureau of Statistics, 2013). The important roles played by small businesses have not reduced in Nigeria's national development as the sector in 2016 and 2017 contributed 48% to the GDP (National Bureau of Statistics, 2016, 2017).

In addition, other impediments encouraging employees' bullying in small businesses may be due to the type of employment which is precarious in nature with no job security and the counterproductive behaviours such as abusive supervision, workplace ostracism, workplace incivility and deviant behaviours of owner/managers, supervisors and co-workers. Consequently, workplace bullying may have an effect on not just on employees' productivity but also on business survival and national development due to lack of communication between employers and employees, loss of sense of membership, loss of work relationships and functional support necessary to get one's job done.

Negative representative behaviour such as workplace bullying include excessive workloads, persistent monitoring of work, personal jokes, gossip, insulting remarks and threats (Parzefall & Salin, 2010; Stouten, Baillien, Van den Broeck, Camps, De Witte, & Euwema, 2010), and is associated with psychological wellbeing (Brough, O'Driscoll, Kalliath, Cooper, & Poelmans, 2009). Workplace bullying has been recognized as a severe stressor in present-day working life, and a societal dilemma

with harmful implications for employees and organisations and society at large (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2011; Tepper & Henle, 2011). Also, workplace bullying has been linked with high labour turnover, absenteeism, employee intention to leave, and decline in employee commitment and productivity among other organisational outcomes, and in general imposing significant costs on organisations and society (Asfaw, Chang, & Ray, 2014; Hoel & Einarsen, 2015; Hoel, Glaso, Hetland, Cooper, & Einarsen, 2010). Further, bullying is also connected with decline in creativity (Mathisen, Einarsen, & Mykletun, 2008), and decrease in work engagement (Rodríguez-Muñoz, Baillien, De Witte, Moreno-Jiménez, & Pastor, 2009). Hence, employees self defence in the face of harassment, intimidation or victimisation is to put up deviant behaviours that could affect the production of goods and services and reduce the profits of organisations and their contribution of small businesses to GDP, and national development (Neuman & Baron, 2011).

The effect of workplace bullying on employee have been examined by several related studies such as workplace bullying and employee performance (Samnani, Singh, & Ezzedeen, 2013), longitudinal relationships between workplace bullying and psychological distress (Nielsen, Hetland, Matthiesen, & Einarsen, 2012), workplace bullying and employees productivity in Delhi (Garg, Singh, & Srivastav, 2016), workplace bullying and its impact on productivity (Afful, 2010), gender, conflict, and workplace bullying (Gilbert, Raffo, & Sutarso, 2013), language and organisation of bullying at work (Liefoghe & Davey, 2010), bullying: harmful and hidden behaviour in organisations (Karabulut, (2016), workplace bullying and the employment relationship (Beale & Hoel, 2011), and prevention of bullying on campus (Wajngurt, 2014) among others.

Additionally, the occurrence of workplace bullying appears to be routine, with roughly thirty-five percent of employees reporting psychological and/or physical abuse (Workplace Bullying Institute (WBI), 2011). Also, in a meta-analysis consisting of 86 autonomous studies conducted in Scandinavia and other European countries by Nielsen, Matthiesen and Einarsen (2010), it was reported that workplace bullying appears to be on a steady rise. However, most of the studies were conducted in Europe while studies on workplace bullying and how it affects survival of small business and Nigeria national development are still relatively sparse. This is the major gap this study intends to fill.

**Hypothesis**

*Workplace Bullying does not affect the survival of small business and national development in Lagos State.*

**Scope and delimitation of the Study**

The study focused on the cleaning services companies, particularly the 3 major cleaning services companies (Opel cleaning services Ltd, Mahut cleaning services Ltd and Dan cleaning services Ltd), registered with Cleaning Practitioners Association of Nigeria (CPAN) and domicile in the 3 senatorial zones (Lagos-east, Lagos-west and Lagos central) in Lagos State, offering janitorial services only. This study focused on only registered cleaning services companies offering janitorial services because according to Akinbode and Uwem (2013), they are highly staffed with staff strength of 400-600 employees. The target respondents for the study are all levels of employees of cleaning services companies. For this study, the variables of interest are workplace bullying, small business survival and national development.

**Literature Review*****Workplace Bullying***

Escartin, Caja, Navarroj and Zapf (2013) and Hannon and Defina (2014) defined workplace bullying as a workplace slavery that breeds deviant behaviour which is directed at employee. It involves the abuse or miss use of power at workplace (Turner, 2013; Victor, Wood & Genet, 2016; Hall, 2013; Garcia & Abscal, 2015). The resultant effect of workplace bullying to Escartin et al (2013), Victor et al (2016) and Garcia & Abscal (2015) are absenteeism, conflicts stress, lower productivity etc. This deviant behaviour as Aquino and Thau (2009) posit affects employees' productivity so much that effective management practical interventions are needed. The interventions should centre on policies and procedures that checks managers/supervisors behaviours and their effects on employees productivity (Escartin, *et al.*, 2013; Jenkins, Winfield, Sarries, Vartia and Leke, 2011). In supporting Escartin *et al.* (2013) and Jenkins et al (2011), Matthieseen and Einarsen (2007), opine that the policies and procedures should include sanctions for anyone engaging in workplace bullying in organisations. To Leymann (1996), workplace bullying is not managers deviant behaviour aim at employees but a function of how management and their managers manages the conflict of time, resources, processes etc among non-managers.

Mawritz, Mayer, Hoobler, Wayne and Maninous (2012) argue that bullying at workplace are carried out by mostly manager. According to them, it allows

managers to humiliates, victimise, intimidate, harsh, assign high targets and excessively monitor their employees. For Hershcouis and Barling (2010), managers engage in workplace bullying because the culture of most organisations permits it. Salin (2003) also revealed that workplace bullying is professed as a suitable and effective way of achieving tasks in various cultures. Similarly, Loh, Restubog and Zagenczyk (2010) conclude that bullying at workplace is predicated on a culture's recognition of hierarchical power, or power distance.

And once employees perceive that the culture of an organisation do not care for them, their productivity will decline (Parzefell & Salin, 2010). The lowering of productivity by employees according to Leymann (1990), is the employees only way of showing resentment to ill treatments or a form of self-defence. Neuman and Baron (2011) state that employees self-defence in the face of harassment, intimidation or victimisation is to put up behaviours that will affect the production of goods and services. To Glomb (2002) workplace bullying do not just productivity behaviour of employees but also damages employees social relationships especially with managers. The reasons as suggested by Glomb (2002) and Spector and Fox (2005) is that workplace bullying fuels frustration, anger, stress, aggressions etc which is not only transferred to production but also to managers.

Research on workplace bullying has grown significantly over the past decade (Ferris, Zinko, Brouer, Buckley, & Harvey, 2007; Fox & Stallworth, 2010; Parzefall & Salin, 2010; Sidle, 2009). Interestingly, research over this period has revealed that the most common forms of bullying are relatively subtle rather than overt, and are therefore open to subjective interpretation (D'Cruz & Noronha, 2010; Lutgen-Sandvik, Tracy, & Alberts, 2007). Examples include assigning excessive workloads, persistently criticizing one's work, taking credit for another's work, and intentionally withholding information (Bulutlar & Unler Oz, 2009; Fox & Stallworth, 2005). Bullying at work means harassing, offending, socially excluding someone, or negatively affecting someone's work tasks. In order for the label bullying (or mobbing) to be applied to a particular activity, interaction or process it has to occur repeatedly and regularly (weekly) and over a period of time (about six months). Bullying is an escalated process in the course of which the person confronted ends up in an inferior position and becomes the target of systematic negative social acts.

***Workplace bullying, and Business survival and National Development (Conceptual Relationship)***

Survival is to ensure that economic, environmental and social developments are in tandem with the goals

of society (Dee, 2010). Survival which leads to sustainability of business deals with business activities, typically considered voluntary which demonstrate the inclusion of social and environmental concerns in business operations and in interactions with stakeholders (van Marrewijk & Verre, 2003). Survival is the growth that encounters the desires of the present without conceding the capacity of future generations to encounter their own desires. Survival philosophy is based on the demand by the society to distribute the risks, losses and gains from a company doing business more fairly (Jonas & Erisson, 2007). It is a business view where corporate decisions do not only affect other businesses but also other sectors that comprise society, political and civil society (Waddock, 2006).

Bohlander and Snell (2007) reports that organisational performance comprises the actual output or results of an organization measured against its intended outputs (organizational goals and objectives). The effectiveness of skilled employees is likely to be limited if they are not motivated to perform. One of the means that organizations can use to enhance employee motivation and productivity is to provide performance-related compensation (Delaney & Huselid, 1996). A reward and compensation system is based on the expectancy theory, which suggests that employees are more likely to be motivated to perform when they perceive that there is a strong link between their productivity and the reward they receive ( Fey and Bjorkman, 2001; Guest, 2002; Mendonca, 2002; Malik, & Ghafoor, 2011). In other words, the compensation system ( e.g. praises, awards, encouragement, involvement in decision making, profit sharing etc ) contributes to and enhances effort and productivity of employees, increase business survival and economic growth of a nation (Kalleberg and Moody, 1994; Huselid, 1995; Kling, 1995).

To Bohlander and Snell (2007), Duberg and Mollen (2010), Axelsson and Bokedal (2009) and Garlick (2009) rewarding employee's working overtime, taking initiative, team work, reliability, exceptional attendance, outstanding customer feedback, meeting deadlines or timeliness, is the magic to increased employees' productivity, sustain business and increase businesses contribution to GDP. Therefore, employers and managers should then design program, system, policies, procedures that will reward and increase employees productivity at workplace. The ward and recognition programs or policy serve as the most contingent factor in keeping employees' self-esteem high and passionate. Rehman K.U, Zaheer.B and Sufwan .N. (2007) conclude that recognitions, encouragement, promotion, pay and

training and not bullying have positive significant impact on the productivity of an employee and sustenance of businesses.

Furthermore, Bulutlar and Unler Oz (2009) work revealed that persistent criticism of one's work, taking credit for another's work, intentionally withholding information and excessive workloads are illustrations of workplace bullying that lowers employees productivity, business survival and hinder economic growth which in turn affects national actual. For Van der Doef and Maes (1999) high levels of workplace bullying are linked with lower employees' productivity, death of business and slows national development. Also according to Sanne, Mykletun, Dahl, Moen and Tell (2005) high levels bullying at work may be one risk factor for depression and anxiety that lower productivity of employees. Baillien, Neyens, Witte and Cuyper (2009) and D'Cruz and Noronha (2010), workplace bullying in its relatively subtle forms is also a lower of employees productivity, business profits and government tax revenue generation.

### **Theoretical Foundation**

#### ***Resource Based View Theory***

Resource based view theory is a foremost research theory to comprehend the source of sustained competitive advantage of a business. The theory was postulated by various scholars and emphasized building competitive advantage by capturing economic rents originating from fundamental firm-level efficiency advantages (Penrose, 1959; Rumelt, 1984; Teece, 1984; Wernerfelt, 1984; Barney, 1991). Resource based view theory proposed that there are two major sources of competitive advantage, which are tangible and intangible resources, within the internal environment of a business that are imperative to the preparation of business strategy and the efficient and effective application of these resources especially human capital could facilitate businesses to achieve sustainable competitive advantage (Hooley & Brodrick, 1998; Ringim, Razalli, & Hasnan, 2012). In addition, these resources have to be valuable, increasing efficiency and effectiveness, rare, imperfectly imitable and non-substitutable (VRIN) (Barney, 1991).

There are two major assumptions of RBV. The first one state that resources must be heterogeneous in nature which assumes that firms achieve competitive advantage when business makes use of resources that are significantly different from that of competitors. The second assumption is that firm's resources are non-movable and non-transferable that is, resources attributed to a particular company do not move from

one company to another at least in a short run (Akio, 2005).

In the context of resource-based view, a cleaning services company might lose its competitive advantage if there is high labour turnover of competent personnel who are skilled in the act of gathering and analysing of information, as they are not easily duplicated or substituted. The supporters of RBV theory noted that businesses should look inwards to identify the sources of competitive advantage instead of looking at competitive environment for it (Wernerfelt, 1984; Barney, 1991). Human capital is valuable as they help in sourcing for information about competitors to support the business strategies and gain competitive advantage. To buttress this, Attaway (1999), observed that between 70&90 % of the competitive intelligence a business requires is owned by own employees who collect it during dealing with suppliers, customers and other industry interactions. According to RBV scholars, a business resources such as human assets can be considered a determinant of competitive advantage and sustainability (Barney, Wright, & Ketchen, 2001; Barney & Mackey, 2005). RBV also uses techniques such as value analysis to study the function of material, components or systems to identify areas that is mitigating a business.

However, one of the major draw backs of resource based view theory raised by critics is that the theory is operationally invalid in the sense that this theory is only appropriate in a static environment which is not the case for real life situation (Therious, Aggelidis, & Theriou, 2009).

#### ***Social Exchange Theory by George Homans in 1958***

Social exchange proposes that the relationships we choose to create and maintain are the ones that maximize our rewards and minimize our costs (Long-Crowell, 2014). Social exchange theory assumes that humans are rational beings that seek rewards and avoid punishments and the standards that humans use to evaluate costs and rewards vary over time and from person to person (West & Turner, 2007).

Blau (1983) and Gouldner (1960) noted that as individuals interact over time, they experience the need to reciprocate the support and assistance of the other person, called the norm of reciprocity. Miller (2005) noted that some of the challenges of the social exchange theory are, human communication is reduced to a purely rational process that arises from economic theory and it also assumes that intimacy is the eventual goal of a relationship when this might not always be the case. Social exchange is applicable

in the cleaning service companies sector which is service oriented and therefore requires competent, loyal and customer friendly employees. Ensuring that a customer repeats patronage is sacrosanct and germane considering the low patronage of cleaning service Companies in Nigeria. Although, employees are precarious engaged with low wages, employers could provide other incentives like praises, encouragement, plaque, inclusion into decision making, bonus for early arrival to work, paternity leave and work schedules that is in tandem with their self actualization.

#### ***Cross Culture Theoretical Approach (1961)***

Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) in the cross cultural theory states the societal members have duties towards each other. The duties stems from cultural differences of goals, attitudes, values etc which are shared by all groups in an organisation. The sharing of this duties leads to interdependence of all members of an organisation. The interdependency forms the basis for the relationship that between the actors as actors look up to each other for direction and national development. The theory is essential for the study because it enables us to see how actors' expectations from each other lead to relationships that sustain businesses. The theory is supported by theory of Dependency by Raul Prebisch and Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean –ECLAC (1950s) which hammered that owners of businesses should strive to achieve better levels of national development, and to high level of national development through meeting employees intrinsic and extrinsic demands and removing all forms of negative treatment. The dependency theory stresses the need for government as an industrial relation actor to reinforce fair employees' treatment as to increase national development conditions and standard of living, These can be done using increase of worker's income as a means of generating more aggregate demand in national market conditions.

#### ***Methodology***

This study utilized descriptive survey research design and stratified sampling technique while data collection was through a well structured questionnaire using a 6 point Likert- scale for responses to specific items; Strongly Agree, Agree, Partially Agree, Partially Disagree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. Simple linear regression was used to determine effect of workplace bullying on small business sustainability in the selected cleaning services companies.

The total population of this study is made up of 1535 personnel working with 3 major cleaning services companies (Opel cleaning services Ltd, Mahut

cleaning services Ltd and Dan cleaning services Ltd), registered with Cleaning Practitioners Association of Nigeria (CPAN) and domicile in the 3 senatorial zones (Lagos-east, Lagos-west and Lagos central) in Lagos State, offering janitorial services only. This study focused on only registered cleaning services companies offering janitorial services because according to Akinbode and Uwem (2013), they are highly staffed with staff strength of 400-600 employees. Lagos State was chosen for this study due to its broad-based nature and also it has the highest number of small business inclusive of cleaning services companies in Nigeria (Akande & Ojukutu, 2008; Awe & Ajayi, 2010). This study utilized RAOSOFT web based sample size calculator to establish the sample size which represents the total population of the cleaning services companies under study. Based on the 1535 personnel of the target population, an alpha level of 5% and a confidence level of 95%, the sample size for this study from the strata is made up of 308 samples. In addition, to take care of non-response from the respondents, 30% of the sample was added to increase the sample (Isreal, 2009). Therefore, 30% of 308 = 92.4; the appropriate sample size is 308+ 92.4 = 400.

**Table 1: Presentation of Respondents' Profile**

| Variables                 | Percentage | Frequency |
|---------------------------|------------|-----------|
| <b>Age</b>                |            |           |
| <i>Below 25 years</i>     | 15.5       | 62        |
| <i>25 - 29 years</i>      | 31         | 124       |
| <i>30 - 34 years</i>      | 31.5       | 126       |
| <i>35 - 39 years</i>      | 10.75      | 43        |
| <i>40 - 44 years</i>      | 6          | 24        |
| <i>45 years and above</i> | 5.25       | 21        |
| <b>Marital status</b>     |            |           |
| <i>Single</i>             | 49         | 196       |
| <i>Married</i>            | 48.25      | 193       |

**Data result Analysis**

**Table 2: Linear Regression Analysis between workplace bullying and small business survival Model Summary**

| Model | R                 | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1     | .597 <sup>a</sup> | .357     | .355              | 2.26655                    |

a. Predictors: (Constant), workplace bullying

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

| Model |            | Sum of Squares | Df  | Mean Square | F       | Sig.              |
|-------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|---------|-------------------|
| 1     | Regression | 1033.978       | 1   | 1033.978    | 201.270 | .000 <sup>b</sup> |
|       | Residual   | 1864.827       | 363 | 5.137       |         |                   |
|       | Total      | 2898.805       | 364 |             |         |                   |

a. Dependent Variable: small business survival

|                                          |                                       |       |     |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------|-----|
|                                          | <i>Divorced</i>                       | 2     | 8   |
|                                          | <i>Separated</i>                      | 0.25  | 1   |
|                                          | <i>Widowed</i>                        | 0.5   | 2   |
| <b>Highest Educational Qualification</b> |                                       |       |     |
|                                          | <i>SSCE/WASC/GCE</i>                  | 1.75  | 7   |
|                                          | <i>OND/NCE</i>                        | 5     | 20  |
|                                          | <i>HND/BSC</i>                        | 69.75 | 279 |
|                                          | <i>Postgraduate Degrees / Diploma</i> | 20.25 | 81  |
|                                          | <i>Others</i>                         | 3.25  | 13  |
| <b>Position at work</b>                  |                                       |       |     |
|                                          | <i>Top Management</i>                 | 8.25  | 33  |
|                                          | <i>Middle Level Management</i>        | 34    | 136 |
|                                          | <i>Lower-Level Management</i>         | 39    | 156 |
|                                          | <i>Junior Staff</i>                   | 18.75 | 75  |
| <b>Work experience</b>                   |                                       |       |     |
|                                          | <i>Less than 5 years</i>              | 57.75 | 231 |
|                                          | <i>5 - 10 years</i>                   | 32.75 | 131 |
|                                          | <i>11 years and above</i>             | 9.5   | 38  |

Source: Field Study 2018.

From the profile (demographic) table, most respondents (78%) were below 35 years of age, this indicates that the companies' has youths making up its population. More than two-thirds (64.8%) of respondents had first degree or HND and Postgraduate degrees, indicating an industry that has high literate population. 95.75% of the respondents are between middle level management and lower level position, an indication that Top Management accounted for less than 10% of the companies' population. More than half (57.75%) of the respondents had less than five (5) years' experience with a little more than one tenth (9.5%) posting 11 years and above of experience. This reflected high mobility or turnover rate of workers in cleaning services companies. .

b. Predictors: (Constant), workplace bullying

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

| Model |                    | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | T      | Sig. |
|-------|--------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
|       |                    | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |        |      |
| 1     | (Constant)         | 11.262                      | .722       |                           | 15.595 | .000 |
|       | Workplace bullying | .606                        | .043       | .597                      | 14.187 | .000 |

a. Dependent Variable: small business sustainability

The regression results in Table 1, show the effect of workplace bullying on small business survival in the selected cleaning services companies in Lagos State. It shows that a unit increase in workplace bullying will cause a (0.606) corresponding increase in business survival. The R column shows the relationship between workplace bullying and small business survival. R<sub>2</sub> is the square of R which is also known as coefficient of determination. It elucidates the proportion of the variation in business survival that can be attributed to workplace bullying. The value of R<sub>2</sub> denotes that 35.7% of the variations in business survival are explained by the variations in workplace bullying. The coefficient of workplace bullying (0.606) shows that workplace bullying is positively related to small business survival.

In addition, the p-value of 0.000 < 0.05, shows that workplace bullying has no significant effect on small business survival in the selected cleaning services companies in Lagos State. Furthermore, Probability of F-statistics (0.000<0.05) also shows that model is overall significant at 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis that says workplace bullying has no significant effect on small business survival in the selected cleaning services companies in Lagos State is rejected.

**Discussion of Findings**

The findings of the hypothesis indicated that workplace bullying had positive and significant effect on small business survival. This finding agrees with the empirical research done by Hannon and Defina (2014) and Neuman and Baron (2011) workplace bullying leads to behaviours that are counterproductive to production of goods and services which invariably kills business and national development. Also, the outcome of the study is in congruence with that of Hogh et al (2011), which reported that workplace bullying causes and increase loss of employees productivity, organisation’s profits and contribution to GDP.

The results are consistent with the argument of Neuman and Baron (2011), and Hershcouis and Barling (2010) which found that workplace bullying

brought increase harassment, intimidation or victimisation of employees which pull up counter productivity behaviours that affects production of goods and services and economic development of a nation. Further, the result of this hypothesis supports the finding of Rezai dolatabadi, Zeinali and Shekarchi (2011), as cited in Amiri, Shirkavand, Chalak and Rezaeei (2017), which revealed that for a business to have competitive advantage over rivals and survive, usage of a workplace bullying in any form or arrangement must stop.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

The objective of this study was to examine the effect of workplace bullying on the survival of small business i.e. the cleaning service companies in Lagos State. Based on the empirical findings of this study, cleaning service companies in Lagos State should be cautious about constructive and destructive behaviours that manifest in the workplace as a result of power imbalance. Some owner/managers of these service providers may believe they know it all and oftentimes find it difficult to inculcate the views of their employees. Rather they prefer to enforce policies through negative behaviours that are not in tandem with global practices. The study proffers a digest of existing concerns and strategies for stopping workplace bullying of employees in tandem with global practices.

To test the hypothesis, Linear Regression and ANOVA were used for the analysis. The findings revealed that workplace bullying has significant effect on employee productivity in the security guard service companies in Lagos State (B=0.606; R<sub>2</sub>= .357; p<0.05). The study concluded that since the study sector is service oriented, management should take cognisance negative reciprocity. This implies that stress and frustration that manifest from excessive workloads and humiliation from supervisors and co-workers could be transferred to customers in form of rudeness and discourteous behaviours.

Correspondingly, distributive justice which is the sine quo non for fair treatment of employees at the workplace is indispensable, and therefore could be utilised to elicit the hidden potentials of talented employees. The recommendations were affixed on the continuation of workplace bullying to negatively affect social intelligence, social capital, employee engagement, job resources, innovation, creativity, and accountability among others. Consequently, this could create negative behaviours that could be inimical to organisational goals and economic growth such as fraud, damage of companies' properties, lackadaisical disposition to work, increased intention to quit, lowers productivity and contribution to national development nosedives.

Furthermore, in view of the incessant failure of Small business (Small and Medium Enterprises -SMEs) inclusive of cleaning service companies in Nigeria, it has become expedient to cleave to human capital assets as a requisite tool for enhancing self actualisation, organisational sustainability and national development. Establishing a workplace that flows with synergy, innovation and creativity requires horizontal communication which will truncate issues like employee silence and buck-passing. Government also should ensure there is strict adherence to extant laws that repudiates employees' rights to fair pay and appropriate working conditions. Also a distributive justice and synergy between employers and employees is recommended as panacea for achieving organisational survival and national development.

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## APENDIX

### Frequency Distribution of the Opinions of the Participants

| Items                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | N   | Strongly Agree | Agree         | Strongly disagree | Disagree       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----------------|---------------|-------------------|----------------|
| There is the existence of workplace bullying in my company which affects employees work.                                                                                                                                                                                           | 400 | 96<br>(24%)    | 120<br>(30%)  | 84<br>(21%)       | 100<br>(25%)   |
| In my company criticisms, unreasonable expectation, shouting, blame, humiliation, excessive monitoring, malicious rumours/gossip, social isolations, micromanaging, unwarranted punishment, blocking training/leave/promotion and harassment are recognised as workplace bullying. | 400 | 152<br>(38%)   | 59<br>(14.8%) | 63<br>(15.7%)     | 126<br>(31.5%) |
| My organisation does not have zero tolerance policy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 400 | 152            | 48            | 100               | 100            |

|                                                                                                                                                                   |     |                |                |                |                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| that minimises workplace bullying, create productivity and give more desirable workplace.                                                                         |     | (38%)          | (12%)          | (25%)          | (25%)          |
| Unreasonable expectations on me from my company with its managers stresses me out and lower my productivity                                                       | 400 | 208<br>(52%)   | 81<br>(20.3%)  | 48<br>(12%)    | 63<br>(15.7%)  |
| Excessive monitoring makes me to loss myself esteem which invariably affects my interest at work and makes me not to put in my best at work.                      | 400 | 168<br>(42%)   | 60<br>(15%)    | 92<br>(23%)    | 80<br>(20%)    |
| Humiliation and blame without factual justifications gives me psychological and psychosocial distress which increases my rate of absenteeism at work.             | 400 | 284<br>(71%)   | 72<br>(18%)    | 24<br>(6%)     | 20<br>(5%)     |
| The daily harassment by my superiors has reduced my work efforts and increased my desire to leave the company.                                                    | 400 | 85<br>(21.3%)  | 77<br>(19.4%)  | 33<br>(8.3%)   | 204<br>(51%)   |
| Constant intimidations in my company has made me hyper vigilant of openings in other companies.                                                                   | 400 | 48<br>(12%)    | 78<br>(19.4%)  | 133<br>(33.3%) | 141<br>(35.3%) |
| Constant criticism and shouting gives me job dissatisfaction which causes me to make work mistakes that cost the company fortunes.                                | 400 | 236<br>(59%)   | 76<br>(19%)    | 72<br>(18%)    | 16<br>(4%)     |
| Workplace bullying Zero-tolerant policy in my company will help to increase employees' job satisfaction, retention, productivity and profitability of my company. | 400 | 141<br>(35.2%) | 144<br>(36.1%) | 82<br>(20.4%)  | 33<br>(8.3%)   |

*Source: Survey, 2018*