

## Association of Innovative Work Behaviour, Employee Efficiency and Boredom Proneness Among Librarians in Anambra State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

Boredom proneness can stifle employees' potential with reduced job outcomes. Librarians in Nigeria are experiencing attention disengagement from their workplace due to dwindling readership culture and over reliance on routine. This study evaluates possible consequences in the light of association among innovative work behaviour, employee efficiency and boredom proneness. The sample for the study was 211 (86 males and 125 females) librarians selected from high institution libraries in Anambra State. Participants' ages ranged from 25 to 49 years with an average age of 31.50 years and standard deviation of 2.20. The participants were selected using multi-stage sampling which employed purposive and simple randomization. Purposive sample was used to select participants' institutions; while simple random sampling was used to select each participant from the selected libraries. The study utilized correlation design and moderated regression analysis as appropriate design and statistic. The result revealed that for innovative work behaviour (IWB), the adjusted  $aR^2$  for step 1 is .29 at  $\beta = .58^*$ ,  $p < .01$  ( $F = 21.01$ ). In the second model, the adjusted  $R^2$  for workplace boredom is .38 and R change differential is .9 indicating 9% contribution of workplace boredom to the model which was significant at  $\beta = .32^*$ ,  $p < .05$  ( $F = 14.3$ ). In the step 2, the model indicated that jointly, the  $aR^2$  was .46 indicating a contribution of 8% of both factors (IWB and WB). The contribution was significant at  $\beta = .63^{**}$ ,  $p < .01$  ( $F = 24.6$ ). Given this, the model is accepted the proposed association in hypotheses 1-3 as confirmed. Findings imply that workplace boredomness is

a negative antecedent on innovative work behaviour and employee efficiency.

**Key words:** Innovative work behavior; Employee efficiency; Boredom proneness; Librarians; Organizational climate

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### INTRODUCTION

Today's organizational climate is the bed rock of organizational success. Many organizations are beleaguered by many challenges including boredom proneness which necessarily task the resources of the employees. Among library workers, organizational factors have many employee outcomes (Nwangwu et al., 2021); some of them may be responsible for boredom proneness including the dwindling fortunes in the education sector and the culture of reading and research which is at its lowest ebb among Nigerians. The rise in ICT typically of the search engines for educational resources (Ikwuka et al., 2020) has also affected the uses of library. Also, public sector corruption in Nigeria (Ezeh et al., 2016) has seen basic library infrastructure unattended to by the Ministry of Education. Although, there are possible antecedence to employee ineffectiveness such Machiavellian traits in the workplace and climate of abuse (Madubuze, et al., 2021) in the public service, this study was only interested on how boredom proneness in the workplace and innovation could influence it.

Van (2015) conceptualized workplace boredom as a state of high arousal marked by negative affect

coupled with a state of attention disengagement from one's environment. It is likened watching the paint dry characterized by tastelessness and lack of excitement in the workplace (Danckert, 2013). Boredom proneness is a problem occasioned by routine and bad inter-relationship among workers and lack of motivation (Merrifield, & Danckert, 2014). Workplace boredom is something inherent in routine jobs except they are spiced with curricular activities, introduction of new roles and rotation of jobs and line of task performance. Despite the growing attention that boredom has gained as a construct of scientific inquiry, it is still poorly understudied and understood especially how it affects organizational effectiveness (Danckert, 2013). Boredom as a motivational state portrays an opportunity to explore potential antecedents of the experience. If boredom acts as a signal to motivate individuals to explore more stimulating alternatives, it is thus likely that conditions that prevent effective exploration may play a key role in an individual's tendency to experience boredom. In the workplace, boredom is something commonly associated with different types of loafing behaviour (Chine et al., 2019). This is also consistent with the idea that boredom arises when individuals are not able to effectively explore their environment or those inhibited or prevented in doing so. There are remarkable patterns in which workplace boredom has manifested itself in the civil or public service which unfortunately librarians belong to especially if the workers are relegated in decision making (Ike et al., 2017). For example, Elpidorou (2014) contended that boredom affects civil servants' mentality towards the workplace as a result of over repeated routine and that is why most of them see their workplace as a place of passivity which explains why most of them come late to work and leave the workplace earlier than the closing hour. Secondly, a good number of them are not occupied with tasks to the extent that they provide other ancillary services or sales while in the offices such as selling of snacks and peeling of melon seeds for sale. Many civil servants due to workplace boredom waste their time with office gossip, slander and other uncharitable misdemeanor. There are also the social aspects which can hinder employees thriving leading to boredomness (Joe-Akunne et al., 2019). Without control, boredom proneness may lead to employee turnover intention if the causes of the boredom appear to be political, relational or insecurity (Ezeh et al. 2017). This in evidence shows that workplace is not actually fully engaged and motivated and may be subject to workplace boredom (Van, 2015). Among Librarians, there is a growing concern that low ebb in reading culture and associated disinterest in educational materials among students and the general public may not be unconnected to boredom proneness.

The importance of librarians cannot be over emphasized considering that as school library media

specialists, library information specialists and library directors etc., librarians are part and parcel of knowledge formation and dissemination. School librarian and public librarians help students to learn, to support other educators, and offer expertise on print and technological resources available in the library (Omeluzor & Ogo 2018). According to Quadri and Idowu (2016), librarians are not just helpers; they are also educators for school and community development who provided education resources for both academic and social knowledge. Without innovation and employee efficiency, librarians may be prone to boredom in the wake of poor reading culture in Nigeria which is on all time high!

Librarians equally play roles in helping other educators to provide resources for academic and community development (Quadri & Idowu, 2016). The librarians also assist in curriculum and teaching given their experiences in available texts and access to educational materials. Despite the critical roles librarians play in and out education sector and public enlightenment in general; the roles of the librarians may have reduced significantly owing to poor funding and poor integration into programmes geared towards mass enlightenment, information dissemination, resource sharing and education assistantship (Bello & Ezeri, 2020). Considering that work is linked to life satisfaction (Etodike et al., 2017), boredom proneness is a negative organizational stimulant as many factors could be leading factors of boredom including counterproductive behaviour, abusive supervision and lack of trust in the workers (Etodike et al. 2017). Also, given the typical unemployment situation in Nigeria (Etodike et al., 2018), many librarians are round pegs in square holes. There are expectations that this reduced roles coupled with poor funding allocations, may be consequential to boredom proneness of librarians which may equally affect their ability to innovate except the librarians are effective.

According to Chatchawan et al. (2017), innovative work behavior is an intentional behavior of an individual to introduce or apply new ideas to their assigned work role. It is a behaviour that may be exhibited in the areas of work processes, personnel hiring, product and service changes, supply chains, quality improvement, production cost reduction, reduction of production time, introduction of ancillary products and services to support existing products and services and even changes in production equipment, chain and location. For Afsar and Badir (2015), innovative work behaviour is regarded as all employee behaviour aimed at the generation, introduction and/or application (within a role, group or organization) of ideas, processes, products or procedures, new dimensions intended to benefit the relevant unit of adoption or the organization in whole. There are many antecedents to innovative work behaviours and many factors have been associated to innovation in the workplace (Ezeh et al.,

2020). Among librarians, these innovative behaviours may arise as a result of the realities which have reduced their roles due to poor policy regarding the width and breadth of the roles of librarians and inadequate funding of the education system and by extension the libraries. However, the school librarian position is far from being a luxury. Librarians engage in collaboration for the sake of student learning by teaming up with other teachers. School library educators have the expertise to teach the 21st-century student the skills necessary for competing in today's world (Dow, 2013). To actualize this, librarians need to be properly engaged, motivated and supported so as to bring out the best in them through innovation. The innovative skills of librarians may never be exploited if they are bored and unmotivated due to poor management of libraries and inadequate provisions to enhance the effectiveness of libraries as resource centers for national development.

Innovative work behavior (IWB) has become a competitive edge for organizations as means to breaking even and actualizing organizational goals (Černe, et al., 2017; Anderson et al., 2014). The reason for this is: innovation enables organizations to gain competences to survive and have competitive advantage over their rivals. And during this time, employees are a key factor in innovation process (Tsai, 2016). It consists of creating and implementing new perspectives and ideas (Janssen, 2004). Rather than just consisting generating new ideas and solutions for situations, innovation consists also implementing those ideas (Teng et al., 2016). This means that innovation is a multiphase procedure that involves individual behaviors (Parjanen et al. 2020). However, despite the importance of innovation, without efficiency, employees may not ideally innovate.

Employee efficiency has more to do with employees' ownership of organizational interests, objectives and goals in a way that helps the organization deliver timely with minimized cost and maximized output. Employee efficiency is a capability of employees to produce a specific, desired effect with minimized costs and in strict compliance with initial requirements (Wang et al., 2019). It is a qualitative characteristic that indicates the extent to which targeted problems are addressed and the degree to which preset goals and objectives are achieved by employees (Shinde & Bachhav, 2017). According to Teo and Low (2016), it means a situation when a worker produces a desired outcome in the best possible way. Labor output acts as a key parameter for measuring employee effectiveness. Employee efficiency can be improved through a range of activities that create a better working environment. Here're some examples of such activities: training and recertification (Mira & Odeh, 2019), better communications (Kang & Sung, 2017), rewarding and remuneration (Stachowska, 2016), employee recognition (Owoeye et al., 2020), improved

leadership and teamwork (Hanaysha, 2016), retooling and re-equipment (Utami, 2020), better corporate culture (Maamar & Saheb, 2018) and organizational climate (Shanker et al. 2017).

According to Shinde and Bachhav (2017), employee efficiency involves ability to act in a way that actualizes both the short term and the long term visions of the organization and this involves taking the right decision, understanding all aspect of one's tasks, having competence to execute them within the resources to the organization and maintaining good atmosphere which encourages co-operation among fellow employees (Teo & Low, 2016). Despite its importance, many authors (e.g. Mackay, 2016) have argued that employee effectiveness is not employee's thing alone. There are other aspects of the organization that affect employees effectiveness. Aspects such as; management policy, availability of resources, leadership styles and skills, organizational support towards the employees themselves, organization justice, reward systems and a host of others have consistently proven to be factors of employee effectiveness (Shinde & Bachhav, 2017; Mackay, 2016). These organizational variables theoretically affect employee effectiveness in several ways and this is the reason behind the success and failure of many organizations. Without an effective workforce, chances of improved innovative work behaviour which optimizes performance are usually reduced. For instance Parjanen et al. (2020) contended that an effective employee-driven innovation manual process supports innovativeness.

Given that effectiveness is central to actualizing the goals of library as resource sharing and knowledge centers, this study conceptualizes that if librarians put greater effort at being more effective at their works; they may reduce the boredom associated with low pro-activity due to policy and management lapses. The model therefore proposed that given the current neglect of education sector which have affected library institutions leading to less involvement of librarians in the academic activities, workplace boredom will be inevitable.

From the literature reviewed above, the relationship among variables could be drawn and hence; the proposed model of the study as previously highlighted by the conceptual model in Figure 1 will test the following hypotheses:

- Workplace boredom will negatively and significantly predict employee efficiency among librarians in Anambra State.
- Innovative workplace behaviour will positively correlate employee efficiency among librarians in Anambra State
- Workplace boredom will negatively predict innovative work behaviour among librarians in Anambra State.

## METHOD

### Sample

The sample of the study was 211 which are made up of 86 male and 125 female librarians. Their ages ranged from 25 to 49 years with an average age of 31.50 years and standard deviation of 2.20. The participants were randomly selected from high institution libraries in Anambra State. The participants were selected using multi-stage sampling which employed purposive and simple randomization. Purposive sample was used to select participants' institutions; while simple random sampling was used to select each participant from the selected libraries.

### Measurement

Measures for the study include Innovation work behaviour scale by Jackson, Scott and Bruce (1994), employee effectiveness scale by Alrub (2004) and workplace boredom scale by Van (2015). Three scales were deployed in the survey for measurement. Innovative workplace behaviour scale was developed by Jackson, Scott and Bruce, (1994). It is a 22-item scale formulated to measure workers' idea generation, idea search, idea communication, implementing ideas, overcoming obstacles and innovation outputs. Some of the samples contained in the scale include: "I am interested in how things are done elsewhere in order to use the acquired ideas in my own work", "I try new ways of doing things while at work." The authors of the scale (Jackson, Scott and Bruce, 1994) reported a Cronbach alpha of  $r = .88$ . The researcher carried out a pilot test to enhance the reliability of the instrument and obtained a Cronbach's alpha of  $\alpha = .68$ . Another one is the Employee effectiveness scale which is a 15-item questionnaire developed in Nigeria by Alrub (2004). It has cronbach's alpha validity of  $r = 0.94$ . It is a measure of effectiveness of an employee. Having been standardized with the Nigerian sample, the researcher carried no further validity and reliability tests before using the instrument. Also, the Workplace boredom scale which is a 6-item scale developed by Van (2015) to measure employees' state of high arousal marked by negative affect and the state of attentional disengagement from work environment was deployed too. Sample items include "At work, time goes by very slowly", "I feel bored at my job", "It seems as if my working day never ends" and "I tend to do other things during my work". The author established an alpha coefficient of  $\alpha = .78$ ;  $\omega = 0.78$ , (i.e. the internal consistency was acceptable compared to the commonly accepted guidelines). The scale if item showed reliability of 0.83 with South African sample. For its use in Nigeria, using 20 participants Cronbach's Alpha reliability analysis was carried out and the researcher obtained an alpha coefficient of .75. All the scales were measured on a 5-point Likert type scale ranging from fully disagree (1) to fully agree (5).

### Design

The design of the study is correlation and regression analysis was used as the appropriate statistical tool to establish the relationship among the variables and the moderating effects of the moderator variable. All statistical analyses were managed using SPSS v21.

### Procedure

Responses from 211 participants were elicited from librarians selected from Anambra State University Igbariam with the aid of research assistants. During the data collection for the main study, the researcher approached the school librarians in each of the tertiary institutions in Anambra State and obtained permission to carry out the study with the participants. The copies of the questionnaire were prepared in booklets and were be hand-distributed to the participants. The participants were given instruction on how to fill in the items in the questionnaire. They were assured of the genuineness of the study and confidentiality of their responses. The survey was for research purpose and as such there was no right or wrong answers. The survey lasted for 15 minutes and at the end of the exercise, the researcher collated the filled questionnaire from the respondents and prepared them for analysis.

### Result

**Table 1**  
**Zero order correlation matrix for employee effectiveness, workplace boredom, and innovative work behaviour**

Variables	N	M	1	2	3
Innovative work behaviour	211	79.3	1.00		
Employee efficiency	211	60.5	.543*	1.00	
Workplace boredom	211	20.5	-.383*	-.199*	1.00

\*Correlation is significant at  $p < 0.05$ ; N = Sample population, M = Mean score.

Data in Table 1 is indicative that there is significant positive correlation between innovative work behaviour and employee effectiveness at  $r = .54^*$ ,  $p < .05$  ( $n = 211$ ). However, significant negative relationship was observed between innovative work behaviour and work boredom at  $r = -.38$ ,  $p < .05$  ( $n = 211$ ) and also between employee effectiveness and work boredom at  $r = -.20$ ,  $p < .05$  ( $n = 211$ ). The findings are indicative that there is significant interrelationship among the variables.

**Table 2**  
**Summary of predictive effects of innovative work behaviour and employee efficiency on boredom proneness**

Model	aR2	Df1	(df2)	F	t	$\beta$	p <
Step 1							
IWB	.29	2	(211)	21.0	6.32	.58**	.012
WB	.38	1	210	14.3	4.10	-.32*	.038
Step 2							
WB IWB	.46	1	209	24.6	5.28	-.63**	.009

aR<sup>2</sup> = adjusted R square, \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

Data in Table 2 reveal that for innovative work behaviour (IWB), the adjusted  $aR^2$  for step 1 is .29 at  $\beta = .58^*$ ,  $p < .01$  ( $F = 21.01$ ). In the second model, the adjusted  $R^2$  for workplace boredom is .38 and  $R$  change differential is .9 indicating 9% contribution of workplace boredom to the model which was significant at  $\beta = .32^*$ ,  $p < .05$  ( $F = 14.3$ ). In the step 2, the model indicated that jointly, the  $aR^2$  was .46 indicating a contribution of 8% of both factors (IWB and WB). The contribution was significant at  $\beta = .63^{**}$ ,  $p < .01$  ( $F = 24.6$ ). Given this, the model is accepted and hypotheses 1-3 are confirmed.

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## DISCUSSION

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From the result, a mixed result was observed. While it is indicative that there is significant negative relationship between workplace boredom and employee efficiency and between innovative work behaviour and workplace boredom, there is significant positive correlation between innovative work behaviour and employee efficiency. The findings are indicative that workplace boredom is unhealthy to both employee efficiency and workplace innovation. Whereas the line of relationship indicated that there is reduced innovation and efficiency when employees experience boredom, however, innovative work behaviour positively enhances employee efficiency. The findings confirm the model of the study that there is association among innovative work behaviour, workplace boredom and employee efficiency.

The finding is in congruence with Alneadi, et al. (2020) which linked innovative leadership to enhanced organizational performance. Their finding is indicative that innovative behaviours have the tendency to improve employee outcomes such as efficiency and overall organizational performance. Also, Shanker et al. (2017) confirmed that organizational climate such as one that is boredom prone can negatively influence employee outcomes such as effectiveness and performance. Equally, Teng et al. (2016) while evaluating the influence on employee outcome linked reduced employee engagement or involvement with workplace boredom. However, they contended that organizational climate that supports members' creativity can reduce the negative effects of workplace boredom. In addition, the result is indicative that with the growth employees' innovative work behaviour in organization rife with workplace boredom is likely to reduce while employee efficiency is most likely to improve. This, in evidence shows that boredom proneness is a negative predictor of employee innovative work behaviour and employee efficiency moderated the relationship between workplace boredom and employee efficiency. This is equally supported by the findings of Parjanen (2020) that an effective employee is innovation driven and can have significant outcomes on the organization.

The finding is further consistent with the findings of Rehman and Iqbal (2020) which indicated that knowledge-oriented leadership has direct and positive effect on organizational performance. Moreover, Rehman and Iqbal's (2020) findings reveal that KM processes and innovation partially mediate the effect of knowledge-oriented leadership on organizational performance. Their findings imply that innovation could positively influence organizational performance and hence; could be linked to the current model which found association among innovation, efficiency and boredom proneness.

## Implication of the Study

Boredom proneness is a negative influence on employees' innovative mindset and it retards their efficiency potentials. Findings imply that boredom behaviour in the workplace may be a factor that is organizationally engineered due to prevailing climate in the workplace. Many organizations may not be benefiting from the innovative and creative processes because the employees are experiencing boredomness and as such may not reach innovation potential. However for organizations with such challenges, helping the employees grow their innovative capacity represent a significant way of reducing the effects of workplace boredom on and enhancing employee efficiency.

## Limitations

Boredom proneness is inherent in most jobs which follow a pattern of routine without an essential part of the job which challenge and task the competence of the worker on a day-to-day basis. Although, the current study made effort to evaluate the contents of measures in order to ensure they apply and are relevant in the measurement of the constructs of the study, however, what has been measured remain on the ambit of generalized boredom model without adapting to specific job environment such in the library setting. To reduce the effects of this limitation, the researchers ensured the boredom behaviours measured in the scale were work attitudes similarly found among workers in school and public libraries.

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## CONCLUSION

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The study was driven on the need to ascertain the proximate associations of boredomness sweeping library officers due to lack of meaningful job involvement caused by routine and dwindling readership culture among Nigerians. The study considered that boredom behaviours in the workplace are capable of reducing employees' potentials. The potentials of interest remain innovative workplace behaviour and employee efficiency. The study adopted a correlation design and regression analysis and the after analysis of the data; findings reveal mixed result for the association among variables. Whereas boredomness influenced innovative work behaviour

and employee efficiency negatively and significantly, innovative work behaviour influence employee efficiency positively. The implications of the study was given as well as the limitations.

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