

Individual substance abuse, perceived workplace fairness and organisational factors as predictors of absenteeism among civil servants in Oyo State

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Abstract

The present paper intends to investigate individual and organisational factors (substance abuse, perceived workplace fairness, work stress, and co-worker support) that predict absenteeism among civil servants in Oyo State, Nigeria. The paper also plans to suggest ways of significantly reducing absenteeism within the Nigerian civil service, especially, amongst the government workers in Oyo State, Nigeria. The current paper adopted a quantitative research approach, as well as a cross-sectional research design. The empirical findings disclosed that substance abuse, perceived workplace fairness, work stress, and co-worker support significantly jointly and independently predict absenteeism among government workers in Oyo State, Nigeria. Similarly, this paper suggests that gender as a demographic factor significantly influence absenteeism as female government workers tend to exhibit more absence behaviour than their male counterparts; and that educational qualification positively correlates with absenteeism, in that, civil servants with lower educational qualification tend to engage in absence behaviour more than the ones with higher educational qualification. Furthermore, this paper concluded that reducing absenteeism within the Oyo State civil service is a factor of reduced substance abuse, high level of perceived workplace fairness, reduced work stress, and increased co-worker support, workers' gender and their educational qualification. This study significantly adds to the body of knowledge in terms of unlocking suitable management strategies towards achieving a reduction in substance abuse, a high level of perceived workplace fairness, a reduction in work stress, and an increase in co-worker support, which reduces workers' absenteeism, within the civil service in Nigeria, specifically amongst the civil servants in Oyo State, Nigeria. Hence, this paper highlighted the importance of individual and organisational factors (substance abuse, perceived workplace fairness, work stress, and co-worker support), and demographic variables (gender and educational qualification) on absence behaviours.

Keywords: Investigating, individual and organisational factors, predictors, absenteeism, civil servants, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Introduction

Absenteeism is a complex concept that is referred to as the employee's behaviour of absence exhibited without formal or corporate understanding. Absence from work is a vital component of human resources management, as controlling absenteeism helps to achieve higher productivity for production companies as well as in the form of better services in service-oriented organisations. So, absenteeism is well-defined as "habitual absence from work for one or more days, usually justified by medical certificate but, actually, due to personal interests and poor sense of duty." (Cucchiella *et al.*, 2014, p.1159). Also, Bhatia (2014) refers to absenteeism as employee's non-appearance for his/her regular tasks and his/her failure to report on the job (the job that puts him/her on a payroll) as scheduled. This reference includes time lost, which comes due to accident, illness and time away from the job due to personal reasons whether authorised or unauthorised. Therefore, as posited by Bhatia (2014), authorised leave of absence with or without pay is also considered as an absence, but not the absences on account of the strike, lock-out, as well as weekly and scheduled holidays. Notably, absenteeism is usually regarded as a pertinent human resource management (HRM) problem in wide organisations and sectors (Harrison & Martocchio, 1998). Human resources management can be divided into three main subfields (Boxall, Purcell & Wright, 2007), namely, the strategic human resources management (SHRM), the micro human resources management (MHRM), and the international human resources management (IHRM). The micro human resources management has to do with the sub-functions of human resources plan, which entails two core categories, namely, handling small groups and individuals (for example, selections, recruitment, training, induction, remuneration and performance management) and the management of work organisation. Strategic

human resources management entails the general human resources strategies implemented by companies and business units, and it makes efforts to measure the effect of these strategies on performance. The international human resources management entails human resources management in organisations working across nationwide borders. Hence, the general goal of strategic human resources management for an organisation is to connect human resources actions and activities in obtaining competitive performance and advantages (Lengnick-Hall *et al.*, 2009; Harpaz & Meshoulam, 2010). One of the main strategic actions in human resources management is the management of absenteeism, to guarantee the company's effective success and performance (Halbesleben, Whitman & Crawford, 2014). Hence, absenteeism remains a strategic and pertinent problem in HRM for both public and private sectors of several nations. However, research shows that the civil servants are more predisposed to being absent (for instance, taking sick leaves and being present without significant contribution to work) related to comparable workers in the private sectors (Truman, 2003). Hogue and Islam (2003) suggest that absenteeism is a topic that should be examined, as well as a problem that should be resolved. They further opined that if absenteeism is not properly taken care of, it could be predominant and create an assortment of retaliatory challenges for organisations. Hence, absenteeism has extensively been perceived as a significant and prevalent problem in the public sector.

Universally, substance abuse has been referred to as the injurious use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs. Notably, psychoactive substance use can cause addiction syndrome which is a collection of behavioural, cognitive, and physiological phenomena that develop due to repetitive substance use; of which these phenomena include problems in controlling its use, an intense craving for the drug, continuous use notwithstanding damaging consequences,

advanced precedence is accorded to drug-use than other obligation and activities, augmented tolerance, and occasionally a physical withdrawal state (Woodman, 2010). Hence, while observing all these symptoms of substance abuse, substance abusers have high probabilities to remain at home under the influence of these substances, having no interest whatsoever in work, highly intoxicated, highly tired, forgetful, and exhibiting poorly coordinated behaviours (Omoluabi & Coker, 2010). Consequently, these outcomes will lead to absence from work as substance abuse contributes enormously to the rate of absence among abusers regardless of the work settings (Omoluabi & Coker, 2010). In the current investigation, substance abuse is labelled as the conscious use of the substance without doctors' prescription, with overdose, or any act of dependence on it or other drugs for psychological and or physical gains (Omoluabi & Coker, 2010).

In an everyday sense, fairness and justice include qualities such as impartiality, moral rightness, equity, and honesty (Polayni & Tompa, 2004). Fairness remains a part of the essential concerns in society, as Cohen (1991) suggests that fairness is a central moral standard against which social practice, conduct, and institutions are assessed. Also, justice is described as a universal insight on suitability (Colquitt & Rodell 2015). In this paper, fairness and justice will be used interchangeably. A phrase, for instance, "*a fair day's pay for a fair day's work*" signifies how important fairness is to employees (Kaori Fujishiro, 2005, p.1). Therefore, employees' perception of workplace fairness has been an important topic in organisational psychology (Kaori Fujishiro, 2005). Justice is an issue that reverberates in employees' entire working lives. Therefore, feelings and thoughts of unfairness go on to influence several significant behaviours (Colquitt & Zipay, 2014). Consequently, managing fairness and justice becomes a critical duty for supervisors and the organisation as a whole. Recently, organisational (un)fairness and its impacts on health have become issues of concern among occupational health and human resources management researchers. Studies have suggested that a lack of organisational fairness/justice significantly influences absence attributable to illness (Kivimaki *et al.*, 2002), a consequent self-rated decline in health status (Elovainio *et al.*, 2002), and psychiatric disorders (Kivimaki *et al.*, 2003).

Work stress remains a major influence on the well-being and daily living of industrial and organisational workers. Work is a vital part of our existence; however, some individuals are vulnerable to work stress (Leka *et al.*, 2003). Obiora and Iwuoha (2013) regard work stress as a physical and or emotional response to duties that are observed to be hostile or difficult. Besides, they believe that work stress places physiological and mental influences on employees, and makes them exceed their accustomed capacity. Carr (2011) describes work stress as a perceived variance between work demands and an individual's capability to perform his/her tasks. However, numerous studies have explored the causes of work stress (Egwunyenga & Egbule, 2002; Forshaw, 2002; Butler, Gizywacs, Bass, Linney, 2005; Bridger *et al.*, 2007). Leka *et al.* (2003) opined that, if a significant number of employees are affected by work stress, it influences the organisation's performances. Therefore, when affected by work stress, organisations experience increased employee absenteeism, increased employee turnover, a negative organisational image, decreased work commitment, damaged performances and productivity both in the public sector and amongst its employees (Leka *et al.*, 2003). According to CIPD (2012), stress remains a part of the most shared reasons cited for long term absences, and it is common amongst non-manual workers. Therefore, high work stress can have a far-reaching impact on employee's absence from work among civil servants.

Co-worker support (peer support/colleagues support) is referred to as the perceived level of supportive effort amongst co-workers,

work-groups' spirit of cooperation, the level of sociability, trust among members of the workgroup, warmth, open communication, and shared pride in the workgroup (Bateman, 2009). Co-worker support means a lot to employee satisfaction as all social exchange requires support. The contemporary organisations take managers as authorities who own utmost control over work experiences and outcomes (such as, employee retention) (Chan & McAllister, 2014). Employee retention remains a pertinent target for the organisations as every organisation needs to employ appropriate candidates for the successful and progressive business activities, and they also need to retain them, as organisations spend an enormous amount on the recruitment, training and orientation of the potential staff. Hence, organisational or co-worker support makes employees have fewer tendencies for quitting their jobs, for engaging in negative behaviours (for instance, absenteeism), as well as builds the employer-employee relationship and employee's positive intentions to stay on the job (Shoib *et al.*, 2009). It has been suggested that, for example, co-worker support influences the level of pro-organisational behaviour (Bateman, 2009), which may further influence the attendance occurrence.

The literature revealed that the rate of workers' absenteeism in Nigeria was very high among government employees (Ejere, 2010). Several studies have been conducted on predictors of employee absence from work; however, a lot of these studies conducted on determinants of absenteeism among employees have not considered individual and organisational factors in the Nigerian context, especially among civil servants. However, employee absence causes a lot of economic and productivity loss for the employers and organisations, as it distorts and destabilises organisational plans and delivery goals. The implications of employee absence cannot be over-emphasised in today's work organisations. Therefore, there is a need to investigate individual and organisational factors predicting absenteeism among civil servants, and the Oyo state civil servants will be used as a case study. Hence, the focus of the current paper is to investigate substance abuse, perceived workplace fairness, work stress, and co-worker support as individual and organisational factors predicting absenteeism within the civil service in Oyo State, Nigeria. Thus, the objectives of the present paper are hereby enumerated below:

- To examine if individual and organisational factors (substance abuse, perceived workplace fairness, work stress, and co-worker support) will independently and jointly predict absenteeism among civil servants in Oyo State, Nigeria;
- To discover if gender difference will significantly predict absenteeism within the civil service in Oyo State, Nigeria;
- To investigate the level of absenteeism among government workers in Oyo State as related to their educational qualifications, and
- To develop an empirical model that can be used to effectively reduce absenteeism in the civil service in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Literature Review

This segment presents a few theories as well as reviews the existing body of work on the relationship among the above-mentioned variables of the current study.

Stress-response theory of substance abuse

This theory suggests that substance use lessens the pressure that emanates from exposure to work stressors (Sayette, 1999). The stress-induced drinking proposal states that experiencing work stressors induces substance use as a way of justifying experienced stress and tension (Frone, 1999; Sayette, 1999). Notably, most work stress research

has tested the stress-induced substance use theory and suggested that more recurrent experience of work stressors will lead to extra recurrent use of drugs and alcohol, leading to some significant measure of abuse (Peirce *et al.*, 2000).

Social cognitive theory of substance abuse

This theory was formulated by Bandura (1986), and it suggests that individuals, their behaviours, and environment work synchronously. Konchellah (2016) includes that, behaviour is not only a product of environmental stimuli but that individuals possess the ability to think and have opinions from any situation, determining the costs of their specific behaviour by reflecting and further concluding on the best strategy. Furthermore, this theory is utilised in the areas of substance use and abuse, suggesting that people assume optimistic anticipations towards substances by imitating their peers' positive statements or attitudes (Giovazolias & Themeli, 2014).

Equity theory of perceived workplace fairness

The core concern of this theory is about reward or return, hence, the reason for equity or inequity in several situations in organisations (Dugguh & Ayaga, 2014). This theory suggests that an employee compares his/her rewards with the ones received by other employees on parallel positions. Thus, if such an employee notices justice, fairness, and equity, he or she will feel satisfied, motivated and this leads to positive behaviours (Aswathappa, 2008). Universally, employees enjoy feeling some significant measure of reward or compensation for their contributions and work efforts. Should they feel any form of unfairness or injustice in what they get from their work organisations in any form of reward, compensation, or benefit, they remain dissatisfied and subsequently turn unfriendly towards their organisations as well as to their colleagues, which may eventually lead to lack of motivation, reduced job satisfaction, and increase in negative behaviours (for instance, absenteeism, bullying, fraudulent behaviour) (Dugguh & Ayaga, 2014). However, fairness is multidimensional; for example, equity does not only depend on our input-to-output but others' valuation of our input-output ratio and theirs. Therefore, it has to do with perception. Consequently, when an employee perceives that his/her inputs are equally rewarded with outputs, he/she becomes satisfied, delighted and is better motivated to discharge their duties positively. But employees lose interest in their jobs and organisations when they perceive that their proportion of inputs-outputs is not equivalent to the one enjoyed by the significant others (Schultz & Schultz, 2010).

General strain theory (GST)

The rudimentary opinion of this theory is that individuals in the workplace who are repeatedly nervous and experience stress are frequently angry and are likely to behave indecently. Stressors and strains are linked with employees' states of emotion because of their work situation (Hart & Cooper, 2001). General strain theory laid emphasis on factors of stress, for instance, loss of valued possessions and the inability to achieve goals. GST is a theory that accurately describes employee deviance behaviours, such as corporate crime, absenteeism, bullying and suicide (Agnew, 2006). Agnew (2006) postulated that GST claims that strains increase the possibility of absenteeism.

Person-environment fit theory of work stress

Dewe *et al.* (2012, p. 28) posit that it is pertinent to "begin with the notion of explaining the word 'fit' itself". The person-environment (P-E) fit theory suggests that there will be high stress because of a discrepancy between an individual's needs and what they face in the workplace (Dewe *et al.*, 2012). The fundamental claim of the P-E fit theory is the expectation of equality between employees' wants and

what they eventually receive, together with equating capabilities (skills) and demands that employees face (Yang *et al.*, 2008; Dewe *et al.*, 2012). Possible outcomes of misfits identified include a reduced commitment to the organisation, absenteeism, job dissatisfaction, and more turnover intentions (Dewe *et al.*, 2012).

Social exchange theory of co-worker support

Employees normally value co-worker support as it helps meet their needs for affiliation, esteem, and approval. It also gives respite during times of stress. So, with increased co-worker support, employees feel accepted and are more pleased with their jobs. Hence, social exchange theory is the theoretical foundation of co-worker support, which suggests that employees will be loyal and contribute towards the success of an organisation if they receive fair, positive, and caring treatment from their co-workers and the organisation (Blau, 1964; Levinson, 1965). The ideology of exchange (exchange theory) and reciprocity (norms) embedded in the concept of co-worker support stimulates employees to feel satisfied to recompense the treatment they get from the organisation (Eisenberger *et al.*, 2001). Thus, based on the reciprocity norm inherent in the social exchange theory, perceived co-worker support generates perceived obligations among employees, which makes them give good concern to the organisation's well-being and support the organisation in achieving its objectives through reduced negative behaviours (for instance, absenteeism and sabotage) (Eisenberger *et al.*, 2001). Employees could then perceive more co-worker support and get more motivated, satisfied on the job, and exhibit more positive behaviours based on the degree to which their organisation and co-workers value them, and according to the help they get from them (Brinkmann & Stapf, 2005).

In the current paper, the aforementioned theories will be used to investigate substance abuse, perceived workplace fairness, work stress, and co-worker support as individual and organisational factors predicting absenteeism amongst the civil servants in Oyo State, Nigeria. However, the concepts of substance abuse, perceived workplace fairness, work stress, and co-worker support and absenteeism are reviewed in the sections below.

Substance abuse and absenteeism

Frone (2003a, 2006b) investigated the occurrence and rate of illicit drug use and alcohol. Taking alcohol to intoxication weekly was reported by 3.4 per cent of the workforce, monthly intoxication by 6.4 per cent of the workforce, and less than monthly intoxication by 20.9 per cent of the workforce. Besides, Bywood *et al.* (2006) posited that 29.3 per cent of the 319 Australian construction apprentices consumed alcohol during work hours. Bywood *et al.* (2006) further opined that 2.5 per cent of the apprentices reported performing their job duties under the influence of illicit drugs. The literature and data sources indicated that 9.3% of mineworkers who partook in a South African study use alcohol daily, while 15.3% depended on alcohol (Hitzeroth & Kramer, 2010). Also, Grobler *et al.* (2006) indicated the increasing employers' worries about the rise in the abuse of substance within the workplace.

Substance abuse contributed hugely to employees' non-compliance and unethical behaviours such as absenteeism, workplace deviance, abuse of organisational facilities, and mental health issues (Woodman, 2010). Meško *et al.* (2013) opined that workers' absenteeism has been influenced by substance abuse, which hampers the individual's performance and leads to distress in the workplace. In this situation, a negative outcome of physical and psychological health and behavioural issues will surface, harming employee and organisational effectiveness since employees under high substance abuse tend to find alternative ways of coping through doping and absenteeism. Research conducted

by Durand *et al.* (2004) suggested that substance abuse significantly associated with higher levels of absenteeism. Studies also showed some relationships between substance abuse and irregular work schedule (Frone, 2006), the number of hours worked (Ames, Grube, Moore, 2000), workplace harassment (Richman *et al.*, 2002), gratifications (Bildt & Michélsen, 2002), absenteeism and increased sick leave at the workplace (Wiesner *et al.*, 2005). Furthermore, Mohr *et al.* (2005) indicated the relationship of alcohol abuse with increased absenteeism; and Bacharach *et al.* (2010) asserts that an increased number of sick days taken by employees are linked to high levels of alcohol consumption. Recently, substance abuse has been placed on the forefront of screening of employees as the front line of healthy behaviour in Nigeria; as it was reported that 80% of employees who abuse drugs had a high rate of absenteeism as identified by the public health services records (Oladejo *et al.*, 2015).

The following hypothesis is hence derived from this literature:

H₁: Substance abuse will independently predict absenteeism among civil servants in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Perceived workplace fairness and absenteeism

The perceptions of employees and their responses to organisational justice have been vital topics in industrial/organisational psychology. Main notions of organisational justice and employees' responses to various types of unfairness in organisations have been well recognised (Cropanzano & Schminke, 2014). Most of the organisational justice researches done tend to concentrate on the results related to the competence of organisational operatives, such as employees' commitment to the organisation, absenteeism, job performance, among others (Colquitt *et al.*, 2001; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Dasgupta & Dubey, 2015). Rue *et al.* (2005) opined that workplace unfairness resulted from a perceived threat of danger (physical or emotional) and the pressure that increases decision towards absenteeism.

Dasgupta and Dubey (2015) noted that employee absences may be used to repay perceived workplace unfairness. Van Yperen *et al.*'s (1996) measure of inequity showed a significant link between perceived workplace unfairness and absenteeism. The findings of Geurts *et al.* (1999) suggested that absenteeism could be regarded as a direct withdrawal response to perceived workplace injustice. De Boer *et al.* (2002) suggested that perceived workplace injustice significantly influenced future absence behaviour. Hirschfeld, Schmitt and Bedeian (2002) found that workers who thought they got low-performance rewards were more likely to be absent. Furthermore, Robbins and DeDenzo (2013) indicated that perceived workplace fairness had a significant negative connection with absenteeism.

Also, the above literature has motivated the hypothesis below:

H₂: Perceived workplace fairness will independently predict absenteeism among civil servants in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Work stress and absenteeism

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) (2012) suggested that stress has become an increasing issue of concern for several work organisations. The institute further suggested 27 per cent of its study's participants has been absent from work, of which work stress was indicated as the biggest causal factor. Also, a study carried out in Ireland suggests that one of Ireland's significant reasons for employees' absence behaviour is work stress and that it loses around €200 million per year due to work stress (Birmingham, 2013). Besides, Birmingham (2013) opined that 86 per cent of his study's respondents indicated work stress as a contributing factor for

absenteeism. In Europe, employers lose around €272 billion per year to absenteeism, €617 billion a year to work depression, and €63 billion as costs of employees' healthcare (Insight Matrix, 2012). France in 2007, on the other end, lost between €1.9 and €3 billion as cost of work stress, and between €826–1,284 million as cost of absenteeism (Trontin *et al.*, 2010).

Apart from the impact of workplace stress on workers' health and wellbeing, studies have suggested that work stress can lead to reduced motivation, a higher rate of staff turnover, and increased absent behaviour (Miche, 2002; Kivimaki *et al.*, 2003; Van den Berg *et al.*, 2008). Laaksonen *et al.* (2010) opined that absenteeism shows a significant correlation with work stress. Also, studies indicated that absenteeism relates with work stress and psychosocial risks such as workloads, role conflict, limited career progression, effort-reward imbalance, and social relationships (including discrimination and bullying, workplace violence, and low social support) (Laaksonen *et al.*, 2010; Ervasti *et al.*, 2011; Figueiredo-Ferraz *et al.*, 2012; Kiran, Günar *et al.*, 2012; Derycke *et al.*, 2013; Magnavita, Garbarino, 2013; Slany *et al.*, 2013).

The above literatures have stimulated the following hypothesis:

H₃: Work stress will independently predict absenteeism among civil servants in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Co-worker support and absenteeism

The influence of co-worker support on employee's performance and absenteeism cannot be over-emphasised; as extremely high and extremely low levels of co-worker support have implications on workers absenteeism and performance (Noe *et al.*, 2010). Besides, Davison and Fielden (2003) researched the determinants of absenteeism among government workers using a sample of 309 participants. They found that organisational support and perceived co-worker support jointly predicted absenteeism while perceived co-worker support had a substantial independent negative impact on absenteeism. The finding is supported by Wade and Travis (2008) who found that employee perception of co-worker support contributed significantly to the variance in absenteeism among public servants in Italy.

Studies have also reported psychosocial predictors of absenteeism among workers in Berlin and identified employee perception of co-worker support, perceived equity, and organisational fairness as joint predictors of absenteeism (Kiecolt-Galsser, *et al.*, 2002; Krantz & McCeney, 2002). Erickson, Drevets and Schulkin (2003) further stressed that workplace factors (such as co-worker support, organisational fairness, organisational culture, and work stress) contributed about 65% to employee absenteeism. Furthermore, studies have revealed that employee satisfaction with organisational justice and co-worker support had a significant influence on employee behaviours (absenteeism, presenteeism, and intention to quit the organisation (Ozturk *et al.*, 2009).

The following hypothesis is therefore derived from this literature:

H₄: Co-worker support will independently predict absenteeism amongst civil servants in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Moreover, the review of the concepts of substance abuse, perceived workplace fairness, work stress, and co-worker support and absenteeism in the sections above have inspired the following hypothesis:

H₅: Individual and organisational variables (substance abuse, perceived workplace fairness, work stress, and co-worker support) will jointly predict absenteeism among civil servants in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Demographic factors and absenteeism

Goldberg and Waldman (2000) noted that demographic factors are extensively used in investigating employee turnover and absenteeism. Hence, employee demographic factors could also indicate their level of absenteeism. This is because Caubridge (2012) investigated the relationship among age, educational qualification and absenteeism and found that, younger workers report higher absenteeism than their older counterparts. The study further confirmed that government workers with higher educational qualification report higher absence behaviour than their counterparts with lower educational qualification. Also, Akankali and Abowei (2010) opined that age, gender, job status, job satisfaction and organisational justice jointly accounted for about 16.3% variance in absenteeism among workers; and further analysis revealed a noteworthy gender difference in employee absence. Similarly, Weiss (2002) has argued that there is gender influence on absenteeism, as men reported a higher level of absenteeism compared to women in the same work organisation. Studies also show that the damaging effects of absenteeism were predicted by age, work experience, and job department (Greenberg & Zhang, 2010; Champoux & Brun 2003). Furthermore, Marzabardi and Tarkhorani (2007) investigated factors affecting absenteeism among employees, and they found out that gender, age, and educational qualification were substantial predictors. Further analysis indicated a significant gender difference in employee absence. Also, Gellatly and Hedberg (2016) reported in his study centred on demographic determinants of absenteeism and workers motivation in Slovakia using a cross-sectional survey that, age, religion and educational qualification had no significant joint effect on absenteeism but that age and educational qualification independently predicted absenteeism. Hence, age and education qualification predict absenteeism among employees.

These views have stimulated the following hypotheses:

H₆: Female civil servants will significantly report higher absenteeism than their male counterparts in Oyo State, Nigeria.

H₇: Civil servants with the lower educational qualification will manifest absenteeism significantly more than their counterparts with higher educational qualification.

The research methodology of the current paper is discussed next.

Research methodology

A research design answers to questions that would choose the course a scholar's research should take (Kumar, 2010). Therefore, a research design should relate to the research purpose (Denscombe, 2010). In the current paper, the researcher espoused a cross-sectional survey research design.

The present researcher applied a quantitative research approach in this paper, to investigate individual and organisational variables (substance abuse, perceived workplace fairness, work stress, and co-worker support) as predictors of absenteeism among government workers in Oyo State, Nigeria. Research methods consist of techniques for gathering data. Hence, a survey research method was adopted in the current paper. An official list of questions for eliciting responses from respondents on a specific topic of study (a questionnaire) (Babbie & Mouton, 2001), was floated in the current study. Besides, participants of the present research were 420 civil service workers of Oyo State, Nigeria. The reason for choosing a purposive sampling technique is because the target population has distinctive parameters, which make it purposive, that is, civil service workers.

Research instruments

The current researcher adopted a structured questionnaire to measure the variables under study. Hence, this questionnaire had six (6) segments, that is, sections A, B, C, D, E, and F.

Section A: Demographic questions: This section deals with the respondents' demographic data (for instance, age, gender, marital status, job level, religion, educational qualifications).

Section B- Substance abuse scale (SAS)

This scale was developed by Peters, Greenbaum, Steinberg, and Carter (2000), to measure substance abuse including alcohol and other drugs. It is a 15-item scale with a dual response category rating, Yes/No. The authors established a Cronbach's alpha of 0.76 as the internal consistency score, and the content and construct validity coefficients were adequate. All negative items are reversed and a high score above the group mean indicates the high substance use and vice-versa. Concerning the reliability analysis of the scale, a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.86 was realised in the current study.

Section C- Perceived workplace fairness scale (POFS)

This section contained a 14-item scale adapted from Donovan, Dragow and Munson (1998), to measure workplace fairness among civil servants. It is a Yes/No rating scale, of which the authors established a 0.76 Cronbach's alpha internal consistency score. However, the current investigation established a Cronbach's Alpha reliability of 0.81.

Section D- Work stress scale (WSQ)

This scale is an 8-item questionnaire developed by the American Institute of Stress, (1979), to measure work stress among civil servants. The Cronbach's alpha of these items was 0.83. The response set-up for the scale contained a 5-point Likert type scale ranging from never to very often, to which the respondents expressed their degree of work stress. In the current paper, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the reliability of this scale is 0.86.

Section E- Co-worker support scale (CSS)

This section measures teacher effectiveness using the co-workers support instrument developed by Smith, Fisher, Ryan, Clarke, House and Weir (2013). It has 11 items and a 4-point Likert rating scale with response format of definitely false to definitely true, in which respondents are expected to specify the rate of their disagreement or agreement with the statements as presented in the questionnaire. The developer of the scale specified a reliability coefficient of 0.89 as well as construct validity. In the current paper, a Cronbach's alpha reliability of 0.87 was derived.

Section F- Absenteeism scale (AS)

This scale was developed by Kathryn, Cook, and Hendrickson (1998), to measure the level of workers' absence from work without permission or official notifications. It is a 12-item scale with a 5-point rating scale ranging from definitely false to definitely true. The authors established a Cronbach's alpha of 0.84 construct validity. In the current investigation, a reliability alpha coefficient for the scale was found to be 0.93.

Research procedure

In the direction of administering questionnaires, the current researcher sought permission from the management of the selected

departments (specifically from the deputy chief-of-staff's office) and participants' informed consent was sought. Questionnaires were handed out to 420 civil servants from six local government areas (Akinyele, Egbeda, Oluyole, Ona-Ara, Iddo and Lagelu) of Oyo State. An introduction letter/cover note was made accessible, showing the details describing the aim of the research and confidentiality of responses. Data collected was analysed and presented in tables. The present researcher considered the ethical issues connected to collecting, assessing, and storing confidential data. Hence, voluntary involvement was encouraged. Besides, the current researcher acted reliably and in a professional manner when distributing the questionnaires, and ensured the safety of the data. In total, 399 questionnaires were retrieved and considered as perfect for use.

The data retrieved from the participants were analysed with the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS v 26). The data was cleaned before analysis. Inferential statistics such as ANOVA, t-test for independent samples, correlation, and multiple regression were adopted when validating the stated hypotheses. In the current investigation, reliability analyses were done to analyse the local reliability of the research tool.

Results

The following sections show the results of the analysed data:

Descriptive Summary

Table 1 shows that 193 of the respondents were males whereas 206 of them were females. Besides, the distribution of respondents by age group showed that more respondents were between 35-49 years old (216; 54.1%) followed by respondents who are between 20-25 years old (157; 39.3%), and those who are 50 years old and above (26; 6.5%). Moreover, the results disclosed that 142 participants were single, 233 were married, and 10 were divorced, while 14 respondents were widow(er). Also, Table 1 revealed that 50 of the respondents were ND holders, 199 were HND certified, 109 were B.Ed/BSc certified, and 41 of the participants were M.Ed/MSc. certified. The results further revealed that 104 respondents were on level 6 job level, 247 were on level 7-9, while 48 respondents were on level 10 and above.

Inferential Statistics (Hypothesis testing)

This section reports the inferences about the observed population.

Hypothesis one

Hypothesis one, which states that substance abuse will independently predict absenteeism among civil servants in Oyo State, Nigeria, was tested with the use of multiple regression and the outcomes are revealed in Table 2. Besides, the results shown in table 2.1 above indicate that substance abuse significantly, positively, and independently predicts absenteeism among government workers in Oyo State, Nigeria. The table further indicates that substance abuse contributes about 11% influence on variance in the absenteeism of Oyo State's civil servants. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that substance abuse will independently predict absenteeism within the civil service in Oyo State, Nigeria was accepted in the current investigation. So, the results above have achieved a part of the first objective of the current paper, which is to examine if individual and organisational factors (substance abuse, perceived workplace fairness, work stress, and co-worker support) will independently and jointly predict absenteeism among government workers in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Table 1. Demographic variables

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Per cent (%)
Gender	Male	193	48.4
	Female	206	51.6
	Total	399	100.0
Age	20-34	157	39.3
	35-49	216	54.1
	50 and above	26	6.5
	Total	399	100.0
Marital Status	Single	142	35.6
	Married	233	58.4
	Divorced	10	2.5
	widow(er)	14	3.5
	Total	399	100.0
Religion	Islam	113	28.3
	Christianity	265	66.4
	Others	21	5.3
	Total	399	100.0
Educational qualification	OND	50	12.5
	HND	199	49.9
	B.Ed./BSc	109	27.3
	M.Ed/MSc	41	10.3
	Total	399	100.0
Job level	Level 6	104	26.1
	Level 7 – 9	247	61.9
	Level 10 and above	48	12.0
	Total	399	100.0

Source: Author's fieldwork

Note OND means (Ordinary National Diploma), HND (Higher National Diploma), B.Ed (Bachelor of Education), BSc. (Bachelor of Science), MSc (Masters of Science), whereas M.Ed is connoting (Masters of Education).

Hypothesis two

Hypothesis two, which states that perceived workplace fairness will independently predict absenteeism among civil servants in Oyo State, Nigeria, was tested with the use of multiple regression and the results are shown in Table 2. Also, the results shown in table 2.1 above indicate that perceived workplace fairness significantly and independently predicts absenteeism within the civil service in Oyo State, Nigeria. Besides, the table shows that perceived workplace fairness contributes 26% change in the absenteeism of government workers in Oyo State, Nigeria. Table 2.1 further shows that perceived workplace fairness negatively predicts absenteeism among government workers in Oyo State, Nigeria. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that perceived workplace fairness will independently predict absenteeism among civil servants in Oyo State, Nigeria was accepted in the current study. Hence, the results above have achieved a part of the first objective of the current paper, which is to examine if individual and organisational factors (substance abuse, perceived workplace fairness, work stress, and co-worker support) will independently and jointly predict absenteeism among Oyo State's civil servants.

Hypothesis three

Hypothesis three, which states that work stress will independently predict absenteeism among civil servants in Oyo State, Nigeria, was verified with multiple regression and the results are revealed in Table 2. Besides, the findings shown in table 2.1 above reveal that work stress significantly and independently predicts absenteeism among civil servants in Oyo State, Nigeria. Table 2.1 further indicates that work

Table 2. Coefficients

Model		Coefficients								
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	44.049	4.260		10.339	.000	35.673	52.425		
	Work Stress	.483	.032	.341	14.888	.000	.419	.547	.319	3.131
	Perceived Workplace Fairness	-.646	.100	-.259	-6.455	.000	-.843	-.449	.104	9.575
	Co-worker Support	-.427	.031	-.339	-13.579	.000	-.488	-.365	.270	3.710
	Substance Abuse	.288	.091	.106	3.154	.002	.109	.468	.150	6.683

a. Dependent Variable: Absenteeism

Source: Author's results

Table 2.1. Summary of the multiple regression table showing the values of the model

Model	R ²	β	B	Standard Error (SE)	Confidence Interval (CI) for 95% (B)
Model	.934				
Substance Abuse		.106	.288	.091	.109 / .468
Perceived Workplace Fairness		-.259	-.646	.100	-.843 / -.449
Work Stress		.341	.483	.032	.419 / .547
Co-worker Support		-.339	-.427	.031	-.488 / -.365

stress contributes about 34% influence on variance in the absenteeism within the civil service in Oyo State, Nigeria. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that work stress will independently predict absenteeism among government workers in Oyo State, Nigeria was accepted in the current paper. Furthermore, the results above have achieved a part of the first objective of the current paper, which is to examine if individual and organisational factors (substance abuse, perceived workplace fairness, work stress, and co-worker support) will independently and jointly predict absenteeism among Oyo State's civil workers.

Hypothesis four

Hypothesis four, which states that co-worker support will independently predict absenteeism among civil servants in Oyo State, Nigeria, was tested with the use of multiple regression and the results are shown in Table 2. Besides, the outcomes shown in table 2.1 above specify that co-worker support significantly and independently predicts absenteeism among Oyo State's civil workers. The table also shows that co-worker support contributes 34% change in the absenteeism of government workers in Oyo State, Nigeria. Furthermore, Table 2.1 shows that co-worker support negatively predicts absenteeism among civil servants in Oyo State, Nigeria. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that co-worker support will independently predict absenteeism among civil servants in Oyo State, Nigeria was accepted in the current study. Hence, the results above have achieved a part of the first objective of the current paper, which is to examine if individual and organisational factors (substance abuse, perceived workplace fairness, work stress, and co-worker support) will independently and jointly predict absenteeism within the civil service in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis five

Hypothesis five, which states that individual and organisational variables (substance abuse, perceived workplace fairness, work stress, and co-worker support) will jointly predict absenteeism among civil servants in Oyo State, Nigeria, was tested with multiple regression and the results are revealed in Table 2. Moreover, the results shown in table 2.1 above indicate that individual and organisational variables (substance abuse, perceived workplace fairness, work stress, and co-worker support) significantly jointly predict absenteeism among civil servants in Oyo State, Nigeria ($R^2 = .934$). This infers that substance

abuse, perceived workplace fairness, work stress, and co-worker support as variable factors, contribute about 93% change in the entire absenteeism within the civil service in Oyo State, Nigeria. The results above have achieved a part of the first objective of the current paper, which is to examine if individual and organisational factors (substance abuse, perceived workplace fairness, work stress, and co-worker support) will independently and jointly predict absenteeism among government workers in Oyo State, Nigeria. Hence, these variable factors are considered very important and significant in determining absenteeism among civil servants in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis six

Hypothesis six, which states that female civil servants will significantly report higher absenteeism than their male counterparts in Oyo State, Nigeria, was tested with the use of a t-test for independent samples and the results are shown in Table 3:

An independent sample t-test was done to compare the absenteeism scores with male and female civil servants. Hence, Table 3 above indicates that gender difference significantly predicts absenteeism within the civil service in Oyo State, Nigeria, and the difference in score between the two gender groups (male and female) is $t(397) = -3.08$, $p < .05$, two-tailed with female civil servants ($M = 47$, $SD = 6.09$) scoring higher than male civil servants ($M = 45$, $SD = 6.79$). However, the following formula is used to arrive at the size of the differences in the means of the gender groups:

$$\text{Eta squared} = \frac{t^2}{t^2 + (N_1 + N_2 - 2)}$$

According to Cohen (1988), .01 suggests a small effect, .06 a medium effect, while .14 indicates a large effect. Hence, in the current study, the following score is derived:

$$\text{Eta squared} = \frac{-9.467}{80.533} = 0.1$$

Therefore, the size of the differences in the means of the gender groups (mean difference = -1.98, 95% CI: -3.26 to -.72) was small (eta squared = .01).

These findings further suggest that female civil servants in Oyo State slightly exhibit more absence behaviour (Mean =47) compared to their male counterparts (Mean =45). Therefore, the hypothesis which states that female civil servants will significantly report higher absenteeism than their male counterparts in Oyo State, Nigeria, was partially accepted in the current research, as the difference between the absenteeism levels of both female and male civil servants in Oyo State is little. Also, the results above have achieved the second objective of the current investigation, which is to find out if gender difference will significantly predict absenteeism within the civil service in Oyo State, Nigeria. Therefore, gender significantly predicts absenteeism within the civil service in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis seven

Hypothesis seven, which states that civil servants with the lower educational qualification will manifest absenteeism significantly more than their counterparts with higher educational qualification in Oyo State, Nigeria, was tested with a one-way ANOVA and the results are revealed in Table 4:

Table 4 above expresses the results of one-way between-groups ANOVA done to investigate the influence of educational qualification on absenteeism. Participants were divided into four groups according to their educational qualification (OND; HND; B.Ed./BSc; and M.Ed./MSc). A substantial difference at the $p < .05$ level in absenteeism existed among the four educational qualification groups: $F(3, 398) = 5.0, p < .05$. However, the statistical implication of the variances between each

pair of these set of groups is revealed in Table 4.1 multiple comparisons below, which provides the outcomes of the Posthoc tests.

Table 4.1 reveals that group 1 (civil servants certified with OND qualification) is not notably different from the other three groups about absenteeism at $p > .05$ level, but group 2 (civil servants with HND) is significantly different from group 3 (civil servants with B.Ed./BSc.) and group 4 (civil servants with M.Ed./MSc.) about their absence behaviour at $p < .05$ level. However, Table 4.2 below displays the real variance in the mean scores between all the sets of groups, which are meant to corroborate the differences explained above.

By conducting Post-hoc comparisons, Table 4.2 above corroborates the facts that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of group 2 (civil servants with HND; $M = 47.38, SD = 6.16$), group 3 (civil servants with B.Ed./BSc.; $M = 45.39, SD = 7.10$), and group 4 (civil servants with M.Ed./MSc.; $M = 43.70, SD = 5.98$). However, as regards the effect size, which is the strength of the variance between groups, or the effect of the demographic variable (educational qualification) on absenteeism within the civil service in Oyo State, Nigeria, the following formula would be adopted (Cohen, 1998, p. 284-287):

$$\text{Eta Squared} = \frac{\text{Sum of squares between groups}}{\text{Total sum of squares}}$$

The effect of the difference between the demographic variable groups on absenteeism within the civil service in Oyo State, Nigeria is

Table 3. T-Test summary that shows the influence of gender on absenteeism

DV	Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t	P
Absenteeism	Male	193	45.2176	6.79570	397	-3.077	<.05
	Female	206	47.2039	6.09736			

Table 4. One-Way ANOVA (levels of educational qualification)

ANOVA					
Absenteeism					
(educational qualification groups)					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	618.399	3	206.133	5.007	.002
Within Groups	16263.019	395	41.172		
Total	16881.419	398			

Table 4.1. Multiple Comparisons (educational qualification groups)

Multiple Comparisons						
Dependent Variable: Absenteeism						
Tukey HSD						
(I) Educational Qualification	(J) Educational Qualification	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
OND	HND	-1.74191	1.01506	.317	-4.3608	.8769
	B.Ed./BSc.	.24550	1.09598	.996	-2.5821	3.0731
	M.Ed./MSc.	1.93268	1.35190	.482	-1.5552	5.4206
HND	OND	1.74191	1.01506	.317	-.8769	4.3608
	B.Ed./BSc.	1.98741	.76461	.048	.0147	3.9601
	M.Ed./MSc.	3.67459	1.10050	.005	.8353	6.5139
B.Ed./BSc.	OND	-.24550	1.09598	.996	-3.0731	2.5821
	HND	-1.98741	.76461	.048	-3.9601	-.0147
	M.Ed./MSc.	1.68718	1.17555	.478	-1.3458	4.7201
M.Ed./MSc.	OND	-1.93268	1.35190	.482	-5.4206	1.5552
	HND	-3.67459	1.10050	.005	-6.5139	-.8353
	B.Ed./BSc.	-1.68718	1.17555	.478	-4.7201	1.3458

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 4.2. Descriptive

Descriptive Absenteeism								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
OND	50	45.6400	6.14372	.86885	43.8940	47.3860	26.00	57.00
HND	199	47.3819	6.16973	.43736	46.5194	48.2444	31.00	59.00
B.Ed./BSc.	109	45.3945	7.10115	.68017	44.0463	46.7427	27.00	58.00
M.Ed./MSc.	41	43.7073	5.98015	.93394	41.8197	45.5949	34.00	57.00
Total	399	46.2431	6.51273	.32604	45.6021	46.8841	26.00	59.00

Table 5. Correlations among the demographic variables of the study showing relationships

Correlations	Gender	Age	Marital Status	Religion	Educational Qualification	Job Level	Absenteeism
Gender	1	.090	.214**	-.052	.025	-.118*	.153**
Age	.090	1	.106*	.022	-.096	.180**	.033
Marital Status	.214**	.106*	1	-.042	-.001	.114*	.159**
Religion	-.052	.022	-.042	1	.054	-.015	-.106*
Educational Qualification	.025	-.096	-.001	.054	1	-.001	-.126*
Job Level	-.118*	.180**	.114*	-.015	-.001	1	-.078
Absenteeism	.153**	.033	.159**	-.106*	-.126*	-.078	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

determined according to Cohen’s (1998, p. 284-287) classification of effect sizes: .01 as a small effect, .06 as a medium effect and .14 as a large effect. Hence, the following effect sizes are determined:

(a) For educational qualification groups (see table 4 above):

$$618.399$$

$$\text{Eta Squared} = \frac{618.399}{16881.419} = .04$$

Despite attaining statistical worth, the real variance in mean scores between the groups was small. The effect size was .04. Nonetheless, the results then indicate that civil servants who are certified with HND are significantly different from those who are certified with higher qualifications such as B.Ed./BSc and M.Ed./MSc. in absenteeism.

Table 5 above confirms that civil servants’ educational qualification significantly but negatively relates with absenteeism ($r = -.126^*$, $p < .05$), which infers that the higher the educational qualification of the civil servants in Oyo State, the lower their level of absenteeism and vice versa. Hence, this further confirms the outcomes of the current investigation which indicates that workers within the civil service in Oyo State who are certified with HND will significantly have more tendencies of engaging in absence behaviour compared to their colleagues who are certified with B.Ed./BSc and M.Ed./MSc. So, the hypothesis which states that civil servants with the lower educational qualification will manifest absenteeism significantly more than their counterparts with higher educational qualification in Oyo State, Nigeria, was accepted in the current paper. Besides, the above results have achieved the third objective of this paper which is to examine the level of absenteeism amongst civil servants in Oyo State as related to their educational qualifications.

The current results have also met the paper’s fourth objective, which is to develop an empirical model which can be used to effectively reduce absenteeism in the civil service in Oyo State, Nigeria. Hence, this empirical model is shown in figure 1 below:

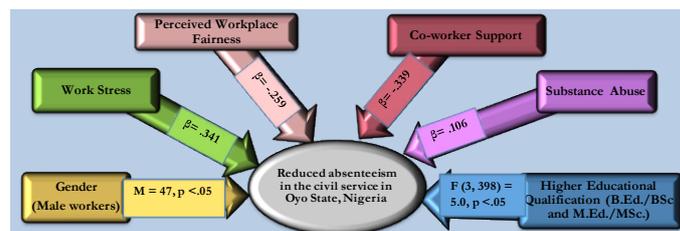


Figure 1. Empirical model of reducing absenteeism in the civil service in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Source: author’s findings

Discussions

Firstly, the hypothesis of the current study which states that substance abuse will independently predict absenteeism among civil servants in Oyo State, Nigeria, was tested with the use of multiple regression. The results reveal that substance abuse significantly, positively and independently predicts absenteeism within the civil service in Oyo State, Nigeria; and that substance abuse contributes about 11% influence on variance in the absenteeism of government workers in Oyo State, Nigeria. The hypothesis is therefore accepted in the current paper. The stress-response theory of substance as earlier explained, further suggests that more recurrent experience of work stressors will lead to extra recurrent use of drugs and alcohol, leading to some significant measure of abuse (Peirce *et al.*, 2000). Also, the social cognitive theory of substance abuse as earlier mentioned, suggests that people assume optimistic anticipations towards substances by imitating their peers’ positive statements or attitudes (Giovazolias & Themeli, 2014). Thus, the current paper confirms the positions of the stress-response theory of substance abuse and the social cognitive theory of substance abuse regarding the influence of substance abuse on absenteeism within the civil service in Oyo State, Nigeria. Also, the current findings sustain the perspectives of Meško *et al.*, (2013) as well as Woodman (2010), who established that workers’ absenteeism has

been influenced by substance abuse, which hampers the individual's performance and leads to distress in the workplace, and that employees under high substance abuse tend to find alternative ways of coping through doping and absenteeism. Furthermore, the results above re-affirm the positions of Vahtera (2012) and Wiesner *et al.*, (2005), who established that absenteeism and increased sick leave at the workplace stems from substance abuse, and Oladejo *et al.* (2015) who reported that 80% of employees who abuse drugs had a high rate of absenteeism as identified by the public health services records. Nevertheless, the current paper did not just confirm the viewpoints of the aforementioned scholars but also contextualises its results within the civil service in Oyo State, Nigeria. Therefore, substance abuse positively influences absenteeism amongst the civil servants of Oyo State, Nigeria. It suggests that the more civil servants in Oyo State engage in substance abuse, the more they exhibit absence behaviour and vice versa. Besides, the stated results achieved a part of the first objective of the present research, which is to examine if individual and organisational factors (substance abuse, perceived workplace fairness, work stress, and co-worker support) will independently and jointly predict absenteeism within the civil service in Oyo State, Nigeria. Hence, the findings suggest a significant and positive main influence of substance abuse on absenteeism amongst the civil servant of Oyo State, Nigeria.

Regarding the second hypothesis, which states that perceived workplace fairness will independently predict absenteeism among civil servants in Oyo State, Nigeria, a multiple regression analysis was conducted. The results indicate that perceived workplace fairness significantly, negatively and independently predicts absenteeism within the civil service in Oyo State, Nigeria and that it contributes 26% change in the absenteeism of government workers in Oyo State, Nigeria. The hypothesis is therefore accepted in the current research. The equity theory as earlier stated, further explained that when employees feel any form of unfairness or injustice in what they get from their work organisations in any form of reward, compensation, or benefit, they remain dissatisfied and subsequently turn unfriendly towards their organisations as well as to their colleagues, which may eventually lead to lack of motivation, reduced job satisfaction, and increase in negative behaviours (for instance, absenteeism, bullying, fraudulent behaviour) (Dugguh & Ayaga, 2014). Therefore, the current paper confirms the position of equity theory concerning the influence of perceived workplace fairness on absenteeism within the civil service in Oyo State, Nigeria. Besides, the current findings re-affirm the position of Rue *et al.* (2005) who reported that workplace unfairness resulted from a perceived threat of danger (physical or emotional) and the pressure that increases decision towards absenteeism. Similarly, according to Dasgupta and Dubey (2015), employee absences may be used to repay perceived workplace unfairness. Also, the current findings affirm the position of Robbins and DeDenzo (2013) who indicated that perceived workplace fairness had a significant negative relationship with the absenteeism of employees. As aforementioned, the current investigation did not just confirm the perspectives of these scholars but also contextualises its results within the civil service in Oyo State, Nigeria. Therefore, perceived workplace fairness negatively influences absenteeism within the civil service in Oyo State, Nigeria; which infers that the more civil servants in Oyo State perceive workplace fairness, the less they exhibit absence behaviour and vice versa. Besides, the stated results achieved a part of the first objective of the present research, which is to examine if individual and organisational factors (substance abuse, perceived workplace fairness, work stress, and co-worker support) will independently and jointly predict absenteeism by government workers in Oyo State, Nigeria. Hence, the findings suggest a significant and negative main influence of perceived workplace fairness on absenteeism amongst the civil servant of Oyo State, Nigeria.

Concerning the third hypothesis, which states that work stress will independently predict absenteeism among civil servants in Oyo State, Nigeria, a multiple regression analysis was done, and its outcome shows that work stress significantly, positively and independently predicts absenteeism within the civil service in Oyo State, Nigeria and that work stress contributes about 34% influence on variance in the absenteeism of government workers in Oyo State, Nigeria. The hypothesis is thus accepted in the current research. The general strain theory of work stress as earlier explained, further suggests that strains increase the possibility of absenteeism in the workplace (Agnew, 2006). Also, the person-environment fit theory of work stress as earlier mentioned, suggests that there will be high stress because of a discrepancy between an individual's needs and what they face in the workplace, and that possible outcomes of such misfits include a reduced commitment to the organisation, absenteeism, job dissatisfaction, and more turnover intentions (Dewe *et al.*, 2012). Thus, the current investigation confirms the positions of the general strain theory of work stress and the person-environment fit theory of work stress regarding the effect of work stress on absenteeism within the civil service in Oyo State, Nigeria. Besides, the findings of the current research support the positions of Bermingham (2013) who opined that a substantial number of participants believed that stress leads to absenteeism in their workplace as 86% of the participants acknowledged this, and that of (Figueiredo-Ferraz *et al.*, 2012; Kiran, Günar *et al.*, 2012; Derycke *et al.*, 2013; Magnavita, Garbarino, 2013; Slany *et al.*, 2013) who opined that absenteeism is linked to workplace stress and psychosocial hazards. Therefore, the results of the current investigation did not only confirm the positions of the previous scholars who indicated the significant main influence of work stress on absenteeism but also indicated a significant main influence of work stress on absenteeism within the civil service in Oyo State, Nigeria. Hence, these results have achieved a part of the first objective of the present research, which is to examine if individual and organisational factors (substance abuse, perceived workplace fairness, work stress, and co-worker support) will independently and jointly predict absenteeism among civil servants in Oyo State, Nigeria. Hence, the findings suggest a significant and positive main influence of work stress on absenteeism amongst the civil servant of Oyo State, Nigeria.

About the fourth hypothesis, which projected that co-worker support will independently predict absenteeism among civil servants in Oyo State, Nigeria, a multiple regression analysis was done. The results indicate that co-worker support significantly, negatively and independently predicts absenteeism among government workers in Oyo State, Nigeria and that it contributes 34% change in the absenteeism within the civil service in Oyo State, Nigeria. The hypothesis is therefore accepted in the current paper. The social exchange theory of co-worker support as earlier stated, further explained that perceived co-worker support generates perceived obligations among employees, which makes them give good concern to the organisation's well-being and support the organisation in achieving its objectives through reduced negative behaviours (for instance, absenteeism and sabotage) (Eisenberger *et al.*, 2001). Therefore, the current paper confirms the position of social exchange theory concerning the influence of co-worker support on absenteeism within the civil service in Oyo State, Nigeria. Furthermore, the current findings reaffirm the position of Davison and Fielden (2003) who indicated that organisational support and perceived co-worker support jointly predicted absenteeism while perceived co-worker support had a significant independent negative effect on absenteeism. Also, the present findings affirm the positions of Wade and Travis (2008) who found that employee perception of co-worker support contributed significantly to the variance in absenteeism among public servants in Italy, and of Erickson, Drevets and Schulkin (2003) who stressed that workplace factors (such as co-

worker support, organisational fairness, organisational culture, work stress, among others) contributed about 65% to employee absenteeism. Besides, the current results confirm that positions of (Ozturk *et al.*, 2009), who suggested that employee satisfaction with organisational justice and co-worker support had a significant influence on employee behaviours (such as, absenteeism, presenteeism, and intention to quit the organisation). However, as aforementioned, the current investigation did not just confirm the perspectives of these scholars but also contextualises its results within the civil service in Oyo State, Nigeria. Thus, co-worker support negatively influences absenteeism amongst the civil servants of Oyo State, Nigeria. It deduces that the more civil servants in Oyo State perceive co-worker support within the civil service, the less they are likely to exhibit absence behaviour and vice versa. Consequently, these results attained a part of the first objective of the present research, which is to examine if individual and organisational factors (substance abuse, perceived workplace fairness, work stress, and co-worker support) will independently and jointly predict absenteeism among government workers in Oyo State, Nigeria. Hence, the findings suggest a significant and negative main influence of co-worker support on absenteeism amongst the civil servant of Oyo State, Nigeria.

The fifth hypothesis, which states that individual and organisational variables (substance abuse, perceived workplace fairness, work stress, and co-worker support) will jointly predict absenteeism among civil servants in Oyo State, Nigeria, was verified with a multiple regression analysis. The result showed that individual and organisational variables (substance abuse, perceived workplace fairness, work stress, and co-worker support) significantly and jointly predict absenteeism among civil servants in Oyo State, Nigeria, and further indicates that substance abuse, perceived workplace fairness, work stress, and co-worker support as variable factors, contribute about 93% change in the entire absenteeism among civil servants in Oyo State, Nigeria. This infers that individual and organisational variables (substance abuse, perceived workplace fairness, work stress, and co-worker support) largely influence an increase and a decrease in absence behaviour within the civil service in Oyo State, Nigeria. The results of the current paper have achieved a part of the first objective of the present research, which is to examine if individual and organisational factors (substance abuse, perceived workplace fairness, work stress, and co-worker support) will independently and jointly predict absenteeism among government workers in Oyo State, Nigeria. Hence, the findings suggest a major significant joint influence of individual and organisational variables (substance abuse, perceived workplace fairness, work stress, and co-worker support) on absenteeism within the civil service in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Concerning the sixth hypothesis, which states that female civil servants will significantly report higher absenteeism than their male counterparts in Oyo State, Nigeria, a t-test for independent samples analysis was done, and its outcome indicates that gender difference significantly predicts absenteeism within the civil service in Oyo State, Nigeria and that the female civil servants tend to exhibit more absence behaviour compared to their male counterparts. The hypothesis is thus accepted in the current study. This result supports the position of Akankali and Abowei (2010) who noted a significant gender difference in employee absence, but could not support the assertion of Weiss (2002) who opined that men reported a higher level of absenteeism compared to women in the same work organisation. An explanation for the position of female workers and their absence behaviour could be supported by the position of Hardy *et al.* (2003) and Lau *et al.* (2003) who opined that women are usually more absent compared to men because of domestic problems and general health issues. It could

also be viewed from the points of Johnson *et al.* (2003) and Robbins *et al.* (2003) who opined that working women play many roles as female homemakers, care for the elderly and children. However, the results of the current investigation did not only confirm the positions of the previous scholars who indicated the main influence of gender on absenteeism but also indicated a noteworthy independent influence of gender on absenteeism within the civil service in Oyo State, Nigeria. Hence, these results have achieved the second objective of the current paper, which is to find out if gender difference will significantly predict absenteeism within the civil service in Oyo State, Nigeria. Notably, the findings suggest a significant influence of gender on absenteeism amongst the civil servants in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Regarding the seventh hypothesis, which projected that civil servants with the lower educational qualification will manifest absenteeism significantly more than their counterparts with a higher educational qualification in Oyo State, Nigeria, a one-way ANOVA analysis was done, and its outcome indicates a significant variance in absenteeism for educational qualification groups and that the civil servants' educational qualification significantly but negatively relates with absenteeism, which infers that the higher the educational qualification of the government workers in Oyo State, the lower their level of absenteeism and vice versa. Hence, the seventh hypothesis is accepted in the current paper. This result supports the positions of Gellatly and Hedberg (2016) who reported that educational qualification independently predicted absenteeism among employees, and of Caubridge (2012) who opined that civil servants with higher educational qualification report higher absenteeism than their counterparts with lower educational qualification. However, this result did not only confirm the position of the previous scholar who indicated the significant main influence of educational qualification on absenteeism but also indicated a significant main influence of educational qualification on absenteeism within the civil service in Oyo State, Nigeria. Also, it showed that civil servants in Oyo State, who have higher educational qualifications have less likelihood of being absent from work compared to their colleagues who have lesser educational qualifications. Hence, these results have achieved the third objective of the current paper, which is to investigate the level of absenteeism among civil servants in Oyo State in relation to their educational qualifications. The findings suggest a significant influence of educational qualification on absenteeism amongst the civil servant of Oyo State, Nigeria.

However, the current paper has localised its results within the Nigerian civil service; which also makes it a recent finding within the Nigerian civil service.

Practical implications

The results of the current paper apply to the management of the Nigerian civil service. The Oyo State government and the office of the chief-of-staff need to adopt some more specific strategies to ensure a significant reduction in substance abuse, a rise in perceived workplace fairness, reduction in work stress, and to strengthen a work environment filled with co-worker support; as it has been established that these would help to significantly reduce the absence behaviour within the civil service in Nigeria. Gender significantly predicts absenteeism within the civil service in Oyo State. Besides, female civil servants engage more in absence behaviour than the male civil servants. This has a significant implication for the government's agencies and parastatals, in looking into other possible psychosocial factors capable of distracting women (for instance, domestic problems, general health issues, homemaking, and caring for children and the elderly) and providing techniques and skills to help manage these issues outside the workplace. Furthermore, the current findings establish that state

governments that employ and encourage a higher percentage of workers with higher educational qualifications will possibly enjoy some good benefits by experiencing a decrease in the levels of absenteeism as against state governments that have more of their workers certified with lower educational qualifications.

Limitations

The results of this study are predisposed to some limitations. Firstly, the current sample was restricted to the civil servants in Oyo State, Nigeria. Hence, future investigation should look into civil service in other regions and States of Nigeria. Second, the current investigation adopted a cross-sectional survey design. Thus, future studies need to consider the use of a triangulation design which includes a mixed method of data collection to achieve a piece of more robust information on the phenomenon under study.

Conclusion and recommendations

This paper concludes that individual and organisational variables (substance abuse, perceived workplace fairness, work stress, and co-worker support) independently and jointly predict absenteeism amongst the civil servant in Oyo State, Nigeria. Therefore, this paper concludes that substance abuse, perceived workplace fairness, work stress, and co-worker support account for a major significant variance in employee absenteeism among civil servants in Oyo State. Hence, these variables have been ascertained as factors predicting the level of absenteeism among civil servants in Oyo State. Also, this paper concludes that gender significantly correlates with absenteeism amongst the civil servant in Oyo State, Nigeria. Specifically, it concludes that the female government workers engage in absence behaviour more than the male workers. Besides, this paper concludes that educational qualification significantly and negatively correlates with absenteeism amongst the civil servant in Oyo State, Nigeria. Precisely, civil servants with higher educational qualifications are less likely to engage in absence behaviour compared to workers with lower educational qualifications. The current findings have contributed significantly to the roles of governance and leadership in addressing organisational issues, such as achieving a significant reduction in absenteeism within the civil service of a growing economy. Therefore, the following recommendations are useful for future inferences:

The current paper recommends that the problem of alcohol abuse within the civil service in Oyo State and all related problems be addressed and resolved. The Oyo state government should develop policies and regulations that will be a deterrent to alcohol abuse. These control measures related to drinking can enhance both organisations and their employee performance. Civil servants who are affected by abuse of substance should be offered support through intervention programs by the government, to facilitate their recovery. Besides, to check substance abuse among civil servants, this paper recommends a routine training and workshop sessions on substance abuse and its health implications, as well as its organisational outcomes. Also, the Oyo State government needs to develop a system of measuring the loss in man-hour regarding affected worker's performance to facilitate further development of curbing measures. Furthermore, the tendency for workers to adopt absence behaviours because of unfairness remains a concern within organisations. So, the State government needs to create good and adequate communication between manager and workers in recognising and addressing the inequity between workers' investments and their rewards. This could be achieved through routine surveys of employees' concerns, to ensure appropriate interventions towards maintaining the well-being of workers and their organisations. Besides, the government should always ensure an employee-fairness

policy which indicates the ways employee should be fairly treated, in encouraging a significant reduction in absenteeism.

This paper recommends an operative workplace programme to avert work stress, by identifying civil servants' psychosocial risks, assessing their work performances and their difficulties due to stress. This assessment should be systematic, making workers express their concerns about any circumstances causing stress within the civil service. Besides, an introduction of trainings and workshops (handled by clinical and industrial psychologists) on stress management will help improve stress-reduction skills among workers. It is also recommended that the government conduct an intermittent occupational health exercise including an improvement in the working conditions and the job of the civil servants; in addition to increasing their ability to cope with work. Also, co-worker support should be promoted in the Oyo State civil service, through sensitisation programme and provision of co-worker support assessment scheme associated with appraisal of employees who are found exhibiting pro-social behaviour and organisational behaviours that can help drive work performance and reduce absenteeism. Besides, the Oyo State government should build a solid social support system for its workers. Although this paper has added knowledge regarding the significant reduction of absenteeism within the Oyo State civil service, there is a need to conduct the same investigation in other States' civil service commissions.

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