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## SELF-EFFICACY AND POLITICAL DEVIANT BEHAVIOUR IN THE CAMEROONIAN PUBLIC SERVICE

MENGOUA PLACIDE

Ph.D in occupationnal and organisational psychology. Lecturer/Researcher/Assistant at the Faculty of Education of the University of Yaounde I

### ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the relationship between self-efficacy and deviant behaviour at work by cameroonian civil servants. The problem raised by this research is that of the practice of deviant political behavior at work by public officials in Cameroon. According to Robinson & Bennett (1997), this is administrative gossip; administrative favoritism, spreading rumors and blaming colleagues and / or users unnecessarily and without reason. The objective of this research is to show that a self-efficient employee does not practice deviant political behaviors at work. Such an objective is part of the research axis of the psychological and developmental sciences, precisely in the field of organizational and occupationnal psychology. The data collection method is the survey and the tool is the questionnaire in the form of measurement scales. Simple random sampling yielded the sample of 500 participants. The self-efficacy scale is that of Sherer and Coll (2005) translated and adapted by Chambon (2013) and the deviance scale is that of Bennett and Robinson (2000). Data collection took place in Yaoundé and the analysis was descriptive and regressive. 70% of the participants in this research believe that the practice of deviant political behavior is a reality in public service Cameroon. HRI:  $\beta = 0.25$ ; HR2:  $\beta = 0.21$ ; HR3:  $\beta = 0.22$ : these results show that the three hypotheses are not validated.  $P = 0.000$  the hypothesis is significant. Our regression result based on data collected on a sample of 500 civil servants shows that a self-efficient employee can produce deviant political behavior at work. A self-efficient employee can also produce deviant political behavior at work.

**Keywords:** self-efficacy, political deviant behavior.

### \*Correspondence to Author:

MENGOUA PLACIDE

Ph.D in occupationnal and organisational psychology. Lecturer/Researcher/Assistant at the Faculty of Education of the University of Yaounde I

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## Problematic

Robinson and Bennett (1995, p.556) define deviant behaviors of employees at work as *voluntary behaviors that violate the norms of the organization and, in so doing, threaten the well-being of the organization and / or its members*. Deviant behaviors have three basic characteristics. First, the act must be voluntary or intentional and not accidental. Second, there are organizational standards that members of the organization must meet. For this point (Appelbaum, Deguire and Lay, 2005) give the definition according to which organizational norms are a grouping of expected behaviors, languages, assumptions that allow the organization to function at an appropriate pace. And third, there is a target for deviant behavior either individuals who are members of the organization or the organization it self or both at the same time. Deviant behaviors at work are behaviors that deviate from the organizational norm and therefore from the general status of the Cameroonian public service. The concern in this research is to account for the existence of deviant behaviors that tend to become generalized in the Cameroonian public sector and propose the necessary levers for their eradication. The research thus consists in studying the link between the employee's self-efficacy and the probability of occurrence of deviant behaviors at work.

According to the theoretical model of organizational deviance of Robinson and Bennett (1995, 1997) the provocations and constraints suffered by employees cause deviant behavior at work in general and particularly acts of political deviance. These deviant behaviors are present in the Cameroonian public service. The employee of the public reports malicious remarks concerning his colleagues so that they are the object of slander, mockery. Practices qualified as administrative gossip. These employees practice administrative patronage on a large scale, blame their colleagues for no reason and spread rumors against them. Rather than

presenting a united front in the performance of tasks, in order to give an acceptable look to the public administration, a peaceful future, the employees indulge more in a carelessness, opening the door to all kinds of excesses.

Administrative gossip is an insidious form of intimidation or harassment. When it is intended to discredit, to propagate lies or half-truths about colleagues or to hurt, denigrate and destroy reputations without their knowledge, it becomes harassment at work. Since it is often based on false conclusions and rumors, it is difficult to find the origin, end or refute them.

Cameroonian civil servants are most often very active in so-called *parallel activities*, thus pardizing the obligation to devote all of their professional activity to the tasks entrusted. In this, they take actions that contribute to giving a bad image of the administration. These employees buy motorcycle taxis, taxis, crushing mills, some have opened shops, drinking establishments, etc. These activities are most often managed by a member of the family who performed moving from village to city for reasons of confidence. After work, the owner (*civil servant*) goes there to continue his day and thus help the manager to complete his income. The activity, initially derisory develops and becomes a source of income more important than the monthly salary of the civil servant. The activity then becomes the main income. If these activities are carried out without causing abandonment of workstation, this would not have aroused our curiosity, but it happens that the hierarchical superior cannot deploy his collaborator because the latter is absorbed by a parallel activity. It is then that the work of civil servant gradually takes over to second rank. In this, these employees compete unfairly with the public service by dealing more with their activities than with the work of the Cameroonian public service.

In the context of the Cameroonian civil service, employees are continuously subjected to provocations at work without interruption, as demonstrated in the theoretical model of

Robinson and Bennett (1995). A situation which was to cause a work stoppage through a general increase in deviant behavior, yet employees continue to serve users. This paradox attracts attention, provokes questions; The problem raised by this research is that of knowing whether, despite this situation, other factors would not be able to induce Cameroonian employees to continue working while eliminating deviant behavior at work. Public officials are increasingly reporting their low income, which barely meets their basic (survival) needs, to justify the discourteous and off hand attitudes they display when welcoming users and towards them. with regard to their colleagues, but also acts of corruption of which they are guilty; the state continuing to be considered a cash cow, everyone believes they are entitled to reap the benefits of all kinds provided for by the regulations in force and related to the work station. The lack of visibility and the length of the administrative circuit followed by the files, favor behavior which is at least reprehensible, borrowing from blackmail and various bargaining. Leunga Kamaga (2005) thinks that at Campost with a sample of 100 employees: 7% of respondents think that 70% of employees adhere to the management guidelines of their new leader. This result shows that staff adherence to the manager's strategic vision is not complete, a situation very characteristic of professional disobedience.

A deviant behavior very wide spread in the Cameroonian public service is that of administrative favoritism. This is a breach of the duty of probity. Indeed, probity is a broad concept which encompasses the necessary impartiality of public decision-makers For the material element of the offense of favoritism to be characterized, three constituent elements must be brought together: the quality of the perpetrator (public official) the granting of an unjustified advantage and the violation of legislative or regulatory provisions intended to guarantee the freedom of access and legality of users. This situation is very visible during the

award of public contracts in Cameroon. Employees gossip to feel more integrated into their group. Many gossips like to be seen as a source of information, which makes them important when people ask them for more information. People who are not good about themselves feel better for a while when they pass negative judgments on others. They do this for the purpose of hurting those with talents or a way of life that they envy. Bennett and Robinson (2000) found in one of their studies that 84.3% of workers used working time for personal matters: that 51.8% of employees took property from the organization without permission.

Professional self-efficacy could play a very important role in the journey of such employees. A good level of self-efficacy will produce three types of effects (Bandura, 2003). The first type of effect is the choice of behavior to be taken. A low level of self-efficacy can lead to avoidance of situations that would reveal suspected incompetence. Conversely, a good level of self-efficacy leads the individual to set more ambitious goals and allows him to orient himself towards work tasks that are more demanding but which seem within reach. People (with high professional self-efficacy) will tend to set higher goals, all other things being equal (Carré, 2003a). The second effect relates to the persistence of behavior. Self-efficacy determines the efforts that learners will accomplish and how long they will persist in the face of obstacles oraversive experiences, which is why Martinot (2001) thinks that when faced with difficulties, students who do not spontaneously access successful self-designs may develop serious doubts about their abilities, reduce their efforts, or give up all together, while those with a strong sense of efficiency [...] exert a greater effort. The third effect is that learners are more resilient in the face of unexpected events and difficulties . High self-efficacy would contribute more than any other factor to professional socialization. It leads employees to take on high-performance professional roles that go beyond simple adaptation to the

requirements of the position held. Are active mastery experiences at work capable of eradicating the phenomenon of deviant political behavior in the workplace? Can verbal persuasion help a public service employee to do his job well without subsequently developing acts of administrative favoritism?

The main question is: Can a self-efficient employee reduce political deviance at work? The secondary questions are: 1-Can the active mastery experience decrease political deviance at work? 2-Can the vicarious experience reduce political deviance at work? 3-Can social persuasion reduce political deviance at work? The general objective is to show that the self-efficient employee does not practice deviant political behavior at work. This research attempts to find ways out of the practice of political deviance in the public service in particular and in the workplace in general. The specific objectives are: OS1- the active mastery experience decreases political deviance at work; OS2-vicarious experience decreases political deviance at work; OS3- Social persuasion decreases political deviance at work.

According to Blau (1964), the theory of social exchange has its origins in the work of Smith (1776) cited by El Akremi (2006) who considers exchange as the means by which the diversity of human needs is satisfied. Blau's theory of social exchange (1964) postulates that work constitutes an exchange relationship between an employer and a worker. This relationship is based on the evaluation of the costs and benefits of this exchange, from the point of view of the employee (Blau, 1964), This theory is based on two guiding principles the voluntary exchange of resources and the standard of reciprocity. Voluntary exchange of resources refers to the rewards that the employer offers to its employee in exchange for a service. Resources voluntarily exchanged can be either tangible (salary, social benefits) or intangible (holding a prestigious position). Using a cost-benefit ratio analysis and a comparison of alternatives, the worker evaluates the exchange subjectively. If the

worker considers the exchange to be preferential treatment, he will voluntarily feel indebted to his employer. The voluntary exchange of resources corresponds to the benefits offered by the organization to the employee. The second guiding principle is the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960). The worker reacts according to his perception of the employer and his perception of the balance of the cost-benefit ratio. If the worker considers that he is adequately rewarded by his employer, his feeling of obligation towards his employer will increase. This feeling of obligation increases the worker's organizational commitment and reduces deviant behavior at work (Blau, 1964 ; Renaud, Morin & Béchar, 2017). When a worker enjoys the benefits associated with the voluntary exchange of resources, he feels indebted to his organization and adopts consistent behaviors.

This theory helps to explain the principle of exchange between an employer and his employee. An employee who receives a remuneration that he considers satisfactory will develop a feeling of obligation towards his employer. This sense of obligation motivates employees to honor their commitments to the employer. This motivation has the effect of reducing the practice of deviant behaviors during work within the organization, since they feel indebted to it. And if, on the contrary, the exchange is perceived as unbalanced, the employee will develop negative attitudes and subsequent behaviors such as organizational disinvestment and withdrawals from work.

According to cognitive social theory, beliefs of personal efficiency are at the basis of human behavior (Bandura, 1997, 2003): they influence what individuals choose (or avoid) to do, their level of engagement in their activities. , the amount of energy invested and the efforts made to achieve their goals, their level of perseverance in the face of obstacles or failure situations or their resilience in the face of adversity. An employee is able to plan his work and to self-regulate by working with great rigor

and respecting the deadlines of administering treatments. The general hypothesis and formulas follows: a self-efficient employee does not proclaim deviant political behaviors.

The research hypotheses are HR1: Active experience of maltreatment decreases political deviant behavior at work. This assumption means that the employee who makes use of previous experiences such as professional seminars, antineure remains, seniority in the task and the difficulty of the task decreases the practice of deviant political behaviors at work. HR2: the vicarious experience decreases the deviant political behaviors at work: this hypothesis means that the employee who has vicarious experiences at work carries out an attentive observation of his colleague in order to imitate him during the execution of the task. The vicarious experience of the employee reduces the practice of deviant behavior at work. HR3: Social persuasion decreases deviant political behavior at work. This hypothesis means that the employee who is persuaded at work that he has the capacity to do his job well, that we show a certain solidarity of body: who receives testimonials of recognition from his professional entourage of a job well done decreases the practice of behaviors at work.

## Methodology

### Participants

The participants of this research are aged between 31 and 50 years (69.2% for 366 participants) ; between 31 years and 40 years (165 participants, that is 33%) : between 41 years and 50 years (181 participants that is 36.2%). Few of the employees are under 30, ie (75 participants and 15%). Between 51 and 60 years old (78 participants and 15.6%). Over 60 years only one participant. 70% of Cameroonian civil servants are between 30 and 50 years old. At over 60, there are hardly any employees, since it is the retirement age. There are also very few under 30s, that is only 15%. 190 participants have between 5 and 10 years of service, that is 38% and that, between 10 and 20 years of service, there are 115 participants, that is 19%,

those with less than 5 years of service 181 participants, that is 36.2%. 295 participants are female with 59% and 205 participants are male that is 41%. There are more women than men in the Cameroonian public sector, this situation is very visible in the Ministry of Basic Education and Public Health. 118 participants have the bachelor Degree that is 23.6% , 87 participants that is 17.4% have the GCE Adadvanced level and 76 participants that is 15.2% have the Master. These figures show that recruitment in the public service is mainly done with the GCE Adadvanced level, the bachelor Degree and the master. These three diplomas have 60% of civil service employees, 8.6% of participants have the Ph.D. Recruitments are rare with the cep, GCE Ordinary level. For this, civil servants are mostly in category A and B for civil servants and in category 8 to 12 for employees covered by the labor code. 252 participants are civil servants or 50.4% and 232 are administrative contractors or 48.2%.

### Data collection tools

The self-efficacy scale is that of Sherer and Coll (2005). Translation and adaptation of Chambon (2013). The questions relate to the measurement of self-efficacy at work and start from question 1 to question 13: 1-Active mastery experience: item 1 to 4; 2-Vicarious experience: item 5 to 8; 3-Social persuasion: item 9 to 13. While the scale for measuring political deviance at work is that of Bennett and Robinson (2000). This questionnaire consists of a series of statements that the respondent must read; then decide to what extent these statements correspond to the image he has of himself. The technique of the self-administered questionnaire was privileged in this research, it consists in getting the participant to complete the questionnaire himself. The participants are recruited randomly, that is to say that the employee who accepts to complete the questionnaire is part of the sample. After eliminating the incomplete questionnaires, 500 well-completed questionnaires were retained for data processing. This is how the final research

sample was obtained. The questionnaire was distributed to the staff of the following ministries: Ministry of the Civil Service; Minister of Public

Health; Ministry of Public Works; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Basic Education; Ministry of Territorial Administration.

**Table 1: Presentations of descriptive statistics from the third Assets study**

Variables	Herhouseps	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Standard-deviation
EAM	500	2.805500	1	4	0.783916
EV	500	2.852333	1	4	0.826913
PS	500	2.961600	1	4	0.756830
CDPOL	500	2.306571	1	4	0.745039

## Data analysis and interpretation

### Descriptive analysis of the data

It emerges from this table that this research is made up of 500 participants with response methods ranging from 1 which corresponds to absolutely disagree to 4 which corresponds to absolutely agree. The results show that:

- The active mastery experiments obtain an average response which is 2.8 / 4. This average is close to 4 and clearly higher than the theoretical average of the scale estimated at 2.5. The dispersion around this average is estimated at 0.78, which reflects the homogeneity of the responses of the participants. It appears that out of 500 participants, 60% totally agree that employees who use their active mastery experiences at work are self-effective.

- Vicarious experiments obtain an average response which is 2.85 / 4. This average is close to 4 and clearly higher than the theoretical average of the scale estimated at 2.5. The dispersion around this mean is estimated at 0.82; which reflects a homogeneity of the responses of the participants. Of the 500 participants, 65% strongly agree that employees who use their vicarious experiences at work are self-effective when managing tasks in the public service.

- For the third sub-factor of self-efficacy at work, which is social persuasion; the average response of the participants is 2.96/4. The standard deviation estimated at 0.75 suggests

that this attitude is encountered among all civil servants. It emerges that out of the 500 participants, 68% totally agree that the employees who receive encouragement and congratulations from the immediate work environment are self-effective when performing tasks in the public service.

- For deviant behaviors at work, it appears that the average probability of observing a behavior characteristic of political deviance is estimated at 2.30/4. This probability of occurrence of political deviance is slightly lower than the theoretical mean of the scale which is 2.5. This observation seems to reflect a stable trend in the Cameroonian civil service since the standard deviation attached to this average is estimated at 0.74. This reflects an observation shared by all the staff. 70% of the participants in this study believe that the practice of deviant political behavior is a reality in the Cameroonian public service.

### Inferential analysis

As far as the analyzes themselves are concerned, the appropriate test in this research is regression.

### Verification of research hypothesis 1

The results in Table 2 show that autonomy at work has a positive effect on political deviance. The model thus described is globally significant at the 5% level, according to the over all significance test, illustrated by the p-value of the Fischer statistic ( $p < 0.05$ ). This result means that

active mastery experiences at work exert a positive influence on the probability of committing a deviant act at work. This effect is confirmed by the results of the regression analysis in Table 3. The active experience of masteries at work explains the 6.7% increase in political deviant behavior at work according to the adjusted R ( $R^2 = 0,0677$ ). Indeed, as shown in Table 3, we realize that the active experiences of mastery at work contribute to the increase in political deviance ( $\beta = 0.26$  and  $p = 0.000$ ). This result rejects the research hypothesis in these terms: the active mastery experience increases political deviant behavior at work. Table 3 shows that, if we consider an initial level of political

deviance of 1.60, it appears that active experiences of mastery at work will increase this starting level by 0.25. This average increase hides disparities which can fit into an interval which goes from 0.33 for the most significant decrease to 0.17 for the least significant decrease. In making this statement, we allow ourselves a margin of error of 5%. That said, employees who take the pleasure of using active mastery experiences will have a decrease of 0.33. The most significant decrease in production deviance at work; while the other employees will have a smaller decrease to the level of 0.17.

**Table 2 : Univariate testing of political deviance and active mastery experiences, vicarious experiences and social persuasion at work.**

Variables	SC	F	P
Active mastery experiences	19.27	6.10	0.000
Vicarious experience	15.08	28.67	0.000
Social persuasion	14.73	27.98	0.000

**Table 3 : Regression test of active mastery experiences ; vicarious experiences and social persuasion at work on political deviance .**

Variables	$\beta$	t	P	$R^2$ ajuste
Active mastery experiences	0.25	6.10	0.000	0,0677
Vicarious experience	0.21	3.5	0.000	0,0525
Social persuasion	0.22	5.29	0.000	0,0513

### Analysis and verification of research hypothesis 2

The results of Table 2 show that the vicarious experience at work has a significant effect on political deviance. The model thus described is globally significant at the 5% level, illustrated by the p-value of the Fischer statistic ( $p < 0.05$ ). This result means that the vicarious experience at work has a positive influence on the probability of committing a deviant act at work. This effect

is confirmed by the results of the regression analysis in Table 3. The vicarious experience at work accounts for a 52% increase in deviant political behavior at work according to the Adjusted  $R^2$  ( $R^2 0.0525$ ). Indeed, as shown in Table 3, we realize that the vicarious experience at work contributes to the decrease in policy deviance ( $\beta = 0.23$  and  $p = 0,000$ ). This result rejects our research hypothesis in these terms: the vicarious experience decreases political

deviant behavior at work. Table 3 shows that, if we consider an initial level of policy deviance of 1.70, it appears that vicarious or work experience will decrease this starting level by 0.21. This average decrease hides disparities that can fit into an interval ranging from 0.28 for the most significant decrease to 0.13 for the least significant decrease. By making this statement, we allow ourselves a margin of error of 5%. However, employees who take the pleasure of collaborating effectively will have a decrease of 0.28 in production deviance at work, the most significant decrease; while the other employees will have a strong decrease of 0.13.

### Verification of research hypothesis 3

The results in Table 2 show that social persuasion at work has a significant effect on policy deviance. The model thus described is globally significant at the 5% level, according to the over all significance test, illustrated by the p-value of the Fischer statistic ( $p < 0.05$ ). This result means that social persuasion at work has a positive influence on the probability of committing a deviant act at work. This effect is confirmed by the results of the regression analysis in Table 3. Social persuasion at work explains 5.1% of the increase in deviant political behavior at work according to the adjusted R-squared. Indeed, as shown in Table 3, we realize that autonomy at work contributes to the reduction of political deviance ( $\beta=0.22$  and  $p=0.000$ ). This result validates our research hypothesis in these terms: social persuasion reduces deviant political behavior at work. Table 3 shows that, if we consider an initial level of political deviance of 1.63, it appears that social persuasion at work will decrease this starting level by 0.22. The average increase conceals disparities which can fit into an interval which goes from 0.31 for the most significant decrease to 0.14 for the least significant decrease. In making this statement, we allow ourselves a margin of error of 5%. That said, employees who take the pleasure of collaborating effectively will have a decrease of 0.31 in production deviance at work, the most

significant decrease: while other employees will have a smaller decrease of 0.14.

### Discussions

It emerges from this research that 65% of the participants think that the employees of the public service are self-efficient at work. These are employees who, despite the difficult working conditions, continue to work. The first research hypothesis gives the following results:  $\beta= 0.25$  and  $p=0.000$ .  $p < 0.05$ . From the point of view of previous performance Gilbert (2017) specifies that employees are inclined to repeat experiences which were previously sanctioned by successes. The successes already achieved are very strong sources of success. The employee adapts his behavior according to expectations but above all to past and present knowledge he has of his working environment. In this research, it emerges that employees who make use of their active experiences of mastery at work also develop deviant political behaviors at work. The second research hypothesis gives the following results :  $\beta= 0.21$  and  $p =0.000$ ;  $p < 0.05$ . Emtcheu (1989) will say that the child who witnesses the painful expression of a brother or sister sitting on the dentist's chair will probably be apprehensive when the time comes for his first dental visit. The model has an important part to play in future driving. Vicarious experiences develop at work in contact with others employees. Seeing like-minded employees succeed through sustained effort increased the belief in one's own ability to be successful in avoiding the production of component parts at work. An employee who works taking into account his vicarious experiences also develops deviant political behavior at work. The third research hypothesis gives the following results:  $\beta=0.22$  and  $p=0,000$   $p < 0.05$ . Self-efficacy at work is developed by social persuasion in birine as human interactions. People who have been verbally persuaded that they have the necessary skills to master a given activity are more likely to mobilise and sustain an effort than if they doubt themselves. The persuasive stimuli of perceived



efficiency and inciting the employee to work hard enough to succeed since social persuasion allows the employee to plan his task and not to tackle it haphazardly; which ensures in the long term and by repetition the success of this one. But this does not prevent the production of political behaviors at work. We formulated a starting hypothesis according to which a self-efficient employee at work in the public service does not practice the behaviors of the political frontiers at work by using the theoretical model of Robinson and Bennett (1995, 1997) which requires that the employee who exercises his work subject to organizational provocations, underdeplorable working conditions and which is subject to certain organizational constraints practices deviant political behavior at work. It emerges after analysis of the data of this initial hypothesis, that it was rejected. This means that an employee can be self-effective at work, but develops deviant political behavior. Having said that, efficiency at work is not a necessary factor capable of reducing bad behavior at work.

## Conclusion

The concern of this research work was to determine the factors relating to the work environment that can eradicate deviant behaviors at work as described in the theoretical model of Robinson and Bennett (1995, 1997) by using the Cameroonian public service employees. At the end of this analysis, all research hypotheses were rejected and therefore the general hypothesis is rejected. This being a self-efficient employee at work uses his mother tongue to communicate instead of French and English and therefore excluded employees who do not understand his language. It is also an employee who practices administrative sprinkling, does not actually report the work carried out. He practices the favoritism of the ethnic in-group at work and puts confidential professional information on social media. He eats at working hours and on work leaves and badly distributes administrative funds to co-workers, all this while being self-sufficient. Effective at work in short, a self-effective

employee also practices deviant political behaviors at work.

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