

# **Impact of Perceived Organizational Support on Constructive Deviance among Frontline Employees in Commercial Banks: Do Organizational Identification and Psychological Safety Matter?**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Constructive deviance is a unique behavior that can promote performance and general organizational effectiveness. The mechanism connecting perceived organizational support to constructive deviance is under-researched in organizational behavior literature. Consequently, this study examined the moderating roles of organizational identification and psychological safety on the relationship between perceived organizational support and constructive deviance. A cross-sectional research design and a quantitative approach for data collection were utilized. Systematic and convenience sampling was used to select 203 frontline employees, 110 males and 93 females, from Delta State, Nigeria, commercial banks. Standardized self-report measures were used to collect participant data, while regression analysis (complemented with Model 1 of Hayes' PROCESS Macro) was used to test the hypotheses. The results indicated that perceived organizational support, identification,

and psychological safety positively and significantly predicted constructive deviance. Also, psychological safety moderated the relationship between perceived organizational support and constructive deviance, while organizational identification did not. The results highlight the importance of high and low levels of psychological safety in increasing and attenuating the relationship between perceived organizational support and constructive deviance. It was recommended that employees should be respected and valued for their contributions, their well-being should be prioritized, and the psychological and general safety climate should be well established in the organization.

**Keywords:** Constructive deviance, Perceived organizational support, Organizational identification, Psychological safety, Frontline workers, Commercial banks

## INTRODUCTION

In recent times, organizational behavior literature has explored constructive deviance because of its capacity to enhance positive changes and innovative behavior in the workplace (Deprez et al., 2020; Robbins & Galperin, 2010). Deviant behaviors have been primarily reported to impact the organization negatively. It is necessary to differentiate between destructive deviance and constructive deviance behaviors. Destructive deviance refers to behaviors that violate the norm of a reference group with no element of benefit attached to them, i.e., the behavior threatens the well-being and effectiveness of the organization and its members (Deprez, 2017). Examples include the destruction of equipment, the harassment of colleagues, and deliberating sabotaging work processes. On the other hand, constructive deviance refers to employees' behaviors that deviate from the norm to promote organizational performance and well-being (Deprez et al., 2020). An employee who engages in constructive deviant behavior contributes to the effectiveness of the work process, increases the organization's performance, and improves service quality (Mertens et al., 2016).

Constructively deviant employees are active agents whose aim is to assist the organization in adapting to the consistent changes in the business environment. For commercial banks to stay competitive in the Nigerian business arena, organizations and their employees must maintain a high standard of customer relations and quality service delivery (Pantano & Migliarese, 2014). Frontline employees usually have to adhere to standards stipulated by the organization when interacting with supervisors, colleagues, and customers. Frontline employees often find themselves in a situation where they have to react to changing customer demands, understand the formal part and necessities of their tasks, work in line with organizational norms, follow managers' or supervisors' instructions, work to deliver better solutions to customer grievances, and ensure they are up to date with management expectations (Cai & Qu, 2018; Jha et al., 2017). In an

attempt to adequately carry out the tasks, employees sometimes deviate from prescribed organizational norms and standards. This form of deviance is called constructive deviance: voluntary behaviors that violate significant organizational norms but are beneficial and contribute substantially to the organization and its members' success (Galperin, 2012). For example, an employee who breaks the overtime policy in an organization to complete an organizational task to assist a colleague or who challenges some of their supervisor's decisions regarding the work process is rarely doing so to harm their colleagues or their organization. These behaviors benefit the organization, as these employees use the knowledge that is unique to them and their position to solve organizational problems (Sawdy, 2019).

The inability of employees to contribute constructively to their organization through creative and spontaneous decision-making, boycotting dysfunctional organizational norms, and having solid regard for positive organizational change could be detrimental to the sustainability and effectiveness of the organization. Some of the negative consequences attached to employees' low constructive deviant behavior include a decrease in organizational decision-making, an inability to rectify problems or dysfunctions in the organization, reduced productivity, and the inability of the organization to adapt to its changing business environment (Griffin & Lopez, 2005; Morrison, 2006; Vadera et al., 2013). Due to the dearth of knowledge regarding this behavior, which is highly regarded as beneficial to the organization, it becomes necessary to understand the possible individual and organizational antecedents of constructive deviance.

Empirical efforts to understand what drives constructive deviance among organizational employees are evident in the literature. Several antecedents of constructive deviance have been explored, some of which include work-family enrichment (Khan & Rehman, 2019), empowering leadership (Mertens & Recker, 2020), organizational justice, and psychological contract breach (Cohen & Ehrlich, 2019; Gong et al., 2021), group citizenship behavior, and environmental dynamism (Liu et al., 2020), workplace spirituality (Garg & Saxena, 2020), and Knowledge sharing system (Malik & Malik, 2021). Recent reports suggest that perceived organizational support (POS) and other exchange variables, such as psychological contract fulfillment and organizational justice, are linked to behaviors that benefit the organization (e.g., Afsar & Badir, 2016; Cohen & Ehrlich, 2019; Edosomwan & Nwanzu, 2021; Kura et al., 2016). Consequently, this study utilizes POS as a predictor variable.

A few gaps in the literature gave necessity to this study. First, the structure of constructive deviance and the functional extent and limit might vary across cultures and types of organizations. Based on existing literature, there is a population gap, especially among frontline employees in the banking sector. This segment of the population has

been under-researched in the literature. In Nigeria, the only identifiable study (Kura et al., 2016) was carried out on public sector employees. Hence, the literature is scarce regarding the antecedents of constructive deviance among private-sector workers in Nigeria. Exploring this gap in the literature will strategically inform policies and managerial practices in the private sector. Second, there is a paucity of studies exploring the conditional effects of organizational identification and psychological safety on the relationship between POS and constructive deviance. As a result, this study is focused on examining the antecedent and underlying factors responsible for constructive deviance. The present study seeks to address the stated problems in the literature and bridge the identified gaps. To achieve this, structured objectives were developed, which are: (1) to examine the relationship between POS and constructive deviance, (2) to examine the relationship between organizational identification and constructive deviance, (3) to examine the direct relationship between psychological safety and constructive deviance, (4) to explore the moderating role of organizational identification on the relationship between POS and constructive deviance, and (5) to explore the moderating role of psychological safety on the relationship between POS and constructive deviance. Examining these objectives will significantly benefit researchers and management practitioners.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT OF HYPOTHESES**

### **Constructive Deviance**

According to Galperin (2012), constructive deviance is “voluntary behavior that violates organizational norms and, in doing so, contributes to the well-being of an organization, its members, or both.” Constructive deviance is characterized by three distinct components central to the definition given above. These components are behavioral deviation, constructive outcomes, and conformance to hyper-norms. Behavioral deviation concerns departures from formal or informal norms in the organization. These include tacit and implicitly shared social rules between agents embedded in a work routine, signifying how things are done in the organization. They are often shown in formal instructions and rules embedded in processes and procedures that provide an expected, reliable, repeatable, and systematic routine for value creation within an organization (Mertens & Recker, 2020).

Constructive outcomes have to do with the enactment of behaviors that are beneficial to the organization. This is an essential way of distinguishing negative deviant behaviors; only employee deviant behavior, which helps improve value creation, can be described as constructive deviant behavior (Mertens et al., 2016). Mertens and Recker (2020) referred to conformance to hyper norms as behavioral deviations that are not harmful to groups outside the group that is being targeted (the organization).

According to Mertens and Recker (2020), constructive deviance behavior shares similar attributes with other forms of non-compliance behaviors (e.g., pro-social rule-breaking, dysfunctional directives, and counter-conformity), extra-role behaviors (e.g., organizational citizenship behavior, role innovation, or proactive behavior), and honorable behavior (e.g., employee voice behavior and whistleblowing). It is crucial to understand that the fundamental factors distinguishing constructive deviance from these related behaviors lie not in any of the three attributes discussed above but instead in the ‘simultaneous’ manifestation of all three attributes, i.e., only employee behaviors that are at the same time deviant, producing beneficial outcomes, and in conformance with hyper norms describe constructive deviance (Galperin, 2012; Mertens & Recker, 2020).

### **Perceived Organizational Support**

Perceived organizational support (POS) is regarded as a vital concept in organizational behavior literature. According to Shanock and Eisenberger (2006), it is employees’ global beliefs regarding how much their organization cares about their well-being and values their contribution at work. Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) noted that POS is an indication of the employees’ assurances that their organization has their best interests at heart, is willing to provide the necessary assistance when it is required, and provides the necessary tools that will enhance the workplace experience and task-related activities. Employees believe in the degree to which their organization can meet their socio-emotional needs, care about their well-being and values, and reward their contribution to the organization (Krishnan & Mary, 2012; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Eisenberger et al. (2020) noted that POS is more pungent when employees attribute their good workplace experiences.

### **Organizational Identification**

Individuals tend to define themselves (or at least partly) through membership in a specific group or organization. Organizational identification has been defined by various researchers in the field of management. According to Ashforth and Mael (1989), it is an employee’s perceived belongingness and oneness with the organization. It is the integration of the self as a significant part of the organization, i.e., the organization becomes a part of the employee’s general self-definition (Rousseau, 1998). This implies that there has to be congruence between individual and organizational values, which is an essential factor in identifying with an organization. The essence of organizational identification is employees’ attachment to and belonging to their organization. This shows the degree to which membership in the organization is incorporated into the self-concept (Ashforth, 2016; Xenikou, 2017). Organizational identification reflects the

degree of psychological attachment, a feeling of oneness, and an employee's sense of belonging to the organization. Initially, organizational identification was conceptualized as a form of cognitive awareness that the self is part of the organization and not necessarily linked to any form of affective state (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Mael & Ashforth, 1992). It can be seen as an antecedent to workplace behaviors such as reduced turnover intention (Oguegbe & Edosomwan, 2021), increased organizational effectiveness (Nwanzu & Babalola, 2019), and proactive work behavior (Chen et al., 2019). From a managerial perspective, organizational identification is beneficial in ensuring that employees' decisions align with organizational goals and the corporate brand (Miller et al., 2000).

### **Psychological Safety**

Psychological safety is one of the organizational constructs that influences how employees behave in the workplace, especially with risk-related behaviors. The concept was initially proposed as a group-level construct (Edmondson, 1999). Recently, it has been examined at the individual, group, and organizational levels (Edmondson & Lei, 2014; Newman et al., 2017). Psychological safety is the belief that employees can freely express themselves without fear of negative consequences or damage to their status, career, or self-image in the organization (Kahn, 1990). It is an employee's perceived consequences of taking interpersonal risks in the organization, which are usually tied to how others (including the organization) will respond to specific questions asked, seek feedback on work-related activities, propose new ideas at work, or report mistakes (Cannon & Edmondson, 2001; Edmondson, 2004).

Employees feel safe when these interpersonal risks do not lead to embarrassment or ridicule but promote organizational change, engagement, connection, and learning (Edmondson & Lei, 2014; Wanless, 2016). Employees feel that their workplace is psychologically safe when their colleagues do not rebuff them for expressing themselves or voicing their opinions, respect each other's level of competence, show interest and have positive intentions for one another, can engage in constructive confrontation or conflict, and feel that it is safe to take risks (Edmondson, 1999). Psychological safety promotes voice behavior, open communication, and feedback (Edmondson & Lei, 2014; Pearsall & Ellis, 2011).

### **Perceived Organizational Support and Constructive Deviance**

Literature in the area of POS and constructive deviance among frontline employees in commercial banks is in its infancy, i.e., there is limited research about constructive deviance's possible negative or positive consequences. So, the empirical review is based on research on POS and the situational factors linked to constructive deviance in

different work settings. The literature indicates a positive relationship between POS and positive work attitudes and behaviors. For example, a study by Afsar and Badir (2016) on person-organization fit, POS, and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB; discretionary and beneficial behaviors in the workplace) found that POS was a significant and positive predictor of organizational citizenship behavior.

In another study, Cohen and Ehrlich (2019) considered constructive deviance as a behavior that can benefit organizations despite the problematic nature of the construct. The researchers examined organizational culture and exchange-related variables (organizational justice, psychological contract breach, moral identity, and psychological climate for innovation) as antecedents of self-reported and supervisory constructive deviance among employees. It was shown that organizational justice, psychological contract breach, and moral identity directly affected constructive deviance (self-reported). This indicates that social exchange-related factors such as organizational support can promote risky and discretionary behaviors and lead to positive organizational change and effectiveness.

Also, Khan and Rehman (2019) adopted the social exchange theory to examine work-family enrichment and its impact on constructive deviance through the structural equation modeling (SEM) technique. Work-family conflict was positively linked to constructive deviance via social exchange theory. This tells us that work-family enrichment is built on employees' experience at work. This experience depends on organizational support for work enrichment. Positive experience in the workplace (made possible through support from the organization) promotes work-family enrichment, leading to constructive deviance. Perceived knowledge sharing built on the exchange between the employee and organization has also been linked to constructive deviance (Malik & Malik, 2021). This offers more support for the notion that employees may likely be constructively deviant in the presence of POS.

This is further supported by organizational support theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Literature indicates that a study has directly linked the criterion and predictor variables. This is shown in the study by Kura et al. (2016). Kura et al. investigated the relationship between POS and constructive deviance while accounting for the indirect role of organizational trust. A positive relationship was found, while organizational trust played a partial mediating role in the relationship. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

***H<sub>1</sub>***: Perceived organizational support will positively and significantly predict constructive deviance.

## **Organizational Identification and Constructive Deviance**

There is a dearth of literature connecting organizational identification to employee constructive deviant behavior. Hence, it is pertinent to research this area. Organizational identification has been found to reduce negative workplace behaviors and improve positive behaviors in the workplace. For instance, organizational identification has been found to promote positive work behaviors such as proactive work behavior (Chen et al., 2019), work engagement (Karanika-Murray et al., 2015), employee performance (Ikoh & Chika, 2019), organizational citizenship behavior (Uzun, 2018), and organizational commitment (Pham, 2020). These studies show that employees with high organizational identification do what they can to ensure they give their best. This is seen through proactive behavior, engagement with their job, organizational citizenship behavior, and increased performance in the workplace. Thus, the organization can achieve effectiveness when employees' organizational identification is high (Nwanzu & Babalola, 2019).

Based on the studies discussed above, the researchers believe that since organizational identification promotes behaviors that benefit the organization, there is a tendency that can lead to beneficial rule-breaking behavior among employees. According to Brown (2017), highly identified employees with their organization may sometimes go beyond their formal job responsibilities because their identity is highly attached to their organization. This identification (signifying loyalty to the organization's effectiveness) can inspire employees to explore other ways of promoting the organization and its stakeholders (Irshad & Bashir, 2020). This could be seen as a factor that can encourage employees to engage in constructive deviance on behalf of their organization.

Organizational identification increases employees' commitment to their organization, encouraging employees to be constructively deviant (Davila & Garcia, 2012). Zuber (2015) noted that highly identified employees are emotionally attached to their organization; thus, activities or situations that might harm the organization have personal consequences. This pushes them to engage in behaviors that deviate from the rules to promote effectiveness and prevent negative occurrences. The link between organizational identification and constructive deviance is built on the view that membership and identification with a group or organization promote pro-social and risk-taking behaviors toward the group or organization an individual identifies with (Irshad & Bashir, 2020; Khorshid & Mehdiabadi, 2020). This notion is further supported by the social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1985).

According to the social identity theory, individuals' self-concept is developed through their association, membership, or affiliation with specific social groups. The organization is a social group that defines the individual's overall self-concept. In application, if an employee's membership or association in the organization is



meaningful, he or she may be inclined to act according to the organization's notions of appropriateness, which guide behavior and reflect the system of social norms and values within the organization. Also, in specific situations, the employees can carry out behaviors that violate these norms if the goal is to benefit the organization (Irshad & Bashir, 2020; Khorshid & Mehdiabadi, 2020). Hence, organizational identification can promote norm-breaking behavior that benefits the organization. Against this background, it is hypothesized that:

*H<sub>2</sub>*: Organizational identification will positively and significantly predict constructive deviance.

### **Psychological Safety and Constructive Deviance**

Psychological safety is a salient attribute in the workplace. As a result, researchers have explored its antecedents and how it influences other workplace behaviors and attitudes. Based on the literature, psychological safety can promote open communication among employees and their supervisors or managers, enhance constructive voice behavior, and give the employees the ability to seek feedback from colleagues and even individuals at management levels (Edmondson & Lei, 2014; Pearsall & Ellis, 2011). According to Hirak et al. (2012), non-threatening and supportive management is vital in developing psychological safety at work. This is possible in a work environment where employees are encouraged to make suggestions regarding the work process. Hence, employees are likely to be constructively deviant if they know that constructively voicing their concerns and sometimes going outside prescribed norms to achieve organizational goals will not lead to an attack from colleagues or superiors, ridiculing, censoring, or penalizing. The literature has also shown that support promote employees' sense of safety and that a healthy work climate is crucial for employees' decisions to take interpersonal risks (Joe-Akunne et al., 2022; Kura et al., 2016; Sax & Torp, 2015). Against this background, it is hypothesized that:

*H<sub>3</sub>*: Psychological safety will positively and significantly predict constructive deviance.

### **Organizational Identification as a Moderator**

There is consistent evidence linking organizational identification to lower levels of undesirable organizational outcomes and an increase in positive workplace behaviors (e.g., Karanika-Murray et al., 2015; Oguegbe & Edosomwan, 2021). A high level of organizational identification promotes positive workplace behavior because employees' identities are attached to their organization. On this note, higher levels of organizational identification propel an employee to carry out constructive deviance and other related

behaviors, such as citizenship behavior in the workplace, proactive work behavior, and pro-social rule-breaking (Chen et al., 2019; Irshad & Bashir, 2020; Uzun, 2018). The argument favoring the moderating role of organizational identification is built on the notion that the construct promotes increased interdependence between an individual's identity and that of the organization (Ashforth et al., 2008). Hence, employees are more likely to carry out behaviors that benefit the organization when their identification with it is high. A few studies have adopted organizational identification as a moderating variable in the relationship between other workplace variables. For example, it has been found to moderate the relationship between ethical leadership and citizenship behavior in the workplace (Mostafa, 2018).

Also, Zhuang et al. (2020) found that organizational identification moderates the effect of workplace friendship on workplace deviance. This suggests that organizational identification can increase or attenuate other workplace relationships at different levels (high and low). Social identity theory theoretically explains organizational identification as a moderator (Tajfel & Turner, 1985). In the application of this theory, employees who have a high perception of organizational support and who are highly identified with their organization can easily exhibit constructive deviance for two reasons: the support they get from their organization (e.g., support for well-being and recognition of their contribution to the work process) and their shared identity with their organization. Based on the available literature, the current study posits that employees high in organizational identification are more likely to engage in constructive deviance due to POS. Consequent to this, it is hypothesized that:

***H4:*** Organizational identification will moderate the relationship between perceived organizational support and constructive deviance. The relationship will be stronger when organizational identification is high.

### **Psychological Safety as a Moderator**

The literature broadly supports the notion that psychological safety is a crucial construct in predicting desirable outcomes in an organization. Psychological safety allows employees to carry out specific workplace behaviors without the fear of being ridiculed, criticized, punished, or rejected by colleagues and the organization (Edmondson & Lei, 2014; Pearsall & Ellis, 2011). Hence, taking interpersonal risky behavior on the job will be less challenging when the organization has high psychological safety. The argument favoring the moderating role for psychological safety is based on the logic that high psychological safety in the organization will promote behaviors likely to benefit the organization. Psychological safety has been found to increase innovative work behavior (Okeke et al., 2019), transformational

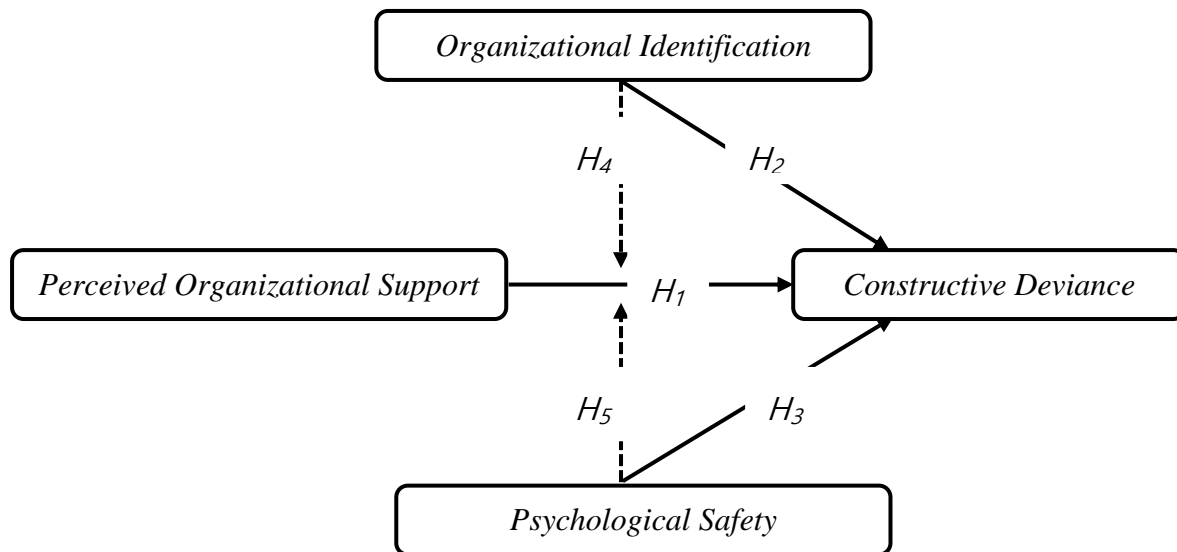
learning (Kwon et al., 2020), voice behavior, and work engagement (Ge, 2020). This indicates that higher psychological safety in the work environment helps the employee exhibit behavior that they would otherwise not display out of fear of the consequences that may come with it.

Psychological safety is a positive workplace resource that can moderate the relationship between various workplace variables. For instance, psychological safety has been found to moderate the relationship between a high-performance work system and promotional voice (Miao et al., 2020), employee voice and organizational citizenship behavior (Salman et al., 2020), and motivation and voice behavior among health care workers where higher psychological safety increases the relationship between both variables (Hu & Casey, 2021).

Theoretically, the conservation of resource theory informs the proposed conditional role of psychological safety (Hobfoll, 1989). At the core of the conservation of resource theory is the view that employees try to gain resources to prevent resource loss (Hobfoll, 1989, 2011). These resources may include rewards, social support, job security, or autonomy and can either be achieved or withdrawn by a supervisor, colleagues, or the organization. According to the theory, employees with access to substantial resources (e.g., good association networks within a psychologically safe workplace) are less susceptible to resource loss or depletion and can gain resources by utilizing existing resources. Hence, they are better equipped to meet their work demands and achieve their goals (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Newman et al., 2017). In application, with the provision of substantial support in the organization, employees can share their ideas and knowledge (with managers, supervisors, and colleagues), engage in constructive and positive work behaviors with confidence that helps them obtain more resources (e.g., suggestions and positive feedback from others). This will enable employees to achieve their goals at work and create an environment where there is an improvement in individual and team learning. Based on the empirical and theoretical literature highlighted, it is hypothesized that:

***H<sub>5</sub>***: Psychological safety will moderate the relationship between perceived organizational support and constructive deviance. The relationship will be stronger when psychological safety is high.

A conceptual model is developed to show the relationship among the variables under investigation. The model proposed that perceived organizational support is related to constructive deviance and that this relationship is moderated by organizational identification and psychological safety. Figure 1 below depicts the conceptual model of the study:

**Figure 1** *Conceptual Model Showing the Direct and Conditional Effects*

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Sample and Procedures

The participants comprised 203 frontline bank employees drawn from two industrial cities (Asaba and Warri) in Delta State, Nigeria. Systematic sampling was adopted for selecting participating bank branches in each city using an nth case of 2 (two), while convenience sampling was used to select frontline employees who consented to the study. Participants were selected from seven different bank branches: Access Bank, First Bank, United Bank for Africa, Guarantee Trust Bank, Zenith Bank, Fidelity Bank, and Union Bank. The researchers distributed 240 questionnaires; two hundred and twenty-three (223) questionnaires were retrieved. This represented a return rate of 92.9%, which was broadly satisfactory. However, after sorting out the questionnaires, 203 were correctly filled out and were used for the data analysis.

The sample consists of 110 (54.2%) males and 93 (45.8%) females; 117 (57.6%) single, 77 (37.9%) married, 4 (2.0%) separated, 3 (1.5%) divorced, and 2 (1.0%) widowed. The age range of the respondents was between 24-48, with a mean of 34.07 years and a standard deviation of 4.54. All the participants had a formal education with a minimum of a Diploma certification, which accounted for 38 (18.7%); those with a Bachelor's degree or its equivalent were 164 (80.8), while 1 (0.5%) had a master's degree. The participants consisted of frontline employees currently working in the Nigerian banking sector. Frontline employees were used in the study because they have direct contact with customers and need to work in line with their supervisors and the

organization's expectations. Considering the pressures attached to their job, there is a tendency for constructive deviant behavior.

## Measurement

Four existing and standardized instruments were adopted for gathering the data, including the constructive deviance scale, perceived organizational support scale, organizational identification scale, and psychological safety scale. Constructive deviance was measured with the 7-item scale developed by Galperin (2012). The scale is composed of two dimensions: interpersonal constructive deviance (measured with four items, e.g., I sometimes disobeyed my supervisor's instructions to perform more efficiently) and organizational constructive deviance (measured with three items, e.g., I violated organizational procedures to solve a problem). Galperin (2012) reported a Cronbach's alpha of .87 for the 7-item scale. Kura et al. (2016) also reported that the scale has good psychometric properties.

Perceived organizational support was assessed with the 8-item version developed by Eisenberger et al. (1997). A higher score on the scale indicates that employees perceive their organization to be supportive, and lower scores indicate otherwise. Items that were negatively worded were reverse-coded. Examples of some of the items are: "My organization would forgive an honest mistake on my part" and "Help is available from my organization when I have a problem." Eisenberger et al. (1997) reported a Cronbach's alpha of .90 for the 8-item scale.

Organizational identification was measured with the 6-item scale developed by Mael and Ashforth (1992). The scale was designed to measure how employees identify and show attachment to their organization. Examples of items on the scale include: "When people praise my organization, it feels like a personal compliment," and "I am interested in what other people think about my organization". Mael and Ashforth (1992) reported a Cronbach's alpha of .87, while Oguegbe and Edosomwan (2021) reported a reliability alpha of .86 for the scale.

Psychological safety was assessed by the scale developed by Edmondson (1999). It is a 7-item scale that assesses psychological safety in the workplace. Sample items for the scale include: "It is difficult to ask other members of this organization for help" and "It is safe to take risks in my organization." The negative items in the scale were reversed coded. A Cronbach's alpha ranging from .70 to .86 was obtained for the scale (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2015; Ujoatuonu et al., 2016). A 5-point Likert format (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) was adopted for perceived organizational support, organizational identification, and psychological safety, while a 5-point Likert format (ranging from 1 = never to 5 = always) was utilized for constructive deviance.

### **Design and Statistical Tools**

The study utilized a cross-sectional design. It is a cross-sectional study because data were collected from all the participating frontline employees in commercial banks at one point. The data collected from the participants were analyzed using a two-step procedure. First, the instruments' reliability coefficient, the descriptive statistics (the mean, standard deviation, and normality test), and the correlation coefficient of each pair of variables were examined. This is carried out to determine if the data meets the assumptions of parametric statistics, such as the normality of data. Second, the research hypotheses were tested with regression analysis via the add-on of IBM SPSS v.25 (Hayes' PROCESS Macro v.4.0) utilizing an independent moderator (Model 1). This was used to test the direct and conditional effects proposed in the study. The Hayes PROCESS Macro is a popular analytical tool to test variables' indirect and conditional effects on observed relationships. A 5000 bias-corrected bootstrapping sample was used for testing the direct and conditional effects using a 95% confidence interval for the developed model. The conditional effect is significant when zero is not included in the 95% confidence interval.

### **Common Method Variance**

As suggested in the literature, common method variance is one of the challenges surrounding studies that utilize questionnaires for gathering data. Hence, it is necessary to control for this so that the result of this study will have more explanatory power. To achieve this, the researchers employed some of the methods suggested in the literature during the study's design. To control for random responses and respondents' misinterpretation of the items, the questionnaire was concise, clear, and easy for the respondents to understand. The cover letter guaranteed the respondents' anonymity, and it stated that respondents should give honest responses to help reduce the socially desirable responses. These methods were adopted to help increase respondents' honesty (MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012; Rodriguez-Ardura & Meseguer-Artola, 2020; Steenkamp et al., 2010). Statistically, the correlation matrix technique was adopted to test the study's severity of method variance (Bagozzi et al., 1991; Tehseen et al., 2017). This approach states that a high correlation value between the variables under investigation ( $r > .90$ ) indicates the method variance. Therefore, correlation values  $< .90$  indicate the absence of common method variance.

## **RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

### **Assessment of Reliability, Validity, Normality, and Correlation Coefficients**

The psychometric properties of the scales used for collecting the data were assessed for reliability and validity. The reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha

coefficient. Based on the results in Table 1, the scale's internal consistency ranged from .701 to .901. Specifically, the internal reliability values for constructive deviance, perceived organizational support, organizational identification, and psychological safety were .701, .861, .834, and .901, respectively. The reliability values were satisfactory as they met the literature requirement (Howitt & Cramer, 2017). Content validity was achieved by adopting existing scales, while the inter-item correlation values provide adequate evidence for convergent validity (Field, 2018; Mirjana et al., 2018). The result also indicated that the correlation values were within the acceptable range (0.20 to 0.58), which was acceptable and satisfactory (Field, 2018). Skewness and kurtosis were used for checking the normality of the data. The table shows that the values were between -2.58 and 2.58, indicating that the data is normally distributed. These values were considered appropriate for a sample size of 200 or more (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012; Rashid et al., 2020). The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were <10 while the tolerance values were >.40, suggesting that multicollinearity was not an issue in the study (Field, 2018).

**Table 1** *Cronbach's Alpha, Skewness, Kurtosis, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), and Tolerance of Research Constructs*

	Number of Items	$\alpha$	Skewness	Kurtosis	VIF	Tolerance
Constructive Deviance	7	.701	-1.223	1.571	--	--
POS	8	.861	-1.331	2.422	1.062	.941
OID	6	.834	-.147	-.233	1.795	.557
Psychological Safety	7	.901	-.482	.335	1.756	.569

*Note.* VIF = variance inflation factor; POS= perceived organizational support; OID = organizational identification

Table 2 below reveals the research variables' mean, standard deviation, and correlation coefficients. All the pairs of relationships were significant from  $p < 0.01$ . The correlational table indicated that perceived organizational support ( $r = .588, p < 0.01$ ), organizational identification ( $r = .254, p < 0.01$ ), and psychological safety ( $r = .222, p < 0.01$ ) were all positively correlated with constructive deviance. Furthermore, perceived organizational support positively and significantly correlated with organizational identification ( $r = .238, p < 0.01$ ) and psychological safety ( $r = .189, p < 0.01$ ). These results showed that all the variables are positively correlated. The observed Correlation coefficient was modest ( $< .80$ ), indicating an absence of multicollinearity. The correlation values were less than .90, satisfying the correlation matrix technique for assessing the presence of common method variance (Bagozzi et al., 1991; Tehseen et al., 2017). Hence, common method variance was not an issue in the study.

**Table 2** Means, Standard Deviation, and Correlation Coefficient of the Predictor, Moderator, and Outcome Variables

		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1	Constructive Deviance	3.92	.88	1			
2	POS	3.93	.86	.588**	1		
3	OID	3.33	.69	.254**	.238**	1	
4	Psychological Safety	3.48	.82	.222**	.189**	.655**	1

*Note.* n = 203; \*\*Correlation is significant at  $p < .01$ ; M = mean; SD = standard deviation; POS= perceived organizational support; OID = organizational identification

### Hypotheses Testing

The hypotheses were tested with regression analysis via Hayes PROCESS Macro. In line with the hypothesized model, simple moderation (model 1) using 5000 bootstrapping was conducted to test the direct and conditional effects. Tables 3 and 4 show the results of the moderation analysis. In congruence with the first hypothesis, the results indicated that POS positively and significantly predicted constructive deviance ( $\beta = .57, p < 0.01$ ). Hence, hypothesis 1 was accepted. The table also indicated that organizational identification positively and significantly predicted constructive deviance ( $\beta = .17, p < 0.05$ ). This offers support for the second hypothesis. Hence, hypothesis 2 was accepted. Also, psychological safety was found to be a positive and significant predictor of constructive deviance among frontline workers in commercial banks ( $\beta = .12, p < 0.01$ ), supporting the third hypothesis. Therefore, the third hypothesis was accepted. The results showed that the independent (POS) and moderating variables (organizational identification and psychological safety) positively predict constructive deviance.

**Table 3** Moderation Analysis of Organizational Identification and POS on Constructive Deviance

	B	SE	t	P	LLCI	ULCI
Perceived Organizational Support	.57	.05	9.97	.001	.46	.68
Organizational Identification	.17	.07	2.26	.024	.02	.32
POS x OID	-.10	.08	-1.13	.260	-.27	.07

*Note.* n = 203; SE = standard error of sample size (5000); LLCI= lower limit confidence interval; ULCI= upper limit confidence interval; POS= perceived organizational support; OID = organizational identification



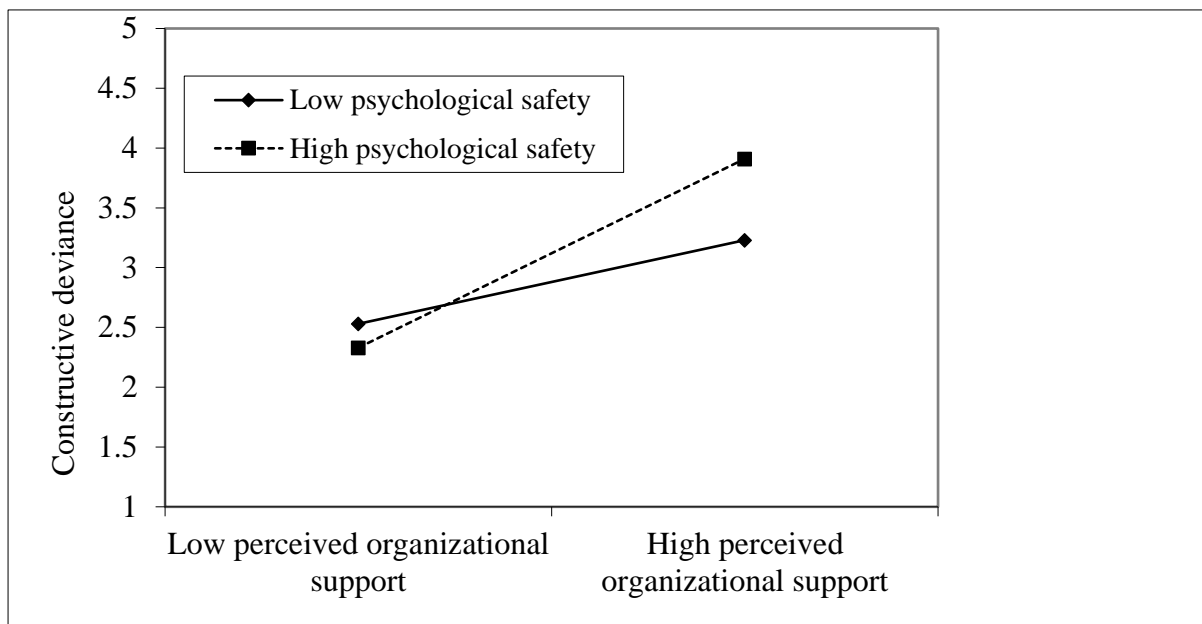
The table (3 and 4) also showed the results of the interaction term for the fourth and fifth hypotheses (H<sub>4</sub> and H<sub>5</sub>). Organizational identification and POS interaction were not significantly related to constructive deviance ( $\beta = -.10, p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, organizational identification did not moderate the relationship between POS and constructive deviance. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis (H<sub>4</sub>) was rejected. In congruence with the fifth hypothesis (H<sub>5</sub>), the interaction term between psychological safety and POS was significant ( $\beta = .22, p < 0.01$ ), indicating that psychological safety moderated the relationship between POS and constructive deviance. Consequently, hypothesis five was accepted.

**Table 4** Moderation Analysis of Psychological Safety and POS on Constructive Deviance

	B	SE	t	P	LLCI	ULCI
Psychological Safety	.12	.06	2.04	.004	.01	.24
POS x PsySafety	.22	.07	3.30	.001	.09	.35
Conditional Effects of POS on constructive deviance at values of the Moderator						
	Moderator	Effect	SE	P	LLCI	ULCI
Low PsySafety	-.83	.39	.08	.001	.23	.55
High PsySafety	.83	.75	.09	.001	.60	.91

*Note.* n = 203; SE = standard error of sample size (5000); LLCI= lower limit confidence interval; ULCI= upper limit confidence interval; POS= perceived organizational support; PsySafety = psychological safety.

Further analysis using two specific values of the moderator (psychological safety) showed the conditional effect of POS on constructive deviance: -1 standard deviation (-.83, > mean value) and +1 standard deviation (.83 < mean value). The simple slope analysis showed that the effect was significant and more substantial for participants with high psychological safety ( $b = .75, p < .01, LLCI = .60, ULCI = .91$ ) and significant but weak for participants with low psychological safety ( $b = .39, p < .01, LLCI = .23, ULCI = .55$ ). The effects are shown on the interaction plot below:

**Figure 2** Simple Slope for the Moderating Effect of Psychological Safety

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present study tested the model that organizational identification and psychological safety would moderate the relationship between POS and constructive deviance. The results confirmed perceived organizational support, identification, and psychological safety's salient roles in constructive deviance among frontline workers in commercial banks. The first hypothesis, which stated that POS would positively and significantly predict constructive deviance, was supported as the results were in line with the hypothesis. The finding suggests that frontline employees who perceive their organization as supportive will likely indulge in discretionary and risky behaviors that benefit the organization. Thus, constructive deviance increases as POS increases, and vice versa. This finding is consistent with the organizational support theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986). The theory is built on the notion that employees' behaviors are the direct consequence of the extent to which they perceive that their contributions are valued and that their well-being is being taken care of and considered a priority by their organization. In this regard, increasing the perception of organizational support will increase the likelihood that employees will engage in constructive and positive work behaviors.

The finding is also consistent with the extant literature (Afsar & Badir, 2016; Kura et al., 2016; Malik & Malik, 2021), which linked POS to employee discretion behaviors that benefit the organization. For example, the study conducted by Afsar and Badir (2016) indicated that POS promoted organizational citizenship behavior, while an investigation by Kura et al. (2016) on a sample of public sector workers found that POS is linked to constructive deviance, especially in the presence of high organizational trust.

Studies have also shown that social exchange constructs such as perceived knowledge sharing and support were positively linked with constructive deviance but showed a negative relationship with destructive deviance (Edosomwan et al., 2023; Malik & Malik, 2021). These studies supported the research finding by indicating that the likelihood of employees engaging in constructive deviance and other risk-related discretion and beneficial behaviors is higher when employees perceive that their organization has regard for their contributions and well-being.

The second hypothesis, which stated that organizational identification would significantly predict constructive deviance, was supported. This shows that increased identification with the organization will promote constructive deviance. This finding is consistent with the social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1985). Identifying with the organization can foster positive behaviors in the workplace. This can also encourage the employees to carry out behaviors that benefit the organization even though they are against organizational norms (Irshad & Bashir, 2020; Khorshid & Mehdiabadi, 2020). The empirical literature also provides adequate support for the second hypothesis. The result is consistent with the studies linking organizational identification with positive workplace behaviors such as work engagement, organizational commitment, and proactive and organizational citizenship behavior (Chen et al., 2019; Karanika-Murray et al., 2015; Pham, 2020; Uzun, 2018). These studies supported our findings by indicating that employees with high organizational identification give their best to their organization, leading to greater organizational effectiveness. Also, Brown (2017) and Irshad and Bashir (2020) noted that high organizational identification sometimes leads employees to go beyond their formal job description to help the organization achieve its goals.

The third hypothesis tested received support from the data analysis. The result showed that psychological safety significantly and positively predicted constructive deviance among frontline employees. This result is consistent with the related literature. Hira et al. (2012) noted that non-threatening and supportive management is salient to the feeling of safety in the workplace. Psychological safety in the work environment fosters open communication and constructive voice behavior among colleagues and superiors (Edmondson & Lei, 2014; Pearsall & Ellis, 2011). Therefore, a healthy work climate is crucial to employees' behaviors, especially with interpersonal risky behaviors (Kura et al., 2016; Sax & Torp, 2015).

The fourth hypothesis, which stated that organizational identification would moderate the relationship between POS and constructive deviance, was not supported. This indicated that organizational identification could not regulate the relationship between POS and constructive deviance among frontline workers in commercial banks. Although this finding is at variance with previous studies (e.g., Mostafa, 2018; Zhuang

et al., 2020) that have utilized organizational identification as a moderating variable among other related work constructs, there is a possible explanation for the current research finding. The previous studies identified in the literature have focused on outcomes such as organizational citizenship behavior, turnover intention, subordinate proactive behavior, and destructive deviance, with less emphasis given to discretionary behaviors that carry some risks, violate organizational norms, and are beneficial to the organization. These could explain the differences in results considering the nature of the behavior that is being studied.

Employees create their self-concept through organizational identification through affiliation and building relationships with the organization. These affiliations and relationships are primarily based on internalizing the organization's norms, values, and culture. Through meaningful association, there is a likelihood that employees may not be willing to go against these norms and values (especially when it is risky to do so) unless there are some assurances that the psychological climate is safe enough for risk-taking and norm violation. Consequently, higher or lower levels of organizational identification may not impact the relationship between POS and constructive deviance.

The fifth hypothesis, which stated that psychological safety would moderate the relationship between POS and constructive deviance, was accepted as the results aligned with the hypothesis. Psychological safety moderated the relationship between POS and constructive deviance such that the relationship was stronger for frontline employees with higher psychological safety and weaker for frontline employees with lower psychological safety. This indicates that the relationship changes at various levels of psychological safety. Theoretically, this finding gives support to the conservation of resources theory, where psychological safety is considered a valuable resource that can be utilized to prevent resource loss in the organization (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Hobfoll, 1989; Newman et al., 2017). The empirical literature offers support for this finding. This finding agrees with the study conducted by Miao et al. (2020) on high-performance work systems, employee voice behavior, innovative work behavior, and the moderating effect of psychological safety. Psychological safety moderated the relationship between a high-performance work system and employee voice behavior. Also, Salman et al. (2020) found that psychological safety moderated the relationship between employee voice and organizational citizenship behavior. These studies supported the research findings by indicating that in the presence of psychological safety, employees are likely to engage in discretionary, risk-taking, and behaviors that benefit the organization. This is also consistent with Hu and Casey (2021).

In conclusion, this study successfully examined the relationship between POS and constructive deviance while also studying the moderating roles of organizational identification and psychological safety among frontline workers in commercial banks.

It was found that POS, organizational identification, and psychological safety have a positive and significant relationship with constructive deviance. In addition, psychological safety moderated the relationship between POS and constructive deviance such that the relationship was more pronounced for participants with higher psychological safety and less pronounced for participants with lower psychological safety. Organizational identification did not moderate the proposed relationship. This study contributed constructively to the literature to further explain the antecedent and underlying factors responsible for constructive deviance. Researchers are encouraged to continue to explore constructive deviance and other related behaviors, such as pro-social rule-breaking and counter-conformity in the workplace.

### **Theoretical and Practical Implications**

Theoretically, this study has made salient contributions to the literature by examining the moderating roles of organizational identification and psychological safety on the relationship between POS and constructive deviance. The study's findings have theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, the finding that POS predicts constructive deviance confirms the organizational support theory. The finding that organizational identification promotes constructive deviance confirms the social identity theory, while psychological safety as a moderating variable supported the conservation of resource theory.

The findings also have some salient implications for managerial practice. As suggested by the extant literature and this study, POS has been seen to have a positive relationship with constructive deviance. This finding implies that employees who experience high levels of organizational support tend to engage in constructive deviance. Therefore, it behooves the management of commercial banks to provide support and ensure that all indices of a supportive organization are adhered to. Some ways this can be achieved include adequately recognizing and rewarding employees' contributions in the workplace, providing a platform that supports employee well-being, lending a helping hand, and promoting equity in the organization. Through adequate and well-channeled social exchange relationships, the organization can be sure that the employees will carry out rewarding behaviors that benefit the organization's sustainability.

### **Limitations and Suggestions for Further Studies**

Although the present study has made some contributions to the management literature, especially in understanding constructive deviance in the workplace, the study is not without limitations. The first limitation is the cross-sectional nature of the research. The study is based on cross-sectional data, and although the tested

relationships suggest causal relationships, a cross-sectional design provides a weak basis for making causal inferences between variables. Therefore, it is recommended that to enable causal inferences, better research designs should be utilized. The second limitation of the study is its reliance on self-report measures. Self-report measures are usually vulnerable to common method bias or the wish to answer questionnaire items consistently, which may have artificially inflated the relationship among the variables in the study. Constructive steps were taken to help reduce common method bias in the study. The findings call for more advanced studies to map the interplay between constructive deviance, POS, organizational identification, and psychological safety. Investigating the dimensions of constructive deviance (interpersonal and organizational) will provide a better understanding of these complex relationships.

### **Acknowledgment**

This study was conducted during the Master's Degree program of the first author at the College of Postgraduate Studies, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria. We would like to express our gratitude to the frontline commercial bank workers who participated in the study.

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### Appendix: Measurement items of the variables and their developer(s)

Construct	Measurement items
Constructive Deviance (Galperin, 2012)	In your job, you have disobeyed supervisors' instructions to perform more efficiently.
	In your job, you have not followed the order of your supervisor in order to improve work procedures.
	In your job, you have reported a wrong-doing to co-worker to bring about positive organizational change.
	In your job, you violated organization's procedures in order to solve a work-related problem.
	In your job, you have sought to bend or break the rules in order to perform your job.
	In your job, you have bent a rule to satisfy the need of someone you are rendering a service to on behalf of the organization.
Perceived Organizational Support	In your job, you have departed from dysfunctional organizational policies or procedures in order to solve a problem.
	My organization cares about my opinions.
	My organization really cares about my well-being.
	My organization strongly considers my goals and values.
	Help is available from my organization when I have a problem.

Construct	Measurement items
(Eisenberger et al., 1997)	<p>My organization would forgive an honest mistake on my part.</p> <p>If given an opportunity, my organization would take advantage of me (R)</p> <p>My organization shows very little concern for me. (R)</p> <p>My organization is willing to help me if I need a special favor.</p>
Organizational Identification (Mael & Ashforth, 1992)	<p>When someone criticizes my organization, it feels like a personal insult.</p> <p>I am very interested in what other people think about my organization.</p> <p>When I talk about my organization, I usually say 'we' rather than 'they'.</p> <p>My organization's successes are my successes.</p> <p>When someone praises my organization, it feels like a personal compliment.</p> <p>If a story in the media criticizes my organization, I would feel embarrassed.</p>
Psychological Safety (Edmondson, 1999)	<p>In my organization, if you make a mistake, it is usually held against you. (R)</p> <p>Members of my organization are able to bring up problems and tough issues.</p> <p>People in my organization reject others for being different. (R)</p> <p>It is safe to take risks in my organization.</p> <p>It is difficult to ask other members of my organization for help. (R)</p> <p>No one in my organization would deliberately act in a way that undermines my efforts.</p> <p>In my organization, my unique skills and talents are valued and utilized.</p>

*Note.* (R) indicates reverse-coded items

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