

Research Reports

Gender Differences in the Effects of Perception of Organizational Injustice on Workplace Reactivity

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Abstract

Previous studies have not adequately examined, in a single model, how gender and perception of organizational injustice are related with revenge-motivated behaviors, especially in male-dominated societies. This study investigated the extent to which gender and perception of organizational injustice predicted employees' tendencies to engage in workplace reactivity, which comprises organizational revenge, interpersonal revenge, interpersonal violence, and corruption in a sample of 703 (460 females; 243 males) employees. Results of the hierarchical multiple regression indicated that gender predicted employees' tendencies to engage in organizational revenge and interpersonal violence; with males showing higher tendencies than females. There were no gender differences in employees' tendencies to engage in corruption and interpersonal revenge. Employees' tendencies to engage in organizational revenge, interpersonal revenge, interpersonal violence, and corruption significantly increased with perception of organizational injustice. Females who felt unjustly treated exhibited as much organizational revenge, interpersonal revenge, interpersonal violence, and corrupt tendencies as males who felt unjustly treated. Implications for theory and research are discussed.

Keywords: gender, injustice, reactivity, revenge, violence, corruption

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Workplace reactivity (WR), which comprises organizational revenge, interpersonal revenge, interpersonal violence, and corruption, refers to employees' affective and behavioral states following perceived wrongdoing. This might be because they perceived the wrongdoing as a threat to their *legitimate* chances of acquiring and protecting workplace resources. In such condition, employees may find justification in acting vengefully towards the perceived source(s) of the threat (i.e. the organization or other organization members). The reaction may be mild (interpersonal or organizational revenge) or intense (interpersonal violence or corruption) depending on the perceived magnitude of the threat.

The management perspective of *workplace reactivity* views such behaviors as deviant and unwanted (Bennett & Robinson, 2000; Kwok, Au, & Ho, 2005; Marcus, Lee, & Ashton, 2007). The management perspective may be faulted for not incorporating the reasons for such behaviors in its conceptualization. Normative control (Kwok et al., 2005) and screening deviant employees out of employment (Marcus et al., 2007) as suggested by the advocates of the management perspective may yield limited and temporary solutions to workplace reactivity because em-

employees will continue to react vengefully as long as they perceive negative work situations no matter the level of organizational control. On the other hand, the employee/ reactor-perspective views *workplace reactivity* as revenge-motivated behaviors that are connected with perception of injustice (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997), anger rumination, and revenge inclination (Barber, Maltby, & Macaskill, 2005; Bushman, 2002; Extremera & Fernandez-Berrocal, 2006). The employee-perspective could provide short- and long-term benefits to the avenger and the organization if well managed (Aquino, Tripp, & Bies, 2001; Bies & Tripp, 2005). This study adopted the employee/ reactor-perspective of *workplace reactivity* because the organizational revenge, interpersonal revenge, interpersonal violence, and corrupt tendencies exhibited by employees could be reactions to unpleasant psycho-physical conditions associated with perception of organizational injustice.

A major lacuna in literature is that the connections among gender, perception of organizational injustice, and revenge-motivated work behaviors have not been adequately investigated in one single model, especially in a male-dominated society. The aim of this study was to extend the literature on revenge-motivated behaviors; and the extent to which employees' tendencies to engage in organizational revenge, interpersonal revenge, interpersonal violence, and corruption (*workplace reactivity*) could be connected with gender and perception of organizational injustice.

Literature Review

Revenge motivation has been implicated in cycles of depression and hostility (Rijavec, Jurčec, & Mijočević, 2010), which could have negative implications for the functionality of the organization and employees. Previous studies (e.g.; Carmody, 2010; Maltby et al., 2008) reported that revenge motivation was strongly connected with high neuroticism, low agreeableness, low trust and trait forgiveness. Apart from personality factors, power relation, perceived justice, blame attribution, victim status, and offender status are important in predicting whether an individual would seek revenge for perceived injustice or not (Aquino et al., 2001; Aquino, Tripp, & Bies, 2006). The individual seeking revenge may also need to analyze the cost and benefit of revenge and forgiveness. For example, Rijavec, Jurčec, and Olčar (2013) reported that individuals who felt it was costly to forgive tended to seek revenge towards the offender than those who felt otherwise.

Revenge motivation could also be attributed to gender-related differences in processing and reacting to justice information. Gender differences in the perception of and reaction to injustice may be more pronounced in patriarchal or male-dominated societies where gender relations and stereotypes follow the dictates of the society (Akinwale, 2009; Fawole, 2008; Oyewumi, 1997; Udegbe & Bamgbose, 2001). For example, in Nigerian societies, females are generally socialized to be less competitive, aggressive and vengeful; but more submissive, tolerant, and nurturing than males (Mudiare, 2013; Udegbe & Bamgbose, 2001). In matrilineal societies (e.g. Khasi in India) females are socialized to be more competitive than males (Gneezy, Leonard, & List, 2009). Since competition has been associated with retaliation and revenge (Duke, 2013), it may not be out of place to submit that females socialized in matrilineal societies may be as vengeful as males raised in patriarchal societies. This may explain why Eagly and Steffen (1986) submitted that gender differences in revenge and aggression are a function of perceived consequences of such behaviors that are learned as gender and other social roles dictated by social and cultural norms.

It is often expected that these cultural and societal norms must be adhered to in the workplace even if they are at variance with job roles (Kidder & Parks, 2001). Vigoda-Gadot and Kapun (2005) submitted that gender differences in justice-related issues may be more noticeable in public than private sector organizations. In the former work

outcomes are based more on socio-political rather than objective considerations (Vigoda-Gadot & Kapun, 2005). In Nigeria, the local government represents public sector organizations that may perpetrate male dominance because of its closeness to traditional societies where traditional customs and beliefs might still hold sway. This may explain why female, compared with male Kenyan employees, perceived higher level of injustice (Mueller & Mulinge, 2001). Among Korean employees, Youn (2007) also found that female employees perceived higher level of injustice than males. The above findings generally indicate that differential treatment by sex still exists in some organizations.

Due to *spill-over* effects, an organization might not be totally immune to the prevailing socio-cultural circumstance in its host community (Dietz, Robinson, Folger, Baron, & Schulz, 2003; Fawole, 2008). In line with the Nigerian socio-cultural work environment, which may promote perception of injustice among female employees, one would expect females to show higher revenge tendencies than males. Unfortunately, theory and research seem not to support this. For example, the normative theory of emotion and emotional reaction posits that the expression and reactions of males and females to emotion-related situations are often consistent with gender-specific emotion beliefs and cultural expectations (Hochschild, 1979).

These cultural norms, which expect men to express anger and be more vengeful or violent than women, may determine and guide employees' emotional expressions in terms of appropriateness, duration, and intensity in a given situation (Simon & Nath, 2004). Taiwo's (2004) findings, which indicated that males expressed higher violence tendencies than females, might be connected with the Nigerian cultural system that condones and promotes revenge and violent behavior more in males than in females. In three separate studies, Wilkowski, Hartung, Crowe, and Chai (2012) found that men were more revenge-motivated and physically aggressive than women. Therefore, females are expected to be less vengeful than males in reaction to injustice because of cultural norms. Against this background, the following hypotheses were tested.

Hypothesis 1a: Gender predicts employees' tendencies to engage in organizational revenge such that males will show higher organizational revenge tendencies than females.

Hypothesis 1b: Gender predicts employees' tendencies to engage in interpersonal revenge such that males will show higher interpersonal revenge tendencies than females.

Hypothesis 1c: Gender predicts employees' tendencies to engage in interpersonal violence such that males will show higher violence tendencies than females.

Studies on gender and workplace corruption yielded mixed results. Adebayo (2005) found that females displayed more ethical behaviors than males. In a cross-country study involving 93 countries, Swamy, Knack, Lee, and Azfar (2000) reported that females were less involved in bribery and were less likely to condone bribe taking. The attitudes of the respondents were also compared on corrupt practices such as tax evasion, bribery, and claiming government benefits under false pretence. The authors reported that males were generally more tolerant of, and favorably disposed to, corruption than females. They, therefore, advocated that more women should be involved in public administration.

However, Alolo (2006), TI (2007), and Agbalajobi (2008) warned that the rush to include more women in public offices as an anti-corruption drive could also be a source of corruption. Alolo (2006) explained that women are socially expected to exhibit higher ethics of care than men. These ethics of care run contrary to the public sector ethics. This is because Alolo (2006) found that male and female employees held similar favorable attitudes toward

corruption. Males were tolerant of corruption if it would lead to justice and fair-play while females displayed higher level of tolerance if corruption would provide opportunity to take care of more people.

Hypothesis 1d: Gender predicts employees' tendencies to engage in corruption such that males will show higher corrupt tendencies than females.

Perception of organizational injustice refers to employees' subjective appraisal of the extent to which distribution and allocation (distributive justice) of workplace resources and rewards and the procedure (procedural justice) used to determine outcomes as well as the quality of interpersonal treatment (interpersonal justice) received, met some general and or specific rules of fairness (Rupp, Ganapathi, Aguilera, & Williams, 2006). Employees regard the organization's formal procedures for allocating workplace resources as fair when the process of decision-making is consistent, accurate, correctable, objective, participatory/ representative, and morally acceptable (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997). The quality of interpersonal treatment is perceived as high, and consequently just, when employees perceive social sensitivity between and among employees; and adequate explanations/ information are provided for work-related decisions and actions (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997).

Studies have reported a strong connection between perception of injustice and revenge actions (Carlsmith, Wilson, & Gilbert, 2008; Gollwitzer, Meder, & Schmitt, 2011; Shaw & James, 2012). This may be linked with the avenger's desires to discourage injustice, restore equity, and indirectly announce acceptable conducts (McCullough, Kurzban, & Tabak, 2010). The fairness theory submits that employees blame the organization and other individuals when they perceive that the organization or other individuals "could" and "should have acted differently" in order to prevent a negative situation (Colquitt & Chertkoff, 2002; Folger & Cropanzano, 2001; Shaw, Wild, & Colquitt, 2003). This implies that the connection between injustice and revenge-motivated behaviors (workplace reactivity) may not be automatic. Beugré (2005) submitted that revenge actions emanating from perceived injustice are, among other things, embedded in a nexus of blame attribution and the advantages incurred by such actions. Therefore, it might be logical to assert that employees' revenge actions, guided by cultural rules of emotional behavior, would be directed at the person or entity adjudged responsible for the negative work situation.

Hypothesis 2a: Perception of organizational injustice predicts employees' tendencies to engage in organizational revenge such that organizational revenge increases with perception of injustice.

Hypothesis 2b: Perception of organizational injustice predicts employees' tendencies to engage in interpersonal revenge such that interpersonal revenge increases with perception of injustice.

Hypothesis 2c: Perception of organizational injustice predicts employees' tendencies to engage in interpersonal violence such that interpersonal violence increases with perception of injustice.

Hypothesis 2d: Perception of organizational injustice predicts employees' tendencies to engage in corruption such that corrupt tendencies increase with perception of injustice.

Studies on gender differences in perception of injustice yielded mix results across some cultures. In a sample of employees in western culture, Lambert, Paoline, Hogan, and Baker (2007) reported that female employees felt as justly treated as their male counterparts. However, studies conducted among employees in Africa (e.g. Mueller & Mulinge, 2001) and Asia (e.g. Youn, 2007) indicated that females perceived higher level of organizational injustice than males. Despite the fact that female employees in Africa may perceive higher level of injustice than male employees, cultural expectations and social norms support and condone revenge and violent reactions in males

than females (Taiwo, 2004). This implies that the connection between perception of organizational injustice and revenge-motivated behaviors may be affected by gender-specific social and cultural expectations on revenge and violent reactions (Hochschild, 1979). Against this background, it was expected that gender would moderate the relationships between perception of organizational injustice and the components of workplace reactivity. It was hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 3a: *Females who perceive organizational injustice exhibit lower tendencies to engage in organizational revenge than males.*

Hypothesis 3b: *Females who perceive organizational injustice exhibit lower tendencies to engage in interpersonal revenge than males.*

Hypothesis 3c: *Females who perceive organizational injustice exhibit lower tendencies to engage in interpersonal violence than males.*

Hypothesis 3d: *Females who perceive organizational injustice exhibit lower tendencies to engage in corruption than males.*

Methods

Participants and Procedure

This study was conducted in the six local government headquarters domiciled in the capital of the six southwestern states in Nigeria. The questionnaires were distributed (in all the offices in the local government headquarters) to employees who were willing to participate in the study. The participants were made to understand that they could discontinue with the research whenever they felt so. They were also assured that their responses could not be traced to them. To further ensure confidentiality, the participants were provided envelopes to return the completed questionnaires. With an average of 140 questionnaires per State, a total of 827 questionnaires were distributed. That is, about 47% of employees in each of the local government headquarters were sampled for the study. Seven hundred and sixty five questionnaires were returned in sealed envelopes. This yielded a response rate of 93%. Out of the 765 envelopes that were returned, 703 contained questionnaires that were duly completed and found usable.

The participants were 703 employees (460 females; 243 males) whose ages ranged between 19 and 59 years ($M_{\text{age}} = 33.93$; $SD = 7.64$). They had spent an average of 6.03 years ($SD = 4.32$) in the employment of the local government. Their average promotion tenure, as at the time of this study, was 2.01 years ($SD = 2.41$). For job status, 44.10% ($n = 310$) were at the senior level; 30.40% ($n = 214$) were at the junior level; and 25.50% ($n = 179$) were at the intermediate level. In the case of academic qualification, 43.40% ($n = 305$) held first degree or Higher National Diploma; 37.70% ($n = 265$) held Ordinary National Diploma or National Certificate in Education; 13.80% ($n = 97$) had up to Ordinary Level Certificate; while 5.10% ($n = 36$) held postgraduate degree/diploma.

Measures

Perception of Organizational Injustice — This was measured using Perception of Organizational Injustice Scale (POIS). It was a 13-item inventory made up of three subscales: interpersonal, distributive, and procedural. The interpersonal subscale was developed by Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, and Ng (2001) to measure the perceived quality of interpersonal relationship that employees enjoy in their job. Price and Mueller (1986) developed the

distributive subscale to measure the extent to which employees perceive that their efforts are fairly rewarded by the organization. The procedural subscale was developed by Rupp and Cropanzano (2002) to measure employees' perceived fairness in the organization's procedure of rewarding employees.

POIS was rated on a 5-point scale (Never = 1; Always = 5). Sample items include: "To what extent are you treated with dignity in your workplace?" (interpersonal injustice); "To what extent are you fairly rewarded in your workplace taking into account the amount of education and training that you have had?" (distributive injustice); and "To what extent are the procedures your organization uses to make decisions fair?" (procedural injustice). Colquitt et al. (2001) reported a Cronbach's alpha of .93 for the interpersonal subscale, while Price and Mueller (1986) found a Cronbach's alpha of .91 for the distributive subscale. The procedural subscale had a .83 Cronbach's alpha (Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002).

In the current study, the summated scores in POIS were used because the one-factor solution with *oblimin rotation* was better than the three-factor solution. A Cronbach's alpha of .77 was obtained for the overall scale. POIS was scored in such a way that high scores indicated that the participants perceived high level of organizational injustice.

Workplace Reactivity — Workplace Reactivity Scale (WRS) was used to measure participants' tendencies to engage in the four components of workplace reactivity. It was a 26-item instrument rated on a 4-point scale (1 = strongly disagree; 4 = strongly agree). This current study focused on the tendencies to engage in, rather than the extent to which the respondents engaged in, workplace reactivity. This is because the item format in the original scales may increase the respondent's "motivation to under-report behaviors, such as theft, that put them at risk of job loss or legal prosecution" (Penney & Spector, 2005, p. 782).

The current scale comprised items drawn from other relevant instruments and those generated by the researchers through focused group discussion with selected local government employees. This method of item selection could lead to item-overlap (Penney & Spector, 2005). Two steps were taken to reduce item-overlap. First, items were selected from the pool based on nominations by Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) (Golden, Sawicki, & Franzen, 1993).

Three of the SMEs represented each of the three job levels (senior, intermediate, and junior) and had been working as local government employees for at least 2 years. The remaining SMEs were 2 psychologists who had conducted researches on the aspects of workplace reactivity investigated in this study. These criteria were used to ensure that the individuals had a fair knowledge about the aspects of workplace reactivity being investigated.

Only the items that 80% of the five SMEs voted as reflections of the concept of workplace reactivity in this study formed the initial items for the scale (Marcus et al., 2007). The 5 SMEs categorized all the initial items into the four subscales (corrupt tendencies, organizational revenge tendencies, interpersonal violence tendencies, and interpersonal revenge tendencies). Eighty percent of the SMEs must agree in their placement of an item into a particular dimension (Bruk-Lee & Spector, 2006; Spector et al., 2004). Only the items that met these rules were tested in a pilot study. Second, it was decided that any item that had item-total correlation coefficient less than .31 and whose elimination increased the reliability of the scale would be deleted from the final scale (Ehigie, 2005). The results of the item analysis show that all the items were valid.

Corrupt tendencies subscale: This measured corrupt tendencies. The SMEs categorized 3 out of the initial 12 items in the corrupt tendencies subscale as acts of organizational revenge. As result of this, the final corrupt

tendencies subscale comprised 9 items. Sample items include: “Helping another person to take a property or an item that belonged to the organization” and “Diverting the organization’s fund for personal use”. The subscale had .92 Cronbach’s alpha. High score indicated that the participant exhibited high tendencies to engage in corruption.

Interpersonal violence tendencies subscale: This subscale measured the participant’s tendencies to exhibit interpersonal violence directed at other employees (coworker and superior officers). It was a 7-item scale (psychological violence = 3 items; physical violence = 4 items) adapted from LeBlanc and Kelloway (2002) and Schat, Frone, and Kelloway (2006). In their scales, the respondent is the victim of the interpersonal violence. In the current scale, the respondent is the reactor. Sample items are: “Threatening to hit or throw something at a superior officer or coworker” (Psychological violence), and “Kicking, beating, or hitting a superior officer or coworker with a fist” (Physical violence). LeBlanc and Kelloway (2002) reported a .90 internal consistency coefficient for their original scale. The current version of the scale had a .92 Cronbach’s alpha. A high score indicated that the respondent showed high tendencies to engage in interpersonal violence.

Organizational revenge and interpersonal revenge tendencies subscales: These subscales comprised 10 items (organizational revenge = 6; interpersonal revenge = 4) drawn from Bennett and Robinson’s (2000) scale of workplace deviance. Sample items include: “Participating in slowing down work” (Organizational revenge) and “Withholding important information from a coworker or superior officer” (Interpersonal revenge). Lee, Ashton, and Shin (2005) reported internal consistency reliability coefficients of .87 and .92, respectively for the interpersonal and organizational dimensions of the Bennett and Robinson’s (2000) original scale. In the current study, .76 and .83 Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were obtained for the organizational revenge and interpersonal revenge subscales, respectively. High scores indicated that the employee exhibited high tendencies to engage in organizational and interpersonal revenge. The overall Cronbach’s alpha of WRS was .95.

An exploratory principal component analysis with *oblimin* rotation was performed to determine the factor solution and inter-factor correlation of the overall workplace reactivity scale. As indicated in the *pattern matrix* and the *factor correlation matrix*, the 4 components of workplace reactivity were distinct but moderately related with coefficients ranging between .55 (organizational revenge and interpersonal violence tendencies) and .61 (interpersonal violence and corrupt tendencies). This indicated that there were no multi-collinearity problems among the subscales of WRS.

Results

Descriptive and Inter-Variable Correlations

The results of the descriptive and inter-variable correlations are presented in Table 1. Table 1 indicates that employees’ tendencies to engage in organizational revenge, $r(701) = .27, p < .01$; interpersonal revenge, $r(701) = .24, p < .01$; interpersonal violence, $r(701) = .22, p < .01$; and corruption, $r(701) = .27, p < .01$, increased significantly with perceived level of organizational injustice.

Table 1

Mean, Standard Deviation, Inter-Variable Correlations, and Reliabilities

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Age	1									
2. Gender	-.02	1								
3. Job level	.37**	-.03	1							
4. Academic qualification	.06	-.15**	.47**	1						
5. Job tenure	.40**	.08*	.25**	-.07	1					
6. Perception of organizational injustice	.01	.01	-.02	-.00	-.04	(.77)				
7. Organizational revenge tendencies	.03	-.11**	-.11*	-.04	-.02	.27**	(.76)			
8. Interpersonal revenge tendencies	-.01	-.05	-.08*	-.08	-.04	.24**	.57**	(.83)		
9. Interpersonal violence tendencies	.03	-.06	-.04	-.04	-.00	.22**	.58**	.55**	(.92)	
10. Corrupt tendencies	-.00	-.04	-.09*	-.07	-.00	.27**	.58**	.58**	.61**	(.92)
<i>M</i>	33.93	-	-	-	6.03	40.22	9.60	7.87	12.46	16.28
<i>SD</i>	7.64	-	-	-	4.32	9.56	5.31	4.68	7.41	8.79

Note. *N* ranges between 520 and 703. Reliabilities are in brackets along the diagonal. Gender was coded male 0; female 1. Job level was coded junior level 1; intermediate level 2; senior level 3. Academic qualification was coded Ordinary Level Certificate 1; Ordinary National Diploma / National Certificate in Education 2; first degree/ Higher National Diploma 3; postgraduate degree/ diploma 4.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Tests of Hypotheses

The hypotheses expected that gender and perception of organizational injustice would predict employees' tendencies to engage in organizational revenge, interpersonal revenge, interpersonal violence, and corruption. To test these hypotheses, four sets of hierarchical multiple regression analyses were performed (one for each component of workplace reactivity). In each case, the demographic variables were entered in model 1. In model 2, the independent effects of the predictors were entered. The moderation effects of gender on the relationships between perception of organizational injustice and the components of workplace reactivity were entered in model 3. Table 2 shows the results of the hierarchical multiple regression on organizational revenge tendencies (hypotheses 1a, 2a, and 3a).

As shown in Table 2, gender significantly predicted employees' tendencies to engage in organizational revenge; with males showing higher tendencies than females, $\beta = -.15$; $t(701) = -3.37$, $p < .01$. This result supported hypothesis 1a. Perception of organizational injustice significantly predicted employees' tendencies to engage in organizational revenge such that the tendencies increased with employees' perception of organizational injustice, $\beta = .20$; $t(701) = 4.57$, $p < .01$. This result supported hypothesis 2a. However, gender did not moderate the relationship between perception of organizational injustice and employees' tendencies to engage in organizational revenge, $\beta = .03$; $\Delta R^2 = .00$; $\Delta F = .04$, $p > .05$. This implied that employees who perceived organizational injustice tended to revenge toward the organization, irrespective of whether they were males or females. Therefore, hypothesis 3a was not supported.

Table 2

Hierarchical Multiple Regression on Organizational Revenge Tendencies

Models	β	t	R	R^2	ΔR^2	F	ΔF
Model 1			.12	.02	.02	1.61	1.61
Age	.07	1.28					
Job level	-.14	-2.63**					
Academic qualification	.05	1.03					
Job tenure	.01	.16					
Model 2			.27	.07	.06	5.88**	16.32***
Age	.06	1.11					
Job level	-.12	-2.21*					
Academic qualification	.01	.19					
Job tenure	.00	.07					
Gender	-.15	-3.37**					
Perception of org. injustice	.20	4.57**					
Model 3			.27	.07	.00	5.82**	.04
Age	.06	1.24					
Job level	-.09	-1.78					
Academic qualification	-.01	-.11					
Job tenure	.01	.25					
Gender	-.14	-1.10					
Perception of org. injustice	.20	3.15**					
Gender x perception of org. injustice	.03	.19					

Note. $N = 703$. Gender was coded male 0; female 1. Job level was coded junior level 1; intermediate level 2; senior level 3. Academic qualification was coded Ordinary Level Certificate 1; Ordinary National Diploma / National Certificate in Education 2; first degree/ Higher National Diploma 3; postgraduate degree/ diploma 4.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Another set of hierarchical multiple regression was performed to test hypotheses 1b, 2b, and 3b. The results are presented in Table 3. Contrary to the position in hypothesis 1b, gender did not significantly predict employees' tendencies to engage in interpersonal revenge, $\beta = -.06$; $t(701) = -1.41$, $p > .05$. This implied that females tended to be as vengeful as males towards other employees. Based on this, hypothesis 1b was rejected. Perception of organizational injustice exerted a significant effect on employees' tendencies to engage in interpersonal revenge such that employees who perceived organizational injustice tended to engage in interpersonal revenge, $\beta = .23$; $t(701) = 5.34$, $p < .01$. This supported hypothesis 2b. There was no moderation effects of gender on the connection between perception of organizational injustice and interpersonal revenge tendencies, $\beta = .16$; $\Delta R^2 = .002$; $\Delta F = 1.08$, $p > .05$. Therefore, hypothesis 3b was not supported.

Table 3

Hierarchical Multiple Regression on Interpersonal Revenge Tendencies

Models	β	t	R	R^2	ΔR^2	F	ΔF
Model 1			.10	.01	.01	.98	.98
Age	-.01	-.25					
Job level	-.08	-1.52					
Academic qualification	-.03	-.53					
Job tenure	.00	.02					
Model 2			.26	.07	.06	5.12**	15.35***
Age	-.02	-.34					
Job level	-.06	-1.12					
Academic qualification	-.06	-1.05					
Job tenure	-.01	-.13					
Gender	-.06	-1.41					
Perception of org. injustice	.23	5.34**					
Model 3			.26	.08	.002	4.90**	1.08
Age	.01	.11					
Job level	-.02	-.46					
Academic qualification	-.06	-1.30					
Job tenure	-.02	-.53					
Gender	-.20	-1.32					
Perception of org. injustice	.16	2.53*					
Gender x perception of org. injustice	.16	1.04					

Note. $N = 703$. Gender was coded male 0; female 1. Job level was coded junior level 1; intermediate level 2; senior level 3. Academic qualification was coded Ordinary Level Certificate 1; Ordinary National Diploma / National Certificate in Education 2; first degree/ Higher National Diploma 3; postgraduate degree/ diploma 4.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

To test hypotheses 3a to 3c, a set of hierarchical multiple regression was conducted. The results are presented in Table 4. The results in Table 4 indicate that gender significantly predicted violence tendencies among employees; with males showing higher tendencies than females, $\beta = -.12$; $t(701) = -2.64$, $p < .01$. This supported hypothesis 1c. Interpersonal violence tendencies among employees increased significantly with the extent to which they perceived organizational injustice, $\beta = .21$; $t(701) = 4.81$, $p < .01$. This supported hypothesis 2c. There was no moderation effect of gender on the relationship between perception of organizational injustice and interpersonal violence tendencies, $\beta = .01$; $\Delta R^2 = .00$; $\Delta F = .01$, $p > .05$. The implication was that being a male or female did not count in employees' tendencies to engage in interpersonal violence as long as they perceived organizational injustice. Hypothesis 3c was not supported.

Table 4

Hierarchical Multiple Regression on Interpersonal Violence Tendencies

Models	β	t	R	R^2	ΔR^2	F	ΔF
Model 1			.09	.01	.01	.85	.85
Age	.08	1.35					
Job level	-.07	-1.34					
Academic qualification	-.01	-.28					
Job tenure	-.03	-.66					
Model 2			.25	.06	.06	4.99**	15.22**
Age	.07	1.22					
Job level	-.05	-.90					
Academic qualification	-.06	-1.01					
Job tenure	-.04	-.79					
Gender	-.12	-2.64**					
Perception of org. injustice	.21	4.81**					
Model 3			.25	.06	.00	3.63**	.01
Age	.06	1.13					
Job level	-.01	-.30					
Academic qualification	-.03	-.58					
Job tenure	.01	.14					
Gender	-.06	-.40					
Perception of org. injustice	.19	2.91**					
Gender x perception of org. injustice	.01	.08					

Note. $N = 703$. Gender was coded male 0; female 1. Job level was coded junior level 1; intermediate level 2; senior level 3. Academic qualification was coded Ordinary Level Certificate 1; Ordinary National Diploma / National Certificate in Education 2; first degree/ Higher National Diploma 3; postgraduate degree/ diploma 4.

** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Lastly, hypotheses 1d, 2d, and 3d were tested with a hierarchical multiple regression. Table 5 shows the results. Gender did not significantly predict employees' corrupt tendencies, $\beta = -.06$; $t(701) = -1.35$, $p > .05$. This implied that female employees tended to be as corrupt as their male counterparts. Hypothesis 1d was, therefore, not supported. However, perception of organizational injustice significantly predicted corrupt tendencies among employees, $\beta = .26$; $t(701) = 6.83$, $p < .01$. These tendencies increased with the level at which the employees perceived organizational injustice. This supported hypothesis 2d. Table 5 shows that gender did not moderate the extent to which perception of organizational injustice predicted corrupt tendencies, $\beta = .17$; $\Delta R^2 = .002$; $\Delta F = 1.25$, $p > .05$. This implied that, irrespective of gender, when employees felt unjustly treated they reacted with corrupt tendencies. Therefore, hypothesis 3d was not supported.

Table 5

Hierarchical Multiple Regression on Corrupt Tendencies

Models	β	t	R	R^2	ΔR^2	F	ΔF
Model 1			.08	.01	.01	.59	.59
Age	.02	.30					
Job level	-.06	-1.17					
Academic qualification	-.02	-.33					
Job tenure	-.03	-.64					
Model 2			.29	.08	.09	5.93**	19.19***
Age	.01	.22					
Job level	-.04	-.73					
Academic qualification	-.04	-.87					
Job tenure	-.04	-.82					
Gender	-.06	-1.35					
Perception of org. injustice	.26	6.83**					
Model 3			.29	.09	.002	6.57**	1.25
Age	-.002	-.04					
Job level	-.05	-1.04					
Academic qualification	-.04	-.90					
Job tenure	.02	.55					
Gender	-.21	-1.41					
Perception of org. injustice	.20	3.11**					
Gender x perception of org. injustice	.17	1.12					

Note. $N = 703$. Gender was coded male 0; female 1. Job level was coded junior level 1; intermediate level 2; senior level 3. Academic qualification was coded Ordinary Level Certificate 1; Ordinary National Diploma / National Certificate in Education 2; first degree/ Higher National Diploma 3; postgraduate degree/ diploma 4.

** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study investigated the extent to which gender and perception of organizational injustice predicted workplace reactivity, which comprises organizational revenge, interpersonal revenge, interpersonal violence, and corrupt tendencies.

The results of the present study showed that males tended to be more vengeful than females toward the organization; but not toward other organization members. These results were partly in consonance with previous studies (e.g. Wilkowski et al., 2012), which reported that males exhibited higher revenge motivation than females. Apart from physiological explanations, the normative theory of emotional reaction (Hochschild, 1979) posits that males are usually socialized to be more revenge-oriented than female, especially in male-dominated societies such as Nigeria (Udegbe & Bamgbose, 2001). As found in the current study, the normative theory and social/ cultural hypothesis (Wilkowski et al., 2012) of revenge did not envisage gender similarities in interpersonal revenge. The gender similarities found in interpersonal revenge occurred probably because males, compared with females, blamed the organization (Colquitt & Chertkoff, 2002; Folger & Cropanzano, 2001; Shaw et al., 2003) for providing opportunities (even) for interpersonal transgressions. Consequently they were more willing to mildly avenge the transgressions emanating from the organization than those perpetrated by other organization members.

In the case of interpersonal violence, results indicated that males exhibited higher violence tendencies than females. This corroborated the findings of [Taiwo \(2004\)](#), who reported that males showed higher violence tendencies than females. These tendencies are usually recognized and reinforced in males through socialization processes ([Taiwo, 2004](#)) may be because such tendencies help sustain dominance and enhance territorial behavior. The normative theory ([Hochschild, 1979](#)) posits that socially and culturally sanctioned gender-specific emotional reactions usually dictate the intensity and duration of such behavior for males and females.

In most cases, violent behaviors are more tolerated in males than in females. This may explain why males tended to be more violent than females. As noted in previous studies (e.g., [Dietz et al., 2003](#); [Fawole, 2008](#)) individuals may not be totally immune to the socio-cultural beliefs and events in their environment. In such case, employees' decisions and actions might be based on informal rules and norms dictated by the cultural and social expectations rather than the formal rules of the organization. Since the Nigerian cultural beliefs and expectations condone violence more in males than females, it was therefore, not out of place for males to show higher violence tendencies than females.

Contrary to our expectations, females tended to be as corrupt as males. These results question the findings of [Adebayo \(2005\)](#) and [Swamy et al. \(2000\)](#) who reported that males were more susceptible to corruption than females. However, our results confirmed the fears of [Agbalajobi \(2008\)](#), [Alolo \(2006\)](#), and [TI \(2007\)](#) that females may display comparable levels of corruption with males if exposed to certain level of injustice. In addition to that, the gap in economic expectations and financial responsibilities among males and females, which tend to induce more pressure on males than females seem to have reduced considerably. Therefore, females might have experienced comparable levels of financial pressure and the zeal to help people as males did. The employees might have perceived that the organization could not provide just and legitimate opportunities to meeting such demands. This might have motivated them to exhibit corrupt tendencies.

True to our hypotheses, perception of organizational injustice predicted all components of workplace reactivity. Employees' tendencies to engage in organizational revenge, interpersonal revenge, interpersonal violence, and corruption increased with perception of injustice. Our findings were in tandem with previous studies (e.g. [Carlsmith et al., 2008](#); [Gollwitzer et al., 2011](#); [Shaw & James, 2012](#)), which reported that revenge-motivated behaviors were closely connected with perception of injustice. This implied that the employees held the targets of these forms of revenge-motivated behaviors responsible for the unpleasant work situations. Our results indirectly confirmed the submission of [Beugré \(2005\)](#) that attribution of blame and the expected benefits of revenge actions are important in the link between injustice and revenge-motivated behaviors. According to [McCullough et al. \(2010\)](#), the benefits of revenge, violence, or corruption for reactive employees might not only be linked with the zeal to discourage injustice and promote equity but also with the opportunity to *push* the organization and other organization members to behave in acceptable manners ([Colquitt & Chertkoff, 2002](#); [Folger & Cropanzano, 2001](#); [Shaw et al., 2003](#)). One of the major contributions of the present study to the fairness theory was that it empirically showed link between perception of injustice and corrupt tendencies. Other studies (e.g. [Agbalajobi, 2008](#); [Alolo, 2006](#); [TI, 2007](#)) were only speculative about such connection.

None of the hypotheses on the moderation effects of gender on the relationships between perception of organizational injustice and the components of workplace reactivity was supported. However, gender and perception of organizational injustice jointly influenced employees' tendencies to engage in organizational revenge, interpersonal revenge, interpersonal violence, and corruption. This implied that even if socio-cultural beliefs and expectations

discourage females from revenge inclinations, they could still be vengeful if injustice was perceived. For example, when perception of organizational injustice was added to the model connecting gender and interpersonal revenge tendencies, the insignificant relationship became significant with a 6% change. Similarly, perception of organizational injustice enhanced the relationship between gender and corrupt tendencies to the tune of 9% change. The results of the present study, therefore, extended the normative theory of gender difference in revenge-motivation. The present study has shown that socio-cultural norms may not guarantee low revenge-motivation in females if injustice is perceived.

In spite of its contributions, this study was not without short-comings. The major short-coming was that this study was prone to common method variance. Our study only relied on self-report measures of the dimensions of workplace reactivity. Despite the addition of a statement that portrays revenge and provides justification for their actions, respondents may under-report such behavioral tendencies for fear of being punished. It may, therefore, be beneficial if future studies combined self-report with another measure of workplace reactivity. Lastly, the fact that gender did not strongly affect the relationships between perception of organizational injustice and the components of workplace reactivity might be because it was treated as a moderator and not as a mediator variable. Therefore, future studies should examine the mediation effects of gender on the connections between perception of organizational injustice and the components of workplace reactivity.

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Competing Interests

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