AN EXAMINATION OF THE EFFECTS OF AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT AND JOB SECURITY SATISFACTION ON CONSTRUCTIVE DEVIANT BEHAVIOR USE AMONG CAMPUS EQUITY DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PROFESSIONALS

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ABSTRACT

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Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) professionals often serve as change agents tasked with leading university-wide EDI efforts. Charged with advancing EDI initiatives as part of the University mission, the Vice President of Equity Diversity and Inclusion (VPEDI) must navigate campus organizational and cultural barriers in order to effect change. In this study, 116 VPEDIs and campus community members working in EDI roles responded to a survey designed to investigate if EDI professionals believe they use constructive deviant behavior while engaged in University EDI roles. Constructive Deviance is defined as voluntary risk-taking behaviors that violate perceived organization or group norms with the intent of improving the well-being of the organization, its members, or both. The survey utilized the Constructive Deviance Behavioral Scale (CDBS), the Affective Commitment Scale (AC), and the Job Security Satisfaction (JSS) scale to test for an emotional component to constructive deviance use and measure affective reactions to perceptions of job security. Demographic variables of race or ethnicity and gender identity were tested for differences in perceptions of constructive deviance use. Data analysis found no significant difference in constructive deviance for racial or gender identity groups. Additionally, the results indicated no significant relationship between constructive deviance and affective commitment or constructive deviance and job security satisfaction. A negative relationship was found between affective commitment and interpersonal constructive deviance. Two open-ended responses allowed participants to share their views regarding the risks and benefits of constructive deviance and its use for change.

This dissertation is dedicated to my children. Skyler, you taught me not to let my feelings pick the facts. John, you gave me permission not to regret the past when I can appreciate the present. Savien, you made me laugh when you said I seem a lot more intelligent when I'm stressed out of my mind. You are the loves of my life and inspire me every day to continue my learning and unlearning journey. To our family dog, Holly, whose constant companionship through all stages of this journey has brought me great comfort. And to my life partner and husband, Greg. Thank you for supporting me when I decided to embark on this dissertation journey and through some of the toughest personal times I've ever faced. I would never have accomplished this without the long walks and theoretical debates. Thank you for always being there for me and for understanding my need to be a lifelong learner. I love you.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Since the murder of George Floyd in 2020, the national spotlight on race and bias helped to shift the makeup of corporate boardrooms, which rushed to increase diversity through the recruitment of directors identifying as Black or African American as well as from historically underrepresented groups (Guynn & Fraser, 2022). This same spotlight prioritized equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) initiatives within American Institutions of Higher Education, further prompting the hiring of EDI Professionals (Kyaw, 2021). New EDI Professionals, many in inaugural roles, were hired and situated within the institution's executive leadership, having a seat on the University's Presidential Cabinet (Worthington et al., 2020).

The summer of 2023 saw a significant shift in the landscape of EDI initiatives, particularly in the corporate boardroom, due to the change in Supreme Court rulings on affirmative action. This has led to a reversal of the trend towards EDI-friendly initiatives, as political pressures mount and threats of legal action loom over Fortune 100 CEOs and other public entities (Harper, 2023). The higher education sector is also feeling the strain of anti-EDI sentiment, with an increasing number of state legislatures introducing proposals aimed at dismantling EDI offices (DEI Legislation Tracker, 2024). EDI professionals in Higher Education are now faced with the prospect of prohibitive measures, as they navigate both external and internal pressures while pursuing campus EDI change initiatives.

The EDI Professional

Higher education diversity professionals carry many different titles. A search of the Diverse Jobs website lists job titles such as Vice President of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Senior Officer for Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging; Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Officer; Chief Diversity and Belonging

Officer; and Chief Diversity Officer (*Diversity Jobs, Employment in United States |DiverseJobs.Net*, n.d.). The most recognizable title in the diversity arena is Chief Diversity Officer (CDO).

The National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (NADOHE) currently utilizes the term CDO in its standards of professional practice. They acknowledge that the association is assessing the use of the word *chief* in the future (*Standards of Professional Practice for Chief Diversity Officers in Higher Education 2.0*, 2020). Additionally, diversity professionals have raised concerns about the connotations of policing through the use of the word *officer* (Bohanon, 2022).

Words matter. Due to the potential harm to Indigenous peoples and underrepresented groups in American society, I will not use the commonly utilized term of Chief Diversity Officer (CDO). Instead, I will use Vice President for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (VPEDI) when referring to the head Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) professional. This terminology is especially salient when considering the importance of inclusive and respectful definitions of people's identities. Moreover, using the term EDI is in keeping with the terminology utilized in the NADOHE standards of professional practice.

According to Williams and Wade-Golden (2013), the VPEDI is "a boundary-spanning senior administrative role that prioritizes diversity-themed organizational change as a shared priority at the highest levels of leadership and governance" (p. 13). The VPEDI position should be at the "executive level" of the organizational hierarchy, reporting directly to the president (Wilson, 2013, p. 436). The VPEDI may also be a direct report to the provost or serve in a dual capacity (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). The rank of Vice President implies a high-ranking level of leadership, formal authority within an organization, and a seat on the organization's

executive leadership team (Arnold & Kowalski-Braun, 2012; Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). The Vice President's rank should be more than just of symbolic importance. Indeed, it should establish the EDI professional's position in the institutional hierarchy and include "positional capital" (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2007, p. 17).

VPEDI Professional as Change Agent

EDI reflects the shifting focus from initiatives solely directed at identity-related access (increasing the number of people in terms of race and gender) toward addressing issues such as "inclusion, campus climate, systemic inequities, and other critical issues" (Worthington et al., 2020, p. 4). The expectation is that individuals in the VPEDI role lead and coordinate university-wide efforts to create an inclusive environment (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). The VPEDI, through a framework of EDI campus initiatives, often functions as a change agent tasked with carrying out the institution's espoused EDI values and is generally responsible for enacting change across multiple domains, often with limited resources and support (Arnold & Kowalski-Braun, 2012; Swartout et al., 2023; Wilson, 2013; Worthington et al., 2020). The assumption that the VPEDI is the only administrator responsible for creating a culture of inclusion can strain the resources at the VPEDI's disposal and their resilience in doing this work (Harvey, 2014; Wilson, 2013).

Worthington et al. (2020) define a change agent as "an individual who plays a role in creating, establishing, developing, reorganizing, redesigning, operating, reconfiguring, or transforming a system, organization, or institution" (Worthington et al., 2020, p. 4). Arnold and Kowalski-Braun (2012) contend that for a VPEDI to lead institutional change successfully, there must be a university-wide willingness to accept and support the change process. Worthington et al. (2020) suggest that "students, staff, and faculty can take ownership to organize grassroots

change efforts from the bottom-up" (p.5). Additionally, visible support from senior campus leadership and faculty governance signals a commitment to advancing EDI initiatives as part of the campus mission (Worthington et al., 2020). However, the potential for campus community members to resist new policies and change initiatives can hinder the VPEDI as they navigate the campus's organizational and cultural barriers (Wilson, 2013).

Resistance to change can create a "backlash" effect (Wilson, 2013, p. 436). Campus community members perceiving no EDI-related issues may harbor animosity toward the VPEDI, making it difficult to gain support for and compliance with campus change initiatives (Wilson, 2013). To et al. (2023) found that managers with more structural power had fewer perceptions of gender and racial workplace inequity. Managers who would otherwise support diversity initiatives failed to comprehend problems with institutional practices and were less supportive due to a greater identification with the organization (To et al., 2023). When considering the likelihood of institutional change resistance, one defining question is, "How do VPEDIs leverage support for EDI campus initiatives?"

Statement of the Problem

In this research, I propose investigating whether VPEDIs and campus community members working in EDI roles believe they must engage in constructive deviant behaviors to support EDI initiatives. There has been no examination of constructive deviance within the context of EDI work or the utilization of constructive deviance in higher education organizations. In this literature review, I review the constructs of constructive deviance and positive deviance research and theorizing and explore their related theoretical backgrounds. These terms in the literature are almost interchangeable, and their meanings often overlap. The study of deviance arises from sociological studies of deviant behavior, mainly focusing on negative aspects such as

employee theft. Researchers have also grappled with trying to make sense of the different approaches to the study of deviance and find a "common language" with which to communicate "explicit" parameters (Warren, 2003, p. 631). Although there is little acknowledgment of the often interchangeable concepts of positive and constructive deviance, I identify and define these constructs within the schools of thought in the literature on deviance and positive organizational studies (Galperin, 2012; Mertens et al., 2016). Additionally, I will review the constructs of affective commitment and job security satisfaction that may impact the EDI professional's decision to engage in constructive deviant behaviors. Finally, I propose that these constructs will be useful in understanding how VPEDIs and practitioners of EDI within higher education organizations face challenges and find successes in managing campus EDI initiatives.

Research Question

Do VPEDI's and their colleagues responsible for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives at higher education institutions believe they must engage in constructive deviant behavior to advance campus EDI strategic initiatives? Does one's affective commitment to the organization influence the decision to engage in constructive deviant behaviors? Does one's level of job security satisfaction moderate these behaviors?

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review will address the concept of constructive deviance emerging from the sociological literature on destructive deviance. The chapter begins with a review of positive deviance emerging from the public health sector. The intertwining concepts of positive deviance and constructive deviance are not entirely distinct in the literature and are often interchangeably applied within the literature of positive organizational studies. Because constructive deviance forms the foundation of my research question about the behavioral beliefs of campus EDI professionals, I will include critiques of the construct and applications of this research in the EDI domain. Lastly, I will review the literature on affective commitment and job security satisfaction. These constructs are helpful because they can influence the EDI professional's beliefs and decision to act in a constructive deviant manner. The next section of this paper applies these ideas to formulate this study's research design and methodology.

Positive Deviance in Public Health Studies

The concept of positive deviance originated in the field of clinical and public health (Benjamin, 2017; Zeitlin, 1991). Zeitlin (1991) studied childhood nutrition to understand why some children exhibited better health outcomes within disadvantaged groups. These children proved to be nutritionally resilient despite seemingly restrictive diets. Rather than focusing strictly on the factors leading to malnourishment, positive deviance researchers examined the dietary adaptations that led to survival in these developing regions (Zeitlin, 1991).

Monique and Jerry Sternin took this a step further, developing a positive deviant approach to nutrition by designing community-based nutritional programs as part of their work with Save the Children from 1987-92 (Sternin et al., 1998). The basis of positive deviance is: "(1) solutions to seemingly intractable problems already exist, (2) members of the community

itself have discovered them, and (3) these innovators (individual positive deviants) have succeeded even though they share the same constraints and barriers as others" (Pascale et al., 2010, p. 4). The positive deviant approach is also a research framework used to understand behaviors of positive deviants, that is people "whose outcomes positively deviate from the (likely negative) norms" (Ruggeri & Folke, 2022, p. 712). The positive deviance approach has been extended to healthcare organizations in an effort to improve healthcare delivery by identifying top-performance practices and circulating these practices to improve hospital care (Bradley et al., 2009).

Bradley et al. (2009) proposed a four-step process consisting of (1) identifying positive deviant organizations, (2) a qualitative study of the organization to develop hypotheses, (3) testing the hypotheses, and (4) working with key stakeholders to disperse best practices. Although this approach seems markedly similar to an action research approach because both approaches acknowledge the contextual nature of the organization, there are two key differences. First, unlike the creation of best practices built through an "iterative cycle of problem identification, planning, intervention, and evaluation" as utilized in action research, the positive deviant approach assumes that someone has figured out a better answer to a problem (Bradley et al., 2009, p.4). The answer, once identified, is then promoted for adoption and innovation as a best practice (Bradley et al., 2009).

Ruggeri and Folke (2022) suggest that the positive deviance approach should be utilized in behavioral sciences and psychology research to better understand the relationships between behaviors and contexts that encourage or discourage deviance. For example, they propose using the positive deviance approach to study economic inequality to inform public policy. Generally, studies pay more attention to the more significant outcome, such as the 90% of the group not

achieving a positive economic result. This deficit approach studies the group's deficiencies and constructs possible solutions to address the shortcomings. The positive deviance approach would examine the outliers, the 10% of the group achieving the outcome, to develop a hypothesis about the methods utilized to navigate their economic circumstances. They would then design interventions to encourage others to adopt similar strategies. However, as outliers, positive deviant populations are often vulnerable. Therefore, designers must take care when creating interventions to ensure no harm is perpetuated (Ruggeri & Folke, 2022).

From a positive deviant approach, researchers could study higher education institutions showing marked advancement in creating sustainable campus change for inclusive excellence. Dávalos (2014) took a case study approach to learn about the VPEDIs' role in leading transformational change by examining three campuses that displayed measurable gains in campus-wide inclusion and institutional diversity. Dávalos, through a series of interviews with campus VPEDIs, learned that these administrators engaged in centralizing resources and building relationships with colleagues. Additionally, VPEDIs shifted the campus from thinking of diversity in terms of historical practices (increasing diversity numbers) by broadening definitions to include other diverse backgrounds and working toward creating a welcoming campus climate. Lastly, “five key strategies emerged from the data at all three case study sites: using a campus diversity plan, analyzing the data, educating stakeholders using the data, providing incentives, and assessing the external environment” (Dávalos, 2014, p. 140). Studying these exemplary institutions and their VPEDIs provides insight into best practices. When shared with other EDI professionals and incorporated into intervention practices, the lessons learned from a positive deviance approach can be conducive to the institution's strategic EDI initiatives.

Positive Organizational Behavior Scholarship

Another stream of research on positive deviance emerged from positive organizational studies (POS). Following the lead of positive psychology, POS examines organizational behavior from a positive orientation rather than a negative one to gain insight and a more comprehensive understanding of the context within which behavior manifests in the workplace (Luthans & Youssef, 2007). Luthans and Yousef (2007) applied four criteria strongly related to employee performance (traits, state-like capacities, organizations, and behavior) to determine how research was aggregated in Positive Organizational Behavior (POB) scholarship.

Traits include the big five personality traits: conscientiousness, emotional stability, extroversion, agreeableness, and openness to experience (Luthans & Youssef, 2007; McCrae & Costa, 1987). Also counted with traits are the four core self-evaluations: self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, locus of control, and emotional stability (Judge et al., 1997; Luthans & Youssef, 2007). Additionally, other positive psychological traits, such as the Values in Action Inventory of Strengths that measures six universal virtue categories: transcendence, wisdom, humanity, courage, temperance, and justice through 24 signature character strengths are part of POB scholarship (Luthans & Youssef, 2007; Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Positive traits serve as a "classification system" to characterize personality traits that remain relatively consistent over time and through various circumstances (Luthans & Youssef, 2007, p. 325).

In addition to positive traits, Luthans and Youssef (2007) include "positive state-like capacities" (p. 326). State-like capacities embody a more flexible characteristic of being "less fixed" than traits and have the added potential for development (Luthans & Youssef, 2007, p. 326). To be included, state-like capacities are positive in orientation and have a solid foundation in research. Luthans and Youssef (2007) specified four state-like capacities: self-efficacy, hope,

optimism, and resiliency. Together, these resource capacities interact to create the higher-order construct of psychological capital (Luthans & Youssef, 2007).

Positive organizations embody positive practices vital to a thriving organization through the "selection, development, and management of human resources" (Luthans & Youssef, 2007, p. 336). Although the traits and states of employees contribute to the attributes of a positive organization, these organizations go further than the collective contributions of their members (Luthans & Youssef, 2007). Positive organizations provide the conditions for positive traits, states, and behaviors to flourish for performance in the workplace (Luthans & Youssef, 2007).

Luthans and Youssef (2007) conclude their review with positive workplace behaviors. Positive behaviors are a product of the convergence of positive traits, states, and organizations. Luthans and Youssef (2007) labeled positive behaviors as positive deviance (behavior that departs from group norms), organizational citizenship behavior (discretionary behavior promoting organizational effectiveness), and courageous principled action (actions in line with organizational ideals outside of the usual routine) (Luthans & Youssef, 2007).

Positive Deviance Construct Development

To appropriately position the construct of constructive deviance, it is essential to examine the evolution of the positive deviance construct. Spreitzer and Sonenshein (2004) contend that developing the construct of positive deviance was crucial to the POS movement because it provided a conceptual framework for understanding positive behaviors that depart from organizational norms. Spreitzer and Sonenshein (2004) developed their definition of positive deviance by utilizing sociological research on deviant behavior. The sociological approach to deviance primarily focused on harmful and undesirable behaviors or marginalized populations. Sociologists studied different kinds of deviant acts in order to learn what makes a behavior

deviant. In other words, “who determines whether some behavior is deviant, the actor or the audience of the act?” (Clinard & Meier, 2015, p. 5). Spreitzer and Sonenshein (2004) discovered four primary approaches to deviance within sociology literature: statistical, supraconformity, reactive, and normative. The application of these four approaches to defining positive deviance behavior is discussed in the following section.

The statistical approach employs a bell curve approach to deviance, with deviant behavior (negative or positive) being anything that falls outside the normal distribution of behaviors (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004). In the statistical approach, for any given behavior, an individual's behavior that falls “to the far right in a normally distributed curve” is considered positive deviance (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004, p.830). The statistical approach centers on the majority's behaviors when determining an action's legitimacy. Clinard and Meier (2015) note that a statistical definition of deviance does not imply what the deviant behavior means or if it departs from a behavioral standard. Instead, statistical deviance merely indicates “what is” (Clinard & Meier, 2015, p. 8). Regarding EDI Initiatives, Worthington et al. (2020) warn that, similar to the statistical approach, EDI should not be just about increasing the number of people in an organization by race and gender.

The supraconformity approach contends that behavior exceeding cultural norms is positive deviant behavior (Heckert, 1998). Supraconformity pushes the bounds of normal behavior by exhibiting extreme conformity (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004). Supraconformists go to great lengths to obtain an “idealized level” of perfection, such as elite athletes' diet and exercise regimens or students with perfect grade point averages in school (Heckert, 1998, p. 26). However, this idealized level can become harmful and unrealistic to obtain. One example would be the behaviors exhibited by young women trying to obtain an ideal body image through

restrictive dieting and obsessive exercising. Entirely consumed by the strive for perfectionism, supraconformity can parallel the dysfunction of obsessive behavior (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004).

The reactive approach relies on the observer to determine if a behavior is deviant (Clinard & Meier, 2015; Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004; Warren, 2003). If the behavior is not observed, then no judgment can be made as to the quality of the act. Once observed, the audience assigns a label to the behavior. When behavior is determined to be deviant, the label assigned is almost always negative (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004). Scholars call this pairing of the observed act and audience reaction the reactive approach.

The reactive approach helps conceptualize the impact of the social agents' judgments on establishing the level of deviance from social norms (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004). “The reaction of others is significant since certain acts will require a major difference from the norm to be judged deviant while with other acts, only a small variation from the norm will result in a designation of deviance” (Heckert, 1998, p. 24). These reactions help to establish the boundaries for which one measures one's behavior against reference group norms, leading to internalized behavioral standards by which one pre-judges one's acts. This is central to the normative approach, which focuses on the actor's intention and not the outcome of the act (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004).

The normative approach characterizes deviance by what “should or should not” occur (Clinard & Meier, 2015, p. 9). These norms are not about what is considered average behavior for the group but rather a standard about what one should do, say, or think in a given situation (Clinard & Meier, 2015). Violating these behavioral standards can invoke group “sanctions from their social audiences” (Clinard & Meier, 2015, p. 7). Normative definitions provide a reference

group for comparison with some norms categorized as formal norms, such as expected rule-following behaviors, and others as informal norms, such as behaviors germane to a social group (Mertens et al., 2016; Warren, 2003). Additionally, norms may not be evident until feedback is received to the contrary (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004).

Utilizing the normative approach with a reactive approach twist, Spreitzer and Sonenshein (2004) define positive deviance as "intentional behaviors that depart from the norms of a referent group in honorable ways" (p. 832). This definition focuses not on outcomes but on behaviors and their intentions, with honorable intentions considered positive. Behavior is evaluated based on expected group norms and the reference group's judgment of how significantly the behavior departs from those norms (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004). Positive deviance can occur at "an individual or organizational level" if the behavior meets the three criteria of intention, a departure from norms, and is honorable (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004, p.839).

Spritzer and Sonenshein's (2004) definition of positive deviance shares behaviors found in the constructs of "organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), whistle-blowing, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and creativity/innovation" behaviors (p. 836). However, these constructs are distinguishable from positive deviance because they often include compliance behavioral expectations that would not be considered a substantial departure from reference group norms (Galperin, 2012; Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004). For example, while OCBs are nonmandated behaviors that go beyond the formal job description, such as helping a coworker with a difficult task or staying late, they might not deviate significantly from the expectations of the reference group (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004). Some cases of whistle-blowing are

considered positive deviance depending on whether the behavior's reasons align with honorable intentions (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004).

These fine distinctions become crucial for determining one's perception of positive deviance. For example, the espoused norms of an institution may not align closely with the organizational culture, which can sideline VPEDIs as they encounter behaviors such as microaggressions and stereotyping. For the VPEDI, reference group norms may be mainly unwritten or invisible, making it challenging to navigate one's intersecting group identities and those of other groups. VPEDIs predominately identify as people of color holding underrepresented or intersectional identities in stark contrast to senior campus leadership (Nixon, 2017). Demographic variables from a national benchmarking study of 108 VPEDI positions found that 74% of VPEDIs identified racially as African American/Black and 58% of the respondents identified their gender as female (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2007).

Similarly, demographics from the 2023 NADOHE survey reported that 52% of the respondents were Black/African American, and 63% identified as women (Swartout et al., 2023). In a study of the experiences of five women of color serving in the role of a VPEDI, Nixon (2017) found that the women "experienced trauma in the form of microaggressions, isolation, and marginalization" (p. 315). For these women, their role as VPEDI was tantamount to a perpetual act of positive deviance as they enacted behavioral strategies to "navigate, resist, and shift structures that oppress and marginalize" (Nixon, 2017, p. 308).

In short, positive deviance emerged as a "theoretical concept and a practical strategy" for finding solutions to difficult problems (Herington & Van de Fliert, 2018, p. 664). The research that emerged from positive organizational studies provided a conceptual schema for assessing employee performance-related behaviors. The construct of positive deviance served as a way of

understanding behaviors that deviated from group norms within organizations (Mertens et al., 2016). Heckert (1998) contends that positive deviance supplies "opportunities to benefit the social order" (1998, p. 29). Organizational leaders who practice awareness of their employee's use of positive deviance may benefit from the knowledge that their organization needs to change. Thus, an increase in positive deviant behaviors can alert leaders to opportunities and innovation favorable for creating a thriving organization (Herington & Van de Fliert, 2018).

Constructive Deviance

A separate stream of scholarship in the management literature developed the construct of constructive deviance. Specifically, scholars of workplace deviance, which traditionally focused on negative or destructive behaviors, noted that occasionally, deviant behavior, such as employee rule-breaking or whistle-blowing, leads to desirable organizational outcomes (Galperin, 2003, 2012; Vadera et al., 2013; Warren, 2003). Hence, constructive deviance was developed, sharing certain behavioral fundamentals with destructive deviance, such as the role of autonomy and "a departure from norms whereby employees must resist social pressure to confirm" (Warren, 2003, p. 622). While constructive deviance is generally considered to fall under the umbrella of positive deviance, this terminology places additional focus on the well-being of the organization and the "unauthorized employee behaviors" that help the organization accomplish its "economic and financial goals" (Sharma & Chillakuri, 2022, p.3). According to Galperin (2012), innovators who "strongly identify with the organizational goals but may not agree with sanctioned means and hence use deviant or unorthodox means to attain the goals" are constructive deviants (p.2993).

Warren (2003) contends that group or organizational norms alone may not be an appropriate reference group for determining whether a behavior is destructive or constructive

deviance. For competing group norms, the reference group determines if the behavior is conforming or deviant (Warren, 2003). However, some organizational values are never explicitly stated and can fluctuate, making it difficult to measure standards for behavior. Galperin (2012) alludes to this conundrum by acknowledging that the dominant group often creates and shares organizational norms, with subculture norms carrying less weight. Galperin (2012) further poses the difficulty of assessing constructive deviance within organizations that follow more traditional managerial processes versus organizations that encourage pushing the boundaries. What might be considered deviant behavior in one organization would be considered normal behavior in the other.

To address these challenges, Galperin (2012) conducted a series of studies that added to the positive organizational scholarship by developing a measure of constructive deviance, the Constructive Deviance Behavior Scale (CBDS). This scale sought to measure workplace constructive deviance and provide insight as to how constructive deviance might support innovation and champion organizational change. These studies aimed to identify the nomological net of deviance by exploring the relationship between the positive and negative sides of deviant organizational behavior utilizing the terminology of constructive and destructive deviance. Based on the analysis of the items in the scale, deviant behaviors had two factors: either action toward the organization (organizational) or individuals (interpersonal). Galperin (2012) broadened the scope of behaviors to include an interest in the attainment of organizational or interpersonal goals, defining constructive deviance "as voluntary behaviors that violate significant norms with the intent of improving the well-being of an organization, its members, or both" (p. 2990).

Galperin (2012) found a positive relationship between constructive deviance and innovative behavior, advocacy, civic virtue, and voice. These behaviors are similar to

constructive deviance because they challenge organizational norms. However, there are distinct differences. For example, employees who engage in innovative role behaviors or voice may challenge without necessarily defying organizational norms. Galperin (2012) also supported whistle-blowing behavior as constructively deviant if the behavior was internally focused.

American higher education institutions have inherited a historical culture of exclusion for underrepresented groups (Harvey, 2014). In the context of academic leadership and EDI work, an example of normative behavior might be the defensiveness of privileged campus identities at predominantly white institutions (PWI). VPEDIs encounter this "normative defensiveness" when dominant group members are asked to confront the institutional practices and structures supporting privileged advantages (Sawyer & Waite, 2021, p. 11). The often invisibility of whiteness contributes to normalizing institutional status within racial hierarchies (DiAngelo & Beacon Press, 2020; Sawyer & Waite, 2021). DiAngelo (2020) contends that "Whiteness rests upon a foundational premise: the definition of whites as the norm or standard for humans, and people of color as a deviation from the norm" (p.25). Whiteness is not acknowledged by white people, and the white reference point is assumed to be universal and imposed on everyone" (DiAngelo, 2020, p. 25).

Warren (2003) stipulated that the reference group norms must be morally and ethically sound. To that end, Warren (2003) suggested the incorporation of hypernorms, in addition to reference group norms, to combat the issues raised by solely judging deviance based on organizational or individual standards alone. Hypernorms resist the organizational benefit of reference group norms, wherein the deviant act may be detrimental to society (Warren, 2003). Hypernorms are different from reference group norms because they take a broader view utilizing a standard based upon beliefs and values shared on a global scale and consistent with principles

based upon a social contract (Warren, 2003). This typology of employee deviance emphasizes the outcome while framing the behavior through a lens of ethical judgment. Considering that some conditions related to constructive deviance behavior are ethically bound, the definition of constructive deviance used in this study will include a component of benevolence.

Criticism of Positive Organizational Behavior Scholarship

The study of positive and constructive deviance has been an important topic of interest over the last twenty years. Researchers have identified constructive deviance as a construct of interest in innovative workplace behavior (Déprez et al., 2021; Galperin, 2012; Li & Wang, 2021; Yıldız et al., 2015). Constructive deviance has spawned research to test the antecedent relationships espoused in theoretical models (Hussain & Rehman, 2020) and the concepts of organizational trust (Kura et al., 2016), organizational climate and culture (Narayanan & Murphy, 2017), and in developing a measure of normative conflict (Dahling & Gutworth, 2017). More recent research takes an outcomes approach focusing on issues such as how to empower constructive deviance (Cui et al., 2022; Mertens & Recker, 2020b, 2020a; Pascale et al., 2010; Wang, 2022; Zhang et al., 2021). Additional research seeks to learn more about how to improve customer orientation (Gong et al., 2020), facilitate employee engagement (Sharma, 2021), prompt agents of change (Pascale & Sternin, 2005), and influence public policy (Ruggeri & Folke, 2022).

However, Hackman (2009) argues that the move to Positive Organizational Behavior (POB) scholarship has generated an inordinate number of constructs. Hackman (2009) raises the concern that there has not been adequate testing of construct validity and discriminant validity when establishing the relationships among these constructs within the nomological net. Hackman (2009) also raises the assumption that positivity and negativity reside in the same dimension.

Warren (2003) addresses assumptions regarding positive and negative behaviors within management literature, which contends that the behavior to overcome social norms is different when doing something positive than when doing something negative. Warren (2003) argues that positive and negative behavior share similar constructs because both behaviors depart from norms and rely on an individual's autonomy. Galperin (2012) supports this contention by proposing that workplace deviance should be studied utilizing one common theoretical framework. Additionally, Hackman warns of the possible overreliance on an accepted method or standard paradigm in future research in the field (Hackman, 2009).

A competing view from Vadera et al. (2013) integrates the different streams of research around constructive deviance behaviors to conceptualize a model of antecedents that lead to these behaviors. Building on Warren's definition, Vadera et al. (2013) define constructive deviance as "behaviors that deviate from the norms of the reference group such that they benefit the reference group and conform to hypernorms" (Vadera et al., 2013, p. 1223). Based upon this definition, Vadera et al. propose pulling several behaviors under the heading of constructive deviance, which, they argue, fulfills the three criteria of the definition: (1) deviates from reference group norms, (2) benefits reference group, and (3) conforms to hypernorms. Under this mantle, Vadera et al. list the behavioral constructs of issue selling, prosocial rule-breaking, and counter-role behaviors while additionally including constructs that may depart from reference group norms, such as taking charge, extra-role behaviors, creative performance, expressing voice, whistle-blowing, and prosocial behaviors. From their analysis of the constructive deviance literature, Vadera et al. concluded that three organizing mechanisms (intrinsic motivation, felt obligation, and psychological empowerment) influence constructive deviant behavior. From their

review, Vadera et al. concluded that there had been sufficient studies on the antecedents of constructive deviance but a lack of examination of obstacles and consequences.

In an effort to create a framework for the study of positive deviance, Mertens et al. (2016) tackled the question of the multiple definitions and research designs utilized for recognizing and studying the role of positive defiance in the workplace. They noted that the definitions for these approaches differentiated in three ways: (1) behavior versus outcome, (2) why behavior/outcome is positive, and (3) why behavior/outcome is deviant (Mertens et al., 2016). Mertens et al. (2016) proposed a framework for the study of positive deviance, suggesting that research designs should fit the approach or definition of positive deviance being utilized, capture both the behavior (determinants) and outcomes (consequences), and determine whether deviance is present in either. Creating a measurement for positive deviance is arduous because it is context-specific to the reference group norms. Merten recommends a mixed method approach whereby case study interviews help to identify "deviant behaviors (with positive intent)" triangulated with documents containing context-specific rules or regulations. Next, researchers hold discussions with domain experts followed by survey questions from established scales to capture behavioral frequency (Mertens et al., 2016, p. 1301).

Incorporating Positive and Constructive Deviance into the EDI Domain

Positive and constructive deviance has spawned extensive theorizing. Nevertheless, there is no empirical research examining constructs related to equity, diversity, and inclusion. Many studies on positive or constructive deviance utilize the common control variables of: "gender, age, education, tenure, and hierarchical positions," and yet there is no mention of race, gender identity, sexual orientation, or other intersecting identities in their results (Vadera et al., 2013, p. 1259). Dahling and Gutworth (2017) suggested that future research should include more diverse

samples as they noted the lack of underrepresented identities in the limitations of their study on constructive deviance. These identities are overlooked within positive and constructive deviance theory building, contributing to inequity in knowledge generation issues by normalizing certain identity groups. This gap in the literature needs to be addressed.

Leigh and Melwani (2019) posit that the minority members of an organization experience an ever-changing dynamic between their organizational and social identities. Large-scale diversity-related mega-threat occurrences, especially for Black Americans, affect "the relationship between their identities and subsequent behaviors" (Leigh & Melwani, 2019, p. 565). Further, those in the academy on the margins may feel further pressure to conform to perceived organizational and interpersonal norms due to feeling "more visible and on display" and "finding it harder to gain credibility" (Nixon, 2017, p. 303). Leigh and Melwani (2019) theorize that minority employees who engage in positive deviant behaviors such as pro-group voice and relational bridging are opposing organizational norms to "accept the status quo and stay silent at work" (p. 567). Studying these salient identities may reveal an aspect of diversity within the positive and constructive deviance research that organizational scholars have yet to grapple with. Further, the notion of constructive deviance among VPEDIs in higher education relies on the perception of being constructively deviant and the accompanying challenge in its measurement.

Context matters in the definition of deviance. For this study, I believe the proximity of the actor and the normative expectations will be the most influential on the VPEDIs' decision to act. For this reason, this study will use the term constructive deviance as the designated construct and adapt the definition posited by Galperin. The VPEDIs perceptions of reference group norms can influence how significant a risk the contemplated behavior is. Given that there is a greater

representation of professionals with marginalized group identities serving in the VPEDI and EDI roles, the risks associated with constructive deviance behavior may be even more notable. To reflect that element of risk and the significance of perceived organizational norms, this study defines constructive deviance as voluntary risk-taking behaviors that violate perceived organization or group norms with the intent of improving the well-being of the organization, its members, or both.

Based on the positive and constructive deviance research and the lack of research examining constructive deviance behavior within higher education, I am curious to learn if VPEDIs and their colleagues responsible for EDI work utilize constructive deviance in managing institutional EDI initiatives, especially in consideration of those professionals with marginalized group identities. As VPEDIs work toward achieving institutional change, they must coordinate closely with key stakeholders and institutional leaders at all levels of the institutional hierarchy (Worthington et al., 2020). I speculate that the VPEDI and campus colleagues working in EDI roles may believe engaging in constructive deviant behaviors is necessary to advance institutional EDI initiatives.

Hypothesis 1: Campus EDI professionals in marginalized groups are more likely to report engaging in constructive deviant behaviors than EDI professionals not from marginalized identities.

Affective Commitment

To help test this speculation, I am utilizing a core dimension of organizational commitment, namely affective commitment (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Organizational commitment is vital to leaders because it is critical to attracting and maintaining organizational talent (Mercurio, 2015, p. 390). There are three components to the construct of organizational

commitment: affective, continuance, and normative commitment (Dunham et al., 1994; Meyer & Allen, 1991). These three components share characteristics regarding how employees relate to the organization and influence employee decisions to remain with the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991, p. 67). Affective commitment differentiates itself from the other two commitment components as an "employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization" (Meyer & Allen, 1991, p. 67). People with higher levels of affective commitment often remain with an organization due to their belief in the mission of the organization (Dunham et al., 1994, p. 371). I am choosing to look at the affective component (rather than the continuance and normative) because it may help me understand the participants showing higher levels of constructive deviance, possibly due to their emotional attachment to a belief in and identification with the institution's EDI goals.

Affective Commitment and Deviance

Other scholars have used aspects of organizational commitment to understand deviant behavior better. Dahling and Gutworth (2017) validated a measure for normative conflict utilizing affective and normative commitment measures. The normative conflict model found that normative conflict and the experience of psychological discomfort moderate the relationship between employee organizational identification and constructive deviant behavior (Dahling & Gutworth, 2017). In a study examining affective commitment as a potential antecedent of destructive workplace behaviors, Gill et al. (2011) found a negative relationship between affective commitment and counterproductive workplace behaviors.

Studies utilizing affective commitment have been conducted on concepts related to constructive deviance. For example, Allen and Meyer (1990a) found a positive relationship between affective commitment and employee innovativeness, and other studies have posited that

affective commitment is an antecedent supporting innovative behavior (Déprez et al., 2021; Galperin, 2012; Li & Wang, 2021; Yıldız et al., 2015). Similarly, Galperin (2012) found a significant relationship between exercising voice behavior and interpersonal constructive deviance. Meyer and colleagues (Allen & Meyer, 1996; Meyer et al., 1993) found that employee voice behavior positively relates to affective commitment.

Affective commitment has been positively correlated repeatedly with organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and extra-role behaviors (N. J. Allen & Meyer, 1996; Becker & Kernan, 2003; Meyer et al., 2002). Becker and Kernan (2003) found the organizational focus to be influential in an employee's commitment to extra-role (OCB) performance, while supervisor-established norms more likely influenced in-role performance. Vadera et al. (2013) and Warren (2003) contend that OCB is sometimes a form of constructive deviance. However, Galperin et al. (2012) counter that OCB, while related to constructive deviant behavior, lacks the required risk-taking associated with deviant behavior (Galperin, 2012).

In sum, affective commitment is incorporated to tease out the emotional and moral basis from which constructively deviant behaviors are invoked by VPEDIs. Vadera et al. (2013) contend that the relationship between constructive deviance and organizational attachment remains unclear. However, solid theoretical reasons exist to believe that affective commitment will be positively related to constructive deviant behavior. It is expected that VPEDIs with a stronger emotional attachment to the organization and espoused EDI values will have a greater desire to engage in behaviors they believe to be constructively deviant to achieve EDI initiatives.

Hypothesis 2: Affective commitment will be positively related to interpersonal and organizational constructive deviance behavior.

Job Security

Given that engaging in constructive deviant behavior inherently embodies an amount of risk-taking that could adversely affect employment, the VPEDI's perception of job security may be an influential factor when considering the potential tradeoffs between the risks and benefits of engaging in a constructively deviant course of action. Job security is defined as "the perceived stability and continuance of one's job as one knows it" (Probst, 1998, 2003, p. 452). Probst's definition allows for the individual's perceptional evaluation of "stability and continuance" when appraising future prospects of employment (Probst, 1998, p. 10).

Job Insecurity

An employee's perception of job security is often contextualized at an individual level as "economic vulnerabilities" such as the revenue generated to fulfill one's basic human needs (Reisel et al., 2010; Shoss, 2017, p. 1914). However, job security also includes "psychological vulnerabilities," such as threats to an individual's professional identity stemming from one's current role and responsibilities (Shoss, 2017, p. 1914). Thus, negative views on one's stability and continuance of employment leading to the impression of impending job loss can be described as job insecurity (JI) (Probst, 2003; Reisel et al., 2010; Shoss, 2017). Job insecurity as a "future-oriented" perception and response to foreseeable loss is not contingent exclusively on the organization as the determinant of job loss (Shoss, 2017, p. 1917). Other factors outside of an organization can influence perception, such as one's demographics, experiences, and outlook on future job prospects (Shoss, 2017).

Reisel et al. (2010) found that job insecurity was negatively related to discretionary behaviors such as organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) while positively related to (negative) deviant behaviors and the negative emotional reactions of anxiety, anger, and burnout.

Additionally, this research confirmed the negative relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction (Jiang & Lavaysse, 2018; Reisel et al., 2010). However, they also found that job satisfaction may partially mediate the relationship of job insecurity to negative behaviors and reactions (Reisel et al., 2010).

Job insecurity can be further reduced to a cognitive and an affective component (Jiang & Lavaysse, 2018). Cognitive job insecurity (CJI) is defined as "the perceived threat to the continuity of one's employment and/or to features of the job," and affective job insecurity (AJI) is the "emotional reactions to the perceived threat to one's job" (Jiang & Lavaysse, 2018, p. 2308). Jiang and Lavaysse (2018), in their meta-analysis of JI outcomes and correlates, found that AJI is more closely related to the outcomes and correlates than CJI and serves as a mediator for CJI with its outcomes and correlates. Still, Jiang and Lavaysse (2018) posit that AJI and CJI are distinct enough to be considered two separate constructs. Additionally, JI was negatively related to all three forms of organizational commitment (Jiang & Lavaysse, 2018).

Job Security Satisfaction

Building from one's cognitive evaluation of job security, satisfaction with one's job security measures a person's "affective reactions regarding that level of job security (Bazzoli & Probst, 2023, p. 833). Job security satisfaction distinguishes itself conceptually from job security by capturing a person's attitude toward rather than perception of one's level of job security (Probst, 2003). An individual's personality traits and personal situation may have more of an impact on a person's affective reaction to job security satisfaction than the organization itself (Probst, 2003). For instance, Probst (2003) found no significant relationship between job security satisfaction and the amount of time employed at an organization or the number of times one

changed jobs. Also of note is that job security satisfaction has been found to be “significantly negatively related to physical and mental health conditions and job stress” (Probst, 2003, p. 457).

Given the current changing climate toward organizational EDI initiatives and potential perceptions of instability around positions that work in the EDI space, it may be helpful to consider the construct of job security satisfaction as it reflects the strain of job-related stressors. Job security satisfaction is a distinctive construct that evaluates one's “affective reactions to a perceived level of job security” (Probst, 2003, p. 465). I will include this affective measure of job security to test the relationship between affective commitment and constructive deviance.

Hypothesis 3: Job security satisfaction will be positively related to affective commitment and interpersonal and organizational constructive deviant behavior.

Control Variables

It is important to ensure a clear justification for the control variables selected for this study (Becker et al., 2016). This study will collect the *race or ethnicity* and *gender identity* of the study participants, noted in the constructive deviance literature as variables that have consistently lacked diversity. These two control variables are even more salient when considering there is a higher preponderance of women of color serving in the VPEDI role. The social construction of whiteness “normalizes privileges of those considered white through the dominant ways that societies and organizations are ordered” (Allen & Girei, 2023, p. 7). Because whiteness is a power dynamic that traditionally suppresses black and brown identities, it is appropriate to control for these variables and their potential impact on the variables of interest (Sawyer & Waite, 2021).

Throughout the constructive deviance literature, gender, age, job level (hierarchical position), and organizational tenure are consistently utilized control variables even though there

has been no consensus in the research to support a positive, negative, or no association with constructive deviant behaviors (Vadera et al., 2013). To et al. (2023) recognize that those higher in the organizational power structure are thought to view organizational inequities differently based on demographic attributes. However, when it comes to EDI initiatives, they contend that those with structural power, such as those in management, identify strongly with their organization and thus may not notice inequities (To et al., 2023).

For this study, an exploratory analysis will investigate the variables of race or ethnicity, gender, age, tenure, and job level. Since these variables can influence the perception of job security satisfaction, they may provide a moderating effect on the relationship between affective commitment and constructive deviance. Job security satisfaction will be re-examined through the lens of these various demographic values where moderation is found to exist.

Hypothesis 4: Job security satisfaction will moderate the relation between affective commitment and constructive deviance such that the association will be positive when JSS is high and negative when JSS is low.

Summary

The literature on workplace deviance has often held that constructive and destructive deviance are two sides of the same continuum of deviant organizational behavior (Galperin, 2012; Narayanan & Murphy, 2017). Additionally, the literature posits that deviance can take two different forms depending on where the deviance is directed, either at the organization (organizational deviance), the organizational members (interpersonal deviance), or both (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). This position has helped to inform the creation of scales to measure deviant workplace behavior on the organizational and interpersonal levels (Bennett & Robinson, 2000).

Similarly to the workplace deviance scales, the Constructive Deviance Behavioral Scale (CDBS) includes measures on the organizational and interpersonal levels (Galperin, 2012).

For this research, I focus on the constructive form of employee deviance and utilize the interpersonal and organizational dimensions of the CDBS as the measure of constructive deviance behavior. I primarily use the term constructive deviance unless referring to literature that specifically refers to deviance in the positive. For this study, I define constructive deviance as voluntary risk-taking behaviors that violate perceived organization or group norms with the intent of improving the well-being of the organization, its members, or both.

In a review of research examining EDI initiatives on higher education campuses, Patton et al. (2019) expressed concern "that the lack of research on specific initiatives is potentially supporting institutional resistance towards transformative change" (p. 189). My research focuses on campus EDI professionals to learn whether they believe they engage in constructive deviant behavior while supporting campus EDI initiatives. Often, designated EDI Professionals (VPEDIs) are situated at the vice president or director level. Pascale and Sternin (2005) challenged traditional top-down change efforts by suggesting a positive deviance approach to empowering agents of change. To better understand how other institutional community members interact to support EDI change, I also included faculty and staff who support EDI initiatives.

I hoped to learn if people doing campus EDI work are emotionally committed to the university and its mission, which may influence one's use of constructive deviant behavior. Additionally, I was curious to know if concerns about job security influence the use of constructive deviant behaviors and if specific demographic variables such as gender identity, race and ethnicity, and level in the organization relate to an engagement in constructive deviant behavior. For this research, I proposed the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Campus EDI professionals in marginalized groups are more likely to report engaging in constructive deviant behaviors than EDI professionals not from marginalized identities.

Hypothesis 2: Affective commitment will be positively related to interpersonal and organizational constructive deviance behavior.

Hypothesis 3: Job security satisfaction will be positively related to affective commitment and interpersonal and organizational constructive deviant behavior.

Hypothesis 4: Job security satisfaction will moderate the relation between affective commitment and constructive deviance such that the association will be positive when JSS is high and negative when JSS is low.

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

The research design for this study uses a quantitative approach, utilizing a questionnaire. Measures include the Constructive Deviance Behavioral Scale (CDBS) (Galperin, 2012), the Affective Commitment Scale (ACS) (Allen & Meyer, 1990), and the Job Security Satisfaction Scale (JSS) (Bazzoli & Probst, 2023). Demographic questions were included to provide greater insight into the diversity of the sample and characteristics that may impact the participants. To gain a richer understanding of how campus EDI professionals and EDI supporters engage in institutional EDI practices, two open-ended questions were included at the end of the questionnaire for participants to provide insight into the usage of constructive deviant behaviors in the performance of their role. For this study, constructive deviance is defined as voluntary risk-taking behaviors that violate perceived organization or group norms with the intent of improving the well-being of the organization, its members, or both.

Participants and Recruitment

The population of interest for this study was the designated Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) professionals and their colleagues responsible for EDI work at higher education institutions in the United States. Participants were recruited by purposive snowball sampling utilizing a list of known Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) professionals in higher education compiled from U.S. News and World Report regional and nationally ranked universities (Scharrer, 2021). This nonprobability method was selected because purposefully identifying EDI professionals and their colleagues from the University websites would provide access to the population of interest for this research. The recruitment email, sent from my Bowling Green University account, contained a link to an anonymous Qualtrics survey and a request to send the link to people in their EDI networks.

One hundred forty-nine respondents clicked on the survey link, 32 chose not to respond, and one partially completed the survey, yielding 116 respondents. Eighty-seven of these respondents answered one or both qualitative questions at the end of the survey. Those identifying as women represented 67% of the sample, and 41% of respondents identified as Black or African American, with the participant's mean age of 45 years (SD=12.08). Participants (99%) worked at four-year institutions, mostly private (65%) and not-for-profit (89%), representing 29 states, with 39% of the institutions located in the Midwest. Participants reported their job as situated at a mid-level (M =3.37, SD=.93) and worked an average of 8 years (SD=6.92) at their current institution with an average of 10 years (SD = 7.84) working in the field of EDI. Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the participants.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Demographic Category	*n*	%
Gender Identity		
Man	31	27%
Non-binary	3	3%
Transgender	2	2%
Woman	78	67%
Prefer not to say	1	.5%
Prefer to self-identify	1	.5%
Race/Ethnicity		
Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Origin	14	12%
Asian	5	4%
American Indian or Alaska Native	2	2%
Black or African American	48	41%
White	30	26%
More than one race/ethnicity	12	10%
Prefer not to say	1	1%
Prefer to self-identify	4	3%
Institution		
Private	75	65%
Public	41	35%
Private Institution Status		
For-profit	8	11%
Not for-profit	67	89%
Institution Type		
Two-year	1	1%
Four-year	115	99%
Institution Geographic Region		
North	15	14%
South	36	32%
Midwest	43	39%
West	17	15%
Current Role with EDI work in current institution		
Serve as the designated professional that oversees EDI	60	52%
Work with the professional who oversees EDI	40	35%
Serve on an EDI-related committee	14	12%
None of these roles	2	2%

Note. N=116

Data Collection

The survey met all ethical requirements of Bowling Green State University for participant consent and was approved by the Institutional Review Board. The invitation email for the Qualtrics Survey provided an anonymous link that was not linked to any personal identifiers. The survey instrument contained an explanation of the study and consent to participate. The informed consent letter can be found in Appendix A.

Survey data was collected over two-and-a-half months, with the survey opening on February 25, 2024, and closing on May 15, 2024. Initially, twenty email invitations (five in each region) were sent to designated EDI professionals from universities selected from each of the four regions of the U.S. News & World Report Regional list. After a lack of response, additional university EDI professionals and their colleagues were identified and invited to participate. Due to inadequate response rates, more institutions were identified from the U.S. News lists and follow-up email reminders were sent. During the survey's open period, 275 university EDI offices were identified, and 881 initial email invitations were sent out to EDI professionals and their colleagues. Additionally, a recruitment post was created to advertise the survey on LinkedIn and posted to higher-ed Facebook groups, of which I am a member. The survey closed with 116 completed surveys, which, although it exceeded the target sample size of 100 for this study, is a 13% response rate and will be discussed as a potential limitation. Survey data was downloaded for analysis in SPSS statistical software.

Measures

All measures were self-reported. Utilizing self-reported measures was appropriate to capture the participants' beliefs about their behavior in relation to their work environment's perceived normative expectations. These are "perceptual measures that only the focal respondent

can indicate" (Dahling & Gutworth, 2017, p. 1173). These affective measures are generally accepted as a valid indication of a person's beliefs and as an initial step in examining "phenomena of interest" (Spector, 1994, p. 390).

Constructive Deviance Behavior

The Constructive Deviance Behavior Scale (CDBS) was used to determine the amount of constructive deviant behavior participants believe they engage in while performing their university roles. The CDBS is an empirically tested and validated scale to measure organizational and interpersonal constructive deviance (Galperin, 2012). This ten-item scale contains five items that measure organizational deviance and five items that measure interpersonal deviance (Galperin, 2012). Due to the scale being used in the context of higher education, the word "student's" was substituted for "customer's" in two of the questions. The entire scale can be found in Appendix B. A sample item includes statements such as "sought to bend or break the rules in order to perform your job" (organizational deviance) and "disagreed with others in your workgroup in order to improve the current work procedures" (interpersonal deviance) (Galperin, 2012, p. 2997). Participants were asked to self-report the extent to which they have engaged in these behaviors in the last year. Responses were made on a 7-point scale where 1 = "never" and 7 = "daily" (Galperin, 2012, p. 2997). Higher scores indicate greater engagement in constructive deviant behavior (Galperin, 2012). The data from this research demonstrated scale reliability (Cronbach's alpha =.853).

Affective Organizational Commitment

Affective Commitment is a key measure of "emotional attachment to the organization" and was measured utilizing the Affective Commitment Scale (ACS) (Allen & Meyer, 1990, p. 2). This construct was chosen for the study because constructive deviant behavior may be influenced

by the participant's attachment to the organizational mission. The ACS is an empirically tested and validated scale (Allen & Meyer, 1990). The scale can be found in Appendix C. Eight items measuring Affective Commitment (AC) were used from the Affective Commitment Scale (ACS) to determine if there is a relationship between Affective Organizational Commitment and Organizational Constructive deviance (Allen & Meyer, 1990). A sample item includes “I enjoy discussing my organization with people outside it” and “I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization” (reverse coded) (Allen & Meyer, 1990, p. 6). Responses were made on a 7-point scale where 1=strongly disagree to 7= “strongly agree” (Allen & Meyer, 1990, p. 5). Higher scores indicate a stronger emotional attachment to the organization. The data from this research demonstrated scale reliability (Cronbach’s alpha =.863).

Job Security Satisfaction

Job security satisfaction (JSS) is a measure of an employee's “affective reactions to a perceived level of job security” and was measured utilizing the JSS Scale (Probst, 2003, p. 465). The study utilized this construct because of the risk-taking properties inherent in constructive deviant behavior and the emotional component. The validated scale, which has been shown to have solid psychometric measures, consists of short descriptive phrases and adjectives designed to represent responses one might have when evaluating perceptions of job security (Bazzoli & Probst, 2023; Probst, 2003). The 20-item scale was shortened to nine items and rescaled with a Likert 7-point rating scale where 1 = “strongly disagree” and 7= “strongly agree” to make it less fatiguing to participants and more straightforward to administer (Bazzoli & Probst, 2023, p. 835). The revised scale was validated with known correlates such as the ACS (Bazzoli & Probst, 2023). The scale can be found in Appendix D. All nine items from the revised JSS scale were used. A sample includes “never been more secure” and “upsetting how little job security I have”

(reverse coded) (Bazzoli & Probst, 2023, p. 836). Higher scores reflect greater job security satisfaction (Bazzoli & Probst, 2023; Probst, 2003). The data from this research demonstrated scale reliability (Cronbach's alpha =.930).

Demographic Variables

Respondents' demographic characteristics were obtained for relevant variables. In addition to race or ethnicity, gender identity, and age, it was recognized in the literature that organizational tenure and job level can provide individuals with more positional power within the organization. These individuals may find it easier to move changes forward and experience less need to deviate from organizational norms. Therefore, time at the organization and job level were also collected as part of the demographic information. Additionally, institution type and geographic region were collected. These demographic characteristics were explored for correlation between the demographic variables and the study's scales. The complete list of demographic questions can be found in Appendix E.

Open-Ended Questions

Two open-ended questions were included after the demographic questions. A qualitative analysis was conducted to provide deeper insights into the participants' perceptions regarding the risks and benefits of engaging in constructive deviance while doing EDI work. To "prioritize and honor the participant's voice," first cycle coding was conducted using the In Vivo coding method (Miles et al., 2020, p. 65). Second-cycle coding looked for themes. The list of open-ended questions can be found in Appendix F.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The following section provides the results for each hypothesis. Additional analyses were conducted to investigate the data for relationships between constructive deviance and the demographic variables of age, time in position, and time in the field. This section concludes with a qualitative analysis of the two open-ended questions.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 lists the means, standard deviations, and correlations for the study variables. The scales all have Cronbach alphas greater than .70, indicating high internal consistency and reliability. Affective Commitment and Job Security Satisfaction display a moderate positive relationship $r(116) = .56$, $p < .01$. Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 3 discuss both the Organizational and Interpersonal dimensions of the Constructive Deviance Scale.

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and Pearson Correlations for Scale Measures

Variable	*N*	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5
1. Constructive Deviance Scale	117	2.7	1.0	(.85)				
2. Affirmative Commitment Scale	117	4.2	1.3	-.09	(.86)			
3. Job Security Satisfaction Scale	116	4.1	1.3	-.12	.56*	(.93)		
4. Organizational Constructive Deviance	117	2.6	1.2	.89*	-.09	-.08	(.85)	
5. Interpersonal Constructive Deviance	117	2.7	1.0	.84*	-.07	-.12	.49*	(.78)

* $p < .01$. Cronbach's alphas are shown in the diagonal.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1 contends that there will be a difference in the use of constructive deviance behavior by VPEDIs and their EDI colleagues based on identification with a marginalized group.

For purposes of this study, race and ethnicity were used to define marginalized groups, with all non-white groups being considered marginalized. To test this hypothesis, an independent samples t-test was performed to determine if there is a difference in means for constructive deviance use when comparing non-white to white respondents (Glen, n.d.). Hypotheses I was not supported with t(114) = -.34, p=.733 showing no significant difference in the reporting of constructive deviance behavior use between the two groups. This result does not support Hypothesis 1. Results for all three scales are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Race/Ethnicity T-test Results

Measure	Non-white Identifying		White Identifying		t	*df*	*p*
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*			
Constructive Deviance Scale	2.7	1.0	2.6	1.0	-.34	114	.733
Affective Commitment Scale	4.2	1.3	4.4	1.2	.91	114	.367
Job Security Satisfaction Scale	4.0	1.3	4.2	1.3	.96	113	.341

Note. Participants identifying as not white CDS and ACS n=86. JSS n=85.

Additionally, an independent samples t-test was performed to determine if there is a difference in means for constructive deviance when comparing gender identity (identifies as a man versus does not identify as a man). Hypothesis 1 was not supported with t(114) = -.13, p=.894, showing no significant difference in the reporting of constructive deviance behavior use between the two groups. This result does not support Hypothesis 1. Results for all three scales are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Gender Identity T-test Results

Measure	Does not identify as a man		Identify as a man		t	*df*	*p*
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*			
Constructive Deviance Scale	2.7	1.0	2.6	.9	-.13	114	.894
Affective Commitment Scale	4.2	1.3	4.3	1.2	.18	114	.859
Job Security Satisfaction Scale	4.0	1.4	4.1	1.2	.31	113	.756

Note. Participants not identifying as a man CDS and ACS n=85. JSS n=84.

Hypothesis 2 contends that there will be a positive relationship between affective commitment and interpersonal and organizational constructive deviance. As shown in Table 2, a correlation was computed to evaluate the strength of this relationship. Affective Commitment was found to have a nonsignificant negative relationship with interpersonal constructive deviance, r(115) = -.09, p =.346, and organizational constructive deviance, r(115) = -.07, p =.438. This result does not support Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 3 contends that there will be a positive relationship between job security satisfaction and affective commitment, as well as a positive relationship between interpersonal and organizational constructive deviance. As shown in Table 2, a correlation was computed to evaluate the strength of the relationship between the variables. There is a significant moderate positive relationship between affective commitment and job security satisfaction, r(114) = .56, p <.01 (2-tailed). However, the relationship between job security satisfaction and organizational constructive deviance is not significant, r(114) = -.08, p =.374, as well as the relationship between job security satisfaction and interpersonal constructive deviance, r(114) = -.12, p=.200. This result does not support Hypothesis 3.

Hypothesis 4 contends that job security satisfaction (JSS) will moderate the relationship between affective commitment and constructive deviance, such that the association will be positive when JSS is high and negative when JSS is low. The expectation was that the strength of the relationship between affective commitment and constructive deviance would be affected by JSS. A multiple regression analysis was used to test if affective commitment and job security satisfaction significantly predicted participants' ratings of constructive deviance behavior use. The regression results indicated that the two predictors did not significantly explain the variance for the sample (R^2 =.14, F(2,113) = .82, p =.442. Similarly, the multiple regression analysis results for moderation by JSS found that JSS did not significantly change the strength of the relationship between affective commitment and constructive deviance (R^2=.03). F(3, 112) = 1.28, p =.303. This result does not support Hypothesis 4. The regression results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Results of Regression Analysis for Moderation of Constructive Deviance

Variable	Model 1		Model 2	
	B	SE	*B*	SE
Constant	3.04	.34	1.88	.88
Affective Commitment	-.03	.09	.26	.22
Job Security Satisfaction	-.07	.08	.24	.23
Moderate Affective Commitment by Job Security Satisfaction			-.07	.06
R^2	.01		.03	
ΔR^2	-.00		.01	

Note. N=115

Exploratory Testing

Additional analyses were conducted to test for relationships between constructive deviance and its organizational and interpersonal dimensions with age and tenure in role. As expected, a significant positive relationship was found between age, years in the current role, and

years in the field. Age showed a significant weak negative correlation to organizational constructive deviance r(113) = -.22, p<.05, such that older workers were less likely to report constructive deviance. The correlation results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Exploratory Correlation Results

Variable	*N*	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Age	113	45.3	12.1						
2. Years in current role	114	8.0	6.9	.31**					
3. Years in the EDI Field	116	10.3	7.8	.49**	.28**				
4. Constructive Deviance Scale	117	2.7	1.0	-.18	-.05	.07	(.85)		
5. Organizational Constructive Deviance	117	2.6	1.2	-22*	-.06	.09	.89*	(.85)	
6. Interpersonal Constructive Deviance	117	2.7	1.0	-.09	-.02	.03	.84**	.49**	(.78)

*p<.05. **p<.01. Cronbach's alphas are shown in the diagonal.

Qualitative Analysis

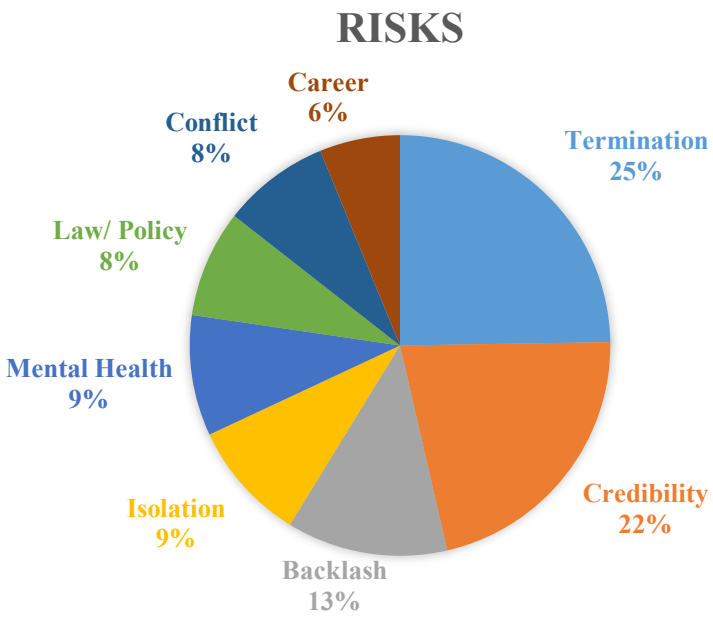
A qualitative analysis was completed on the two open-ended questions. First cycle In Vivo coding was conducted, selecting words and phrases as first-order data codes. Second-cycle coding was conducted, grouping the words and phrases into emergent themes and collapsing codes that shared similarities.

The first open-ended question asked, "What are the risks and benefits of engaging in constructive deviance in doing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion work?" Themes of risk that emerged from this question primarily centered on individual-level concerns about job loss, loss of credibility or reputation, and experiencing backlash in the form of a reprimand or disciplinary action. One participant shared, "Constructive deviance can lead to termination, especially if the university is targeted by lawsuits." Concerns about behavioral perceptions also surfaced as one participant shared, "I think the main risk is losing credibility for yourself, your office, and EDI

work," while another participant shared that "you can be perceived as a troublemaker." One participant summed up this misgiving: "Actions intended as constructive can be misunderstood as disruptive or antagonistic. This misunderstanding can damage relationships and hinder the individual's effectiveness within the organization." Themes for risk are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1

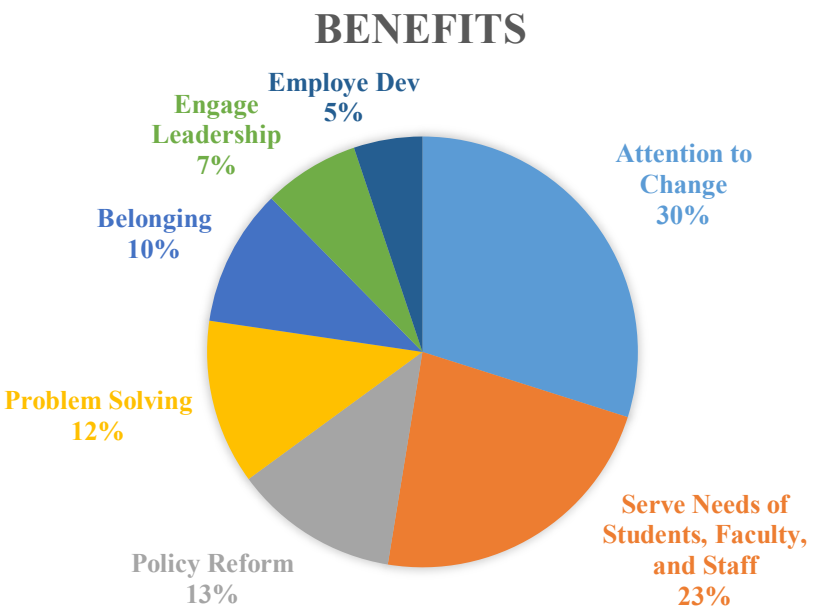
Risks Reported for Constructive Deviance Use



Themes for benefits that emerged from this question primarily centered on organizational-level structures, such as focusing attention on changes needed in systemic or organizational procedures and policies and serving the needs of students, faculty, and staff. One participant shared that a benefit of constructive deviance would be "addressing systems of harm even if outside of the predetermined ways of doing things." Another shared, "Benefits include being able to accomplish things that actually benefit the individuals we are here to serve (students)." Another benefit shared was that it "Shifts entrenched and institutionalized policies, procedures, and mindsets in a more equitable direction. Creates organizational and personal change." Themes for benefits are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Benefits Reported for Constructive Deviance Use



The second open-ended question asked, "Is Constructive Deviation necessary to make the changes you wish to make with your institution's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Practices?" Many respondents followed up with statements to support their answers. The major themes that emerged from these statements, ranked in order from most to least, were advocacy, policy, diplomacy, collaboration, and retention. Primary responses to the question and their frequency are shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Necessity of Constructive Deviance for EDI Work

	Yes	No	Somewhat/ limited	Not sure	Not for current role
Is Constructive Deviance necessary	40	12	21	3	7

Note. n=83

Themes associated with “yes” answers, or for a “limited use” of constructive deviance behavior, centered on challenging unjust norms, policies, or practices. One participant shared, “I do not think that rule-breaking is required; however, challenging inequitable, unjust norms is required.” One participant shared, “We do not have equitable policies in place yet,” and another supported constructive deviance behavior “to confront the limitations that old processes and policies stifle our ability to serve.” Several answers referenced service in the form of student success and retention for changing demographic populations. Additionally, reference was made to constraints such as financial support and rules being imposed by state legislation.

Themes associated with answers of “no” or “not for the current role” referenced having “support by senior leadership” and “diplomacy.” Participants shared that “there are other ways such as diplomacy” and “strategies like collaboration and advocacy.” Others shared that they “can talk openly to my boss” and that “leaders at my institution are quite receptive to my feedback.”

Some participants shared that it depended on the institution's approach to change. They stated, “Many acts of leadership and advocacy can be seen as constructively deviant if they challenge the status quo in meaningful ways. Therefore, a mix of both conventional and deviant strategies is often necessary to navigate complex institutional dynamics and achieve substantive improvements in EDI.”

One participant summed it up this way:

> The decision to engage in constructive deviance should be carefully considered, weighing the potential risks and benefits in the context of the specific EDI challenges facing the institution. Collaboration, dialogue, and advocacy should be prioritized whenever possible, but when these approaches prove insufficient, constructive deviance may be a

necessary strategy to drive meaningful change and advance equity, diversity, and inclusion.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

EDI professionals often find their skills as change agents tested when gathering support for campus EDI initiatives. Considered in the management literature to be a precursor to workplace innovation, constructive deviance behaviors intentionally challenge workplace norms for the benefit of those in the organization and the members they serve. The purpose of this study was to learn if VPEDIs and other campus members working in EDI roles believe they must engage in constructive deviant behavior in support of their professional roles in service of Campus EDI initiatives. Additionally, this study investigated "psychological mechanisms" as potential influencers on the decision to engage in constructive deviant behaviors by examining feelings of commitment to the organization and concerns surrounding job security (Galperin, 2012, p.3017). Demographic variables were also examined for their relationship to constructive deviant behavior. Overall, the findings in this study did not support relational expectations. The following discusses the implications of these results.

Interpretation of Results

Hypothesis 1 anticipated that marginalized groups would report a higher engagement in constructive deviance behaviors as they might be more likely to navigate campus normative expectations to advance EDI initiatives. The t-test results revealed no significant difference in constructive deviance reported by non-white identifying participants when compared to white-identifying participants. Similarly, there was no significant difference between those who identified as men and those who did not. What was particularly intriguing was that the means and standard deviations for both groups differed by only 0.1 for both the race/ethnicity results and the gender identity results. In this sample, there is no significant difference in constructive deviance by race or gender. In other words, all EDI professionals in this sample, regardless of

their race and gender, are reporting nearly identical rates of constructive deviance use in the performance of their roles in higher education. Moreover, there was no significant difference between the groups in reporting affective commitment and job security satisfaction.

Previous research on constructive deviance has reported mixed results regarding gender. Some prior research has reported a correlation between workplace deviance and demographic variables supporting the use of gender, age, job level, and organizational tenure as control variables Galperin (2012). Additionally, women have been reported to exhibit "less constructive deviance than men" (Dahling and Gutworth, 2017, p.1176, Mertens, 2020). However, Wang (2024) found no relationship between gender, age, or education with constructive deviance, as did Berry et al. (2007), who found "little to no relationship with most demographic variables" in their meta-analysis of common correlates in Interpersonal and Organizational Deviance (p.422).

Still, these findings are somewhat surprising considering the findings shared in the State of the CDO Survey Report describing differences by gender and racial and ethnic identities (Swartout et al., 2023). For instance, differences were reported in how CDOs viewed their jobs by gender identity, with women CDOs more likely to report that they considered their jobs "upsetting and overwhelming" (Swartout et al., 2023, p. 29). Additionally, white-identifying CDOs reported the job to be "less upsetting and overwhelming" than other racial and ethnic identities (Swartout et al., 2023, p. 26).

One possible explanation for the lack of difference in the findings could be the situational context. Although the demographics of this study sample are congruent with the gender and race/ethnicity demographics reported in the previously mentioned national benchmarking study and the CDO Survey Report, the context of the participants in their role as VPEDI might trigger the VPEDI's organizational identity while deemphasizing their social identities (Lee & Malwani,

2019). That is, in spring 2024 national news reported the reduction of various EDI programs in Higher Education (Bushard, 2024). Therefore, VPEDIs may have preferred to emphasize their role in Higher Ed rather than their gender or racial/ethnic identity. This process of "identity-switching" in order for the VPEDI to perform their role may mask otherwise salient identities that might otherwise engage very differently in these behaviors (Lee & Malwani, 2019, p.570). As visibility within these roles can often bring unwelcome consequences for the VPEDI, persons from marginalized groups may be hesitant to draw attention to themselves and hesitant to stand out from their peers.

Hypothesis 2 anticipated finding a positive relationship between affective commitment and interpersonal and organizational constructive deviance. No significant relationship was found. Given the supposition that destructive deviance and constructive deviance share many of the same antecedents, these results counter expectations established from the literature review where affective commitment was found to be an antecedent of destructive workplace behaviors (Gill, 2011). Additionally, these results are surprising due to the positive relationship found between employee voice behavior, often classified as constructive deviant behavior, and affective commitment (Alen & Meyer, 1996a). A possible reason for this finding might be that while VPEDIs may have an emotional commitment to the institution's EDI goals, they may hold greater concern about the optics around doing their job and refrain from constructive deviant behaviors, opting instead to work within the confines of the institution's structure.

Hypothesis 3 expected to find a positive relationship between job security satisfaction and affective commitment in addition to job security satisfaction and interpersonal and organizational constructive deviance. Probst (2003) found a slightly "negative relationship between job security satisfaction scale and negative affectivity," contributing to the assumption

that the inverse would be found in this study (p.457). The findings of a positive relationship between affective commitment and job security satisfaction were in line with expectations as JSS scale items evaluate "affective reactions to a perceived level of job security" (Probst, 2003, p.465). However, there was no support for a relationship between job security satisfaction and interpersonal and organizational constructive deviance. This was surprising given that in the open-ended questions, concerns about job termination were identified as the greatest risk associated with constructive deviant behaviors. A possible explanation for not finding a relationship could be the increased uncertainty surrounding higher ed EDI jobs leading to extra care in navigating institutional policies.

The expectation for Hypothesis 4 was that job security satisfaction would moderate the relationship between affective commitment and constructive deviance. Dahling and Gutworth (2017) found a moderating effect of normative conflict on the relationship between organizational identity and constructive deviance. Normative conflict provides a stressor on the relationship, similar to what was posited for job security satisfaction. However, since a relationship was not established between constructive deviance and affective commitment in Hypothesis 2 or between job security satisfaction and constructive deviance in Hypothesis 3, expectations for finding support for Hypothesis 4 were low. The regression analysis did not establish JSS as a moderator of a relationship between affective commitment and constructive deviance (addressed in directions for future research below).

An exploratory analysis examined the additional demographic variables collected for a relationship with constructive deviance. It was expected that years in the current role or the EDI field would show a relationship with constructive deviance. No relationship was found for time in the role. One possible explanation may be that the longer a VPEDI is in the role, the greater

the sense of fulfillment they feel in their position (Swartout et al., 2023). This could be due to having accomplished EDI goals negating a need to use constructive deviance.

The themes from the qualitative questions in this study mirror themes found in workplace literature. For example, Wang (2023) found that while constructive deviance can lead to positive results in the workplace, "employees who implement constructive deviance were vulnerable to workplace ostracism" (p. 23329). Several participants in this study mentioned ostracism as a possible risk when engaging in constructive deviance, which was coded into the theme of "isolation."

Concerns about how constructive deviance might be misinterpreted also surfaced. For instance, one respondent wrote, "Actions intended as constructive can be misunderstood as disruptive or antagonistic." Bennet et al. (2022) concur by suggesting that it may be hard for someone observing constructive deviance behavior to know the "actor's intention" (p.485). This might help explain the lack of relationship found between the variables and constructive deviance in this study. Participants in this sample appear to be highly attuned to reference group judgments and approach their behavior choices somewhat reactively based on normative expectations for their role. This may be why some participants favored taking a more circuitous route with creating buy-in and collaboration among campus members rather than engaging in constructive deviance.

Limitations of Study

A major challenge of this study was obtaining a sufficient sample from the population of interest. I encountered difficulty finding participants willing to take the survey. When the survey opened on February 25, I sent email invites to EDI professionals at 20 universities. After receiving no responses, invitations and follow-up reminders were sent to another 195 universities

from February 28 through April 10. Low response rates prompted an application for an amendment requested from IRB, which was granted on April 5 to post an ad on Linked In and Facebook. From April 28 to May 15 another round of invitations and reminders were sent to 56 Universities to finally surpass the stated goal of 100 participants for this study.

One possible reason for the low response rate could have been survey fatigue. In February 2023, NADOHE conducted a survey of 261 CDEOs and released The State of the CDO report in August 2023, making the results available to members of the association. VPEDIs receiving yet another invitation to participate in a survey may have deemed it an unreasonable request due to the time constraints of their duties during a busy spring semester and perceptions that this information has already been recently gathered.

Additionally, on the national front, 85 bills have been introduced in 28 states to prohibit colleges' EDI efforts (DEI Legislation Tracker, 2024). For example, Texas State University removed its Office of Diversity and all its employees, and Florida State University eliminated all EDI programming (Thomas, 2024). The reversal in some states' support for EDI may be a reason why some EDI professionals returned my email invitation to participate. Responses included, “I spoke to my boss, and our department cannot participate at this time.” Another shared, “I have reservations about participating in the study. Within the charged political climate in [my state] and in my official role as a supporter of inclusion efforts at our university, I fear that anything I say could be used against me publicly.” While another shared, “I recently lost my DEI Director job for being "deviant." Due to the almost inherent risk-taking nature involved, one could construe the act of completing the survey for this study as potentially an act of constructive deviance behavior

Another limitation could be the terminology used around the constructive deviance construct. One participant shared, “The wording of some of your questions is making it difficult for me to respond, especially the different words you use to describe violate perceived norms and the interchangeable way the questions use policy/procedure/norms/etc.” Also, the term deviance in and of itself can be off-putting, as it gives more of a negative meaning despite having the positive undertone of constructive paired with it. Future studies should work to manage the expectations surrounding word choices and connotations attributed to these terms by clearly defining and communicating definitions with participants.

A third possible limitation is that the surveys were self-reported measures. Of less concern was the potential impact of common method variance due to the limited number of constructs and the exploratory nature of the study. However, social desirability bias could be a factor, as VPEDIs may be reluctant to share their true intentions even with the assurance of anonymity (Bennet et al., 2023).

Implications

This study contributed to the further validation of the CDBS scale with a more racially and ethnically diverse sample, as suggested by Dahling and Gutworth (2017). It also supports prior research showing that gender identity has little impact on constructive deviance behavior. Further, this study adds to the body of positive organizational behavior research by expanding the stream of constructive deviance research into the EDI domain and higher education. Situational factors of job security satisfaction and affective commitment were examined to help explain constructive deviance use. This study contributes to filling the gap in the deviance literature that has focused more on personality traits as antecedents to constructive deviant behaviors (Bennet et al.,2024). All the measures used were validated scales applicable to the

population of interest, making it possible to replicate this study with similar samples in other organizational settings.

The absence of a significant effect can be just as desirable as finding one. This study's lack of a significant correlation between the hypothesized variables and constructive deviance is informative regarding the orientation of this sample of EDI professionals. Deprez (2020) concludes that ordinarily, people lack the inclination to act with a deviant intention. Galperin's (2012) results also suggest that constructive deviance behaviors are infrequent. This study supports this conclusion as the means for organizational and interpersonal constructive deviance were 2.6 and 2.7, respectively, which is consistent with Galperin's findings of 1.79 and 2.39. Overall, the participants in this study indicate they believe they engage in constructive deviance behavior more than once a year, and the qualitative responses indicate that nearly half the respondents believe some form of constructive deviance is necessary to effect change at their institution. This may indicate that there is some inherent expectation for challenging policies or procedures tied to the performance of the VPEDI role.

This has implications for how institutional leadership can support EDI professionals. Several respondents shared that it was not necessary to engage in constructive deviance because they had the support of their institutional leadership. Mertens (2020) contends that employees who feel empowered may be able to change norms rather than engage in deviance. Institutional leaders should evaluate their relationships with EDI employees and how they support their initiatives, as well as their perceptions of behaviors that they term deviant.

Future Research

If the goal of constructive deviant behavior is to foster innovative behaviors that improve the organization and benefit its members, future research should look at the outcomes derived

from these actions. The participants in this study shared their thoughts on the risks and benefits of engaging in constructive deviance, contributing to the perceptions of what that outcome may look like. Future research should incorporate the themes shared for perceived outcomes of constructive deviance in the form of risks and benefits in context-specific situations to learn how they are related to constructive deviance behaviors. This might be studied in the setting of specific organizational relationships, such as the dyadic relationship of the VPEDI and their supervisor or the relationship of the VPEDI to their support team. With the loss of credibility emerging as a dominant concern in this study, the role that trust plays in these relationships and contributes to one's perception of risk or benefit emerges as a construct of interest (McAllister, 1995). Additionally, the role of organizational and personal values should be studied to better understand how these values relate to constructive deviance outcomes within the organizational context (Bourne & Jenkins, 2013).

The open-ended responses from participants helped to highlight the difficulty of understanding norm-violating behaviors as more than a violation of a policy, practice, or a supervisor's direct order. Bennet et al. (2024) suggested that “past experiences and personality” may bias perceptions of observed behaviors (p. 498). Once again, context may matter, and future research should seek a more thorough investigation of how behaviors are judged to be norm-violating.

Finally, because this was a predominantly quantitative study, future studies should employ a mixed methods approach to capture the interplay between campus leadership and EDI Professionals. These additional data points may provide context to the normative expectations shared in these relationships discovered through further qualitative inquiry. Further, as the

country's racial and ethnic demographics shift, researchers should take care to acknowledge these shifting demographics and ensure that diverse groups are represented in future studies.

Conclusion

This study looked at the perceptions VPEDIs and EDI professionals have regarding their use of constructive deviance behaviors in service of campus EDI initiatives at a time that is fraught with an increasingly hostile political climate towards EDI work. Although no relationship was found between constructive deviance and affective commitment or job security satisfaction, this study provided some insight into perceptions held about constructive deviance when it comes to doing EDI work. One participant shared an observation from an organizational perspective, “Changes initiated through deviance might meet significant resistance, especially if they challenge deeply entrenched organizational practices or threaten existing power structures.” Another provided an interpersonal perspective, stating, “We always have to be that one person in the room who always says something when it needs to be said, and we don't want to always have to be that person.” The responses shared by these professionals provided rich context to the study and raised additional questions for future study. Hopefully, this will serve as a catalyst for future research to better understand how engagement in constructive deviance behaviors may challenge and support organizations and their people in advancing positive change.

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APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

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BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY

INFORMED CONSENT FOR STUDY OF CONSTRUCTIVE DEVIANT BEHAVIOR USE AMONG EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION (EDI) PROFESSIONALS IN SUPPORT OF CAMPUS EDI INITIATIVES

I, Nicolle Merkel, am a Doctoral Candidate in the Organizational Development and Change Program at Bowling Green State University under the supervision of Dr. Michelle Brodke. I am conducting a research study seeking to understand the use of constructive deviance behavior by professionals working in Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) within higher education settings. Constructive deviance is voluntary risk-taking behaviors that violate perceived organization or group norms with the intent of improving the well-being of the organization, its members, or both.

You are invited to participate in this study if you serve as the head EDI professional in your institution or work with the head EDI professional to support EDI initiatives. Participants must be at least 18 years old to participate in this study.

PURPOSE: I will be investigating constructive deviance behavior use by campus EDI professionals. I am curious to know if EDI professionals engage in behaviors not typically acceptable to the institution and campus community members while also for the benefit of the institution and campus community. This study will add to the body of positive organizational behavior research by expanding the stream of constructive deviance research into the EDI domain and higher education.

BENEFITS: Constructive deviance behaviors can lead to opportunities for innovation. The findings from this study may provide practitioners of EDI and their supervisors with a greater awareness of how to support campus EDI change initiatives. There are no direct benefits for participation, but the indirect benefits for participating in the study are the greater awareness of the behaviors and attitudes you use when approaching your work in leading and managing EDI initiatives. Results will be published at the conclusion of this study.

PROCEDURE: If you agree to participate, you will be answering survey questions on a Likert scale about your behavioral engagement over the last year and feelings toward your organization and job security. You will be asked to provide demographic data along with two questions that provide space for free-form responses on the risks and benefits of utilizing constructive deviance behavior in EDI work. The survey should take 20 minutes to complete and can be completed online.

BGSU IRB - APPROVED FOR USE
IRBNet ID # _2126984_
EFFECTIVE _02/21/2024_
EXPIRES _11/24/2024_

VOLUNTARY NATURE: Your participation is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any time during the survey by closing the survey in your browser. You may decide to skip questions or discontinue participation at any time without explanation or penalty. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your relationship with Bowling Green State University.

ANONYMITY PROTECTION: All data will be kept strictly anonymous, meaning that the researcher *cannot* determine the identities of the participants. The Survey is only accessible via an anonymous reusable survey link. The link cannot be tracked or used to identify respondents. Additionally, IP address and location data will not be retrievable. Your responses will be collected and securely stored in a password-protected location within the Qualtrics survey tool. Data will be stored in a password-protected file.

The results of this study will be used in my dissertation and may be used in reports, presentations, or publications. No information that will make it possible to identify you will be shared. All data will be erased three years after the conclusion of my dissertation defense to maintain anonymity protection.

NOTE: When completing electronic surveys, it is your responsibility to complete the survey in a location that offers privacy. (1) some employers may use tracking software, so you may want to complete the survey on a personal computer; (2) you should not leave the survey open if using a public computer or a computer that others may have access to and, (3) you should clear the browser cache and page history after completing the survey.

RISKS: While the anticipated risk for participation in this study is no greater than that experienced in daily life, this survey does ask about your engagement in behaviors while performing your job to accomplish institutional EDI goals. These behaviors may fall outside of standard accepted behaviors within your higher education institution. Answers to these questions may pose a potential risk to your employment or standing within your university. To mitigate these risks please be sure to follow the instructions above for completing electronic surveys.

There is also always a chance of a data breach. In order to ensure your anonymity in case of a breach, individual responses to the survey will not be identifiable to specific individuals.

CONTACT INFORMATION: If you have any questions concerning the research study or your participation in the study, please contact Nicolle Merkel by phone at 419-234-0012 or via email at nmerkel@bgsu.edu or my graduate advisor, Dr. Michelle Brodke at mbrodke@bgsu.edu. You may also contact the Chair of the Bowling Green State University Institutional Review Board, at 419-372-7716 or irb@bgsu.edu, if you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research.

Thank you for your time and consideration. May I ask that you kindly pass this invitation and survey link on to other colleagues who work in the EDI field within higher education.

Nicolle L. Merkel
Doctoral Candidate, Organizational Development, and Change
Bowling Green State University

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE: I have been informed of the purposes, procedures, risks, and benefits of this study. I have had the opportunity to have all my questions answered, and I have been informed that my participation is completely voluntary. I agree to participate in this research.

By clicking on the link below, I acknowledge that I am at least 18 years of age.

- Clicking on this link will serve as your consent to participate in the study and will begin the survey.
- I do not wish to participate in this survey.

APPENDIX B: CONSTRUCTIVE DEVIANCE BEHAVIORAL SCALE

The following instructions are given: Please indicate the extent to which you have engaged in these behaviors in the last year.

1 = Never
2 = Once a year
3 = Twice a year
4 = Several times a year
5 = Monthly
6 = Weekly
7 = Daily

1. Sought to bend or break the rules in order to perform your job.
2. Violated university procedures in order to solve a problem.[1]
3. Departed from organizational procedures to solve a student's/colleague's problem.[2]
4. Bent a rule to satisfy a student's/colleague's needs.[2]
5. Departed from dysfunctional organizational policies and procedures to solve a problem.
6. Reported a wrong-doing to co-workers to bring about a positive organizational change.
7. Did not follow the orders of your supervisor in order to improve the current work procedures.
8. Disagreed with others in your work group in order to improve the current work procedures.
9. Disobeyed your supervisor's instructions to perform more efficiently.
10. Reported a wrong-doing to another person in your university[1] to bring about a positive organizational change.

[1]University was substituted for "company" in this question.
[2] Student's/colleague's were substituted for "customer's" in this question.

APPENDIX C: AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT SCALE

Participants respond utilizing a seven-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7)[3]. The following instructions are given:

Please answer the following statements.

1. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization.
2. I enjoy discussing my organization with people outside it.
3. I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own.
4. I think that I could easily become attached to another organization as I am to this one. (R)
5. I do not feel like "part of the family" at my organization. (R)
6. I do not feel 'emotionally attached' to this organization. (R)
7. This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.
8. I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization. (R)

R=reverse-keyed items

[3] Higher scores reflect greater affective organizational commitment.

APPENDIX D: JOB SECURITY SATISFACTION SCALE

Participants respond utilizing a seven-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7).[4] The following instructions are given:

Please indicate the extent to which each of the provided phrases describes your job security within your organization.

1. Never more secure
2. Nerve-wracking (R)
3. Sufficient amount of security
4. Looks optimistic
5. Upsetting how little security I have (R)
6. Excellent amount of security
7. Unacceptable low (R)
8. Positive
9. Stressful (R)

R=reverse keyed items

[4] Higher scores reflect greater job insecurity.

APPENDIX E: DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

As you are aware, from doing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) work, demographic information helps us to understand characteristics that impact perceptions. We appreciate your response as we seek to learn how demographic characteristics impact perceptions of EDI work in higher education institutions.

1. Please select one race/ethnicity that you consider yourself to be.
    1. Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
    2. American Indian or Alaska Native
    3. Asian
    4. Black or African American
    5. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
    6. White
    7. More than one race/ethnicity
    8. Other than listed
    9. Prefer not to say
    10. Prefer to self-identify (text box)

2. Please indicate the gender you identify with.
    1. Man
    2. Non-binary
    3. Transgender
    4. Woman
    5. Other than listed
    6. Prefer not to say
    7. Prefer to self-identify (text box)

3. What is your 4-digit birth year (such as “1984”)?
    _____,_____,_____,_____

4. What best describes the type of higher education institution you work in?
    1. Private
    2. Public

4. a If answered private: Which best describes your institution?
    1. For Profit
    2. Not for Profit

5. What best describes your institutional type?
    1. Two-year
    2. Four-year

6. In which state is your institution?
   Dropdown with states.

7. How many years have you worked at your current institution? (Select a number that reflects the number of employment years completed).
   Dropdown with number selections: Less than 1 year, 1 year, 2 years, 3 years,..35 years, Over 35 years.

8. Assume that there are five (5) levels within your organization, with 1 being the lowest level and 5 being the highest level. At what level is your job at your institution?
   1. Lowest level
   2.
   3. Mid-level
   4.
   5. Highest level

9. What best describes current your role with equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) work in your institution?

   1. I serve as the designated professional who oversees the EDI work at my institution.
   2. I work with the professional(s) that is(are) responsible for the EDI work at my institution.
   3. I serve on one or more than one EDI-related committees at my institution.
   4. None of these roles.

9. a. How long have you been in your current role? (Select a number that reflects the number of employment years completed).

   Dropdown with number selections: Less than 1 year, 1 year, 2 years, 3 years,..35 years, Over 35 years.
   This question will display if 1, 2, or 3 is selected in question 9.

10. How many years have you worked in the field of Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)? (Select a number that reflects the number of employment years completed).

   Dropdown with number selections: Less than 1 year, 1 year, 2 years, 3 years,..35 years, Over 35 years.

APPENDIX F: OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Constructive deviance is voluntary risk-taking behaviors that violate perceived organization or group norms with the intent of improving the well-being of the organization, its members, or both.

1. What are the risks and benefits of engaging in constructive deviance in doing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion work?

2. Is constructive deviance necessary to make the changes you wish to make with your institution's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Practices?