

Cable Theft and Vandalism by Employees of South Africa's Electricity Utility Companies: A Theoretical Explanation and Research Agenda

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ABSTRACT In this paper, the researchers argue that unravelling perceptions and attitudes of relevant employees towards theft and vandalism is critical to stemming electric cable theft. The researchers draw on the Reasoned Action Theory (TRA) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) to explain the involvement of electricity utility companies' own employees in vandalism and theft of electricity copper cables. Drawing on a theoretical research approach involving the examination of mainstream literature, the paper explores the reasons for employees' engagement in actions that contradict company policy, namely stealing from the employer or vandalizing organisational property. The findings suggests that personal traits (employee perceptions and attitudes), organizational factors (such as organizational climate) constitute presage factors that trigger psychological dispositions to rob the company of its material assets (copper cables) in general and ultimately steal and vandalise copper cables in particular.