EMPLOYEES’ INFLUENCE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND CAREER SELF-EFFICACY ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

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Abstract

This study explored employees influence of emotional intelligence and career self-efficacy on organizational commitment. The study adopted a survey method by employing qualitative and quantitative methods in triangulating the study to better gain insight of the study. The simple random sampling technique was used to randomly sample 240 participants in public parastatals in Bayelsa State, Nigeria involving 165 males and 75 females. Bivariate analysis involving cross tabulation and a content analysis were used for quantitative and qualitative data. Results indicated that participants had moderate levels of emotional intelligence and career self-efficacy with low level of organizational commitment. Based on the findings, it was suggested that managers could sharpen employees’ emotional intelligence and career self-efficacy to buffer organizational commitment of employees.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, career self-efficacy, organizational commitment

Introduction

Employees in every society play a very strategic role in the advancement of the economy and society. This, according to Okafor (1998) is due to the centrality of employees to the production process. Thus, they constitute an indispensable group both in the achievement of various organizational goals and objectives as well as the government economic programmes.

However, for employees to perform this crucial role efficiently and effectively, Okafor (1998) examined certain pre-conditions that must be met. One of such vital pre-conditions is the system’s ability to meet the expectations of the bulk of the workforce. Such expectations as highlighted by Okafor (1998) include; control over the work process and duties, job security, participation in decision making, adequate remuneration, timely promotion etc.

Organizational commitment is a strong belief in and acceptance of the organizational goals and values, a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the firm and a strong desire to remain in the organization. It predicts organizational outcomes such as turn over, absenteeism and tardiness (Adeyemo, 2007). Employees’ low levels of commitment are as a result of a culmination of poor experiences. The low levels of employees’ commitment are a reflection of their bad experiences, some of which is a function of the type of work they engaged in. Employees’ commitment is significantly affected by their identification and commitment to organizational values.

Various scholars have deduced commitment of public officers with a number of factors. For instance, (Okafor, 2005) pointed out the rules for promoting fail to distinguish between productive and non productive workers. Public servants may lack the required technical skills for their positions.
Thus, many of the skills that public bureaucrats’ posses are wasted (Okafor & Bode – Okunade, 2005). The public service tends to be over staffed with individuals who lack the requisite skill for their positions (Jike, 2003). Their performance tends to be sluggish, their coffee breaks prolonged, and their need for supervision constant (Onyeonoru, 2005). Moreso, the need to tip officials for expected services continues to flourish in most ministries and parastatals in Nigeria (Obiajulu, 2000).

Thus, the performance of the public service in virtually all tiers of government in Nigeria has remained very dismissal, hence the present state of underdevelopment (Jike, 2005, Adebayo, 2001). The former National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) and the Nigerian Telecommunication (NITEL) are very obvious in this regard (Okafor, 2005). Public bureaucrats and parastatals in Bayelsa State are not exonerated of this phenomenon. This has prompted this study.

The construct of emotional intelligence has received increasing attention in a variety of literature in the last two decades. Emotional intelligence (EQ or EI) is the ability to process emotional information as it pertains to the perception, assimilation, expression, regulation and management of emotion (Mayer & Cobb, 2000, Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2000).

Emotionally intelligent individuals are optimistic, a quality that enables them to focus on the resolution rather than the reasoning. The work in any organization imposes difficulties that may result in feelings of frustration. An emotionally intelligent employee would know, as Abraham (1999) opined, not hold the organization responsible for his/her feelings of frustration as he is capable of placing himself in positive affective state and able to experience negative affective states that have insignificant destructive consequences.

Several studies have established a positive relationship between Emotional intelligence and organizational commitment. For instance, Humphreys, Brunsen and Davis (2005) conducted a study on direct health care workers and observed a positive correlation between Emotional Intelligence and organizational commitment. In another study conducted on public sector employees, Adeyemo (2007) established that Emotional Intelligence is positively and significantly associated with organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Additionally, Jordan, Ashkanasy and Hartel (2002) contended that individuals with high levels of emotional intelligence use that capability to maintain their affective commitment to the organization.

The construct career self-efficacy is of importance to this study. According to Bandura people’s judgement of their capabilities to organize and execute course of action required to attain designated type of performance. Findings have demonstrated the essence of self-efficacy on job and career (e.g. Eden & Zuk, 1995; Gist & Michel, 1992).

Career self-efficacy in this context is the application of Bandura’s (1986) theory of self-efficacy to the study of career behaviours. This term has been used as a general label encompassing judgement of personal efficacy in relation to the wide range of behaviour involved in career choice and adjustment. Career self-efficacy is relatively unexplored. The construct of career self-efficacy has many implications for organizations. Empirical research revealed that career is positively related with many organizationally relevant variables such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction and preparedness for organizational change (schyns, 2004; schyns & collani, 2002). Thus, schyns and collani (2002) established that career self-efficacy/occupational self efficacy is positively and significantly related with job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

The importance of career self-efficacy in an organizational context was further ascertained by the study of Rathi and Rastogi (2009).

This study, thus, examines employees’ influence of emotional intelligence and career self-efficacy on organizational commitment in public service in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. Although, the variables have been variously studied in another setting, these variables are yet to be explored in the environment of the
current study. This missing gap has necessitated the current study. Further, the study would complement existing literature for future generation. In order to actualize the objectives of this study, therefore, the following research questions were raised and answered.

Methodology

Research design

The study combined a descriptive survey (quantitative) and a qualitative research technique in generating data for the study. Specifically, survey questionnaires and in-depth interview were employed in triangulating and eliciting information from the sample of the target population. The essence is to enable the researchers gain more understanding of the study.

Population/sample and sampling technique

A total of 15 public parastatals were identified. Out of which a simple random sampling was used to randomly select four parastatals to represent the study population.

A simple random sampling was used to randomly select 240 participants comprising male = 165 and Female = 72 from four parastatals in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, Nigeria. They include, Radio Bayelsa; Water Board; Environmental and Hospital Management Board. Their age ranged between 26 and 55 years.

Instrumentation

The quantitative method

Questionnaire: A questionnaire was designed by the researchers for this study. The questionnaire was divided into four sections; and was modified accordingly to serve the purpose of generating relevant information from the respondents. The first section contained the demographic characteristics of the respondents while the second section measured levels of emotional intelligence. High score revealed high level of emotional intelligence. Conversely, low score revealed low level of emotional intelligence. The third section measured levels of career self-efficacy. High score also revealed high level of career self-efficacy. Conversely, low score revealed low level of career self-efficacy.

Finally, the fourth section measured the levels of organizational commitment. More so, high score revealed high level of organizational commitment and low score revealed low level of organizational commitment. The questions were structured in a 4-point Likert scale, i.e strongly agree to strongly disagree. A typical item in each of the sections read thus: Emotional intelligence = “I know when to speak about my personal problems to others”. Career self-efficacy = “When I have setback in my workplace, I am not bordered because it is normal”. Organizational commitment = “I fully identify myself with the values of this organization”.

In order to establish the psychometric properties of the questionnaire, it was subjected to trial testing. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients yielded thus: $r = .78; .75; .79$ for EI, career self-efficacy and organizational commitment respectively.

The qualitative method

In-depth interview: An in-depth interview (IDI) is a qualitative research technique that allows person-to-person discussion. It can lead to increased insight into people’s thoughts, feelings and behaviour on important issues. The interview used was a semi-structured interview that was totally open and gave the researchers much freedom to explore a range of issues around the research area. With the use of interview guide listing the areas covered. Primary data relating to the research study was collected from selected individuals. The use of semi-structure formant gave room for exploration and for altering the questions based on respondent’s circumstances of response.

The interview was audio recorded on four respondents to represent the four parastatals and subsequently transcribed for analysis. The respondents were informed of the recording
and the questions were asked in English, while the interview guide was sent to the respondents early enough to allow preparedness of the respondents.

The qualitative analysis involved the categorization of responses into the objectives of the study, which they matched. The open code content analysis was adopted to transcribe recordings followed by examination and isolation of various responses according to the respective objectives. The content analysis was employed for its advantage of permitting the study process occurring over a long period of time like this study. It is equally safe and economical in terms of both time and money for it requires no large numbers of research assistants in administering.

Procedure

The researchers personally administered the questionnaires to the respondents while on the field. Due to the busy nature of participants, questionnaires were administered and retrieved the next day. Out of 250 questionnaires that were administered, only 240 were retrieved and subjected to analysis which accounted for about 98 percent. Moreover, quantitative analysis combined content analysis, and verbatim for quotation to buttress the point being made.

Results and discussion

Research question 1

The research question stated thus: what are the levels of employees’ emotional intelligence and career self-efficacy?

The summation of the scores of the 10-item informed the scores that measured the level of emotional intelligence. The least emotional intelligence respondent score is 1 while the most emotional intelligence score is 40.

Respondents that fall within the range of 1-14 experience low level of emotional intelligence, those that were within the range of 15-27 experience moderate level of emotional intelligence, while those that were within 28-40 experience a high level of emotional intelligence.

On the other hand, the summation of the scores of the 10-item informed the scores that measured the level of career self-efficacy. The least career self-efficacy respondent score is 1 while the most career self-efficacy is 40.

Respondents that fall within the range of 1-14 experience low career self-efficacy, those that were within the range of 15-27 experience moderate level of career self-efficacy, while those that were within 28-40 experience a high level of career self-efficacy.

Data analysis

The data analysis for the study involved the use of quantitative and qualitative methods. The former involved the use of bivariate analyses. Bivariate analysis involved cross tabulation.

Table 1: Emotional intelligence and career self-efficacy levels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I know why and when my emotions change</th>
<th>Setback at work don’t border me because its normal</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table above showed that, 46.3 percent of the respondents do not know why and when their emotions change, and that, setback at work do not border them. This means that the respondents levels of emotional intelligence and career self-efficacy is moderate. This showed the importance of emotional intelligence and career self-efficacy in the workplace.

Being able to understand, perceive and express emotions in an appropriate way can determine whether an individual is successful or not as an employee in a career. In respect to public servants, therefore, the presence of moderate levels of emotional intelligence and its antecedents (e.g. empathy, social skills, and perception) may be very crucial to their organizational commitment.

On the other hand, the result showed the moderate level of career self-efficacy. Career self-efficacy is concerned with the people’s judgment of their capabilities to organize and execute course of action required to attain designated type of performance in their career. Various studies have demonstrated the essence of self-efficacy on job and career (e.g. Eden & Zuk, 1995; Gist & Michel, 1992).

The implication of moderate career self-efficacy is that, an employee that is moderately careered self-efficacious may likely to be moderately committed to organization. This result corroborates Okafor’s (1998) assertion that, the difference between hardworking employee and ‘mediocre’ is that, the former keeps working beyond the quota-high career self-efficacy and high organizational commitment. The ‘mediocre’ employee – low career self-efficacy and low organizational commitment stops once the quota is reached and idles away time.

**Research question 2**

The research question stated thus: what is the level of employees’ organizational commitment?

The summation of the scores of the 10-item informed the scores that measured the level of organizational commitment. The least organizational commitment respondent score is 1 while the most organizational commitment score is 40. Respondents that fall within the range of 1-14 experience low level of organizational commitment, those that were within 15-27 experience moderate level of organizational commitment, while those that were within 28-40 experience a high level of organizational commitment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I fully identify with the values of this organization</th>
<th>I fully identify with the goals of this organization</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Table above showed that the respondents who fully identified with the values and goals of their organizations were 6.3%. This means that the level of organizational commitment of employees is low.

The result which showed the low level of organizational commitment of respondents in public parastatals would not have occurred by chance. This is because this study corroborates the view of various scholars. For instance, (Jike, 2005; Okafor & Bode-Okunade, 2003; Okafor, 2005) have at several times decried the low level of organizational commitment of public servants. Thus, the public service tends to be overstaffed with individuals who lack the requisite skill for their positions. Thus, Onyeonoru (2005) viewed their performance to be sluggish, their coffee breaks prolonged, and their need for supervision constant. The performance of public service in virtually all tiers of government in Nigeria has remained very dismissal, hence the present state of underdevelopment (Jike, 2005; Adebayo, 2001).

Be that as it may, the individual’s organizational commitment depends on employee’s perceived balance of reward utilities over his input utilities. Employees in Public parastatals are under paid compared to their contemporaries in the private and political appointments. This has resulted to the recent implementation of N18, 000 minimum wage bill.

Conclusion

The present study helps in understanding the concepts of emotional intelligence, career self-efficacy and organizational commitment and provides an insight of the importance of these variables on organization. Thus, the study has identified that emotional intelligence and career self-efficacy are important to organizational commitment. This means that the higher the emotional intelligence, the higher the organizational commitment. Conversely, the higher the career self-efficacy; the higher the level of organizational commitment. These variables no doubt strike a balance of reward utilities over input utilities.

References


