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PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT AS CORRELATE OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

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Abstract
This study examined relationship between Perceived Organizational Support (POS) and Organizational Commitment (OC). Participants in the study were 99 secondary school teachers and they responded to Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS) and Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ). The research hypotheses were tested using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Statistics. The result revealed that perceived organizational support correlated with three dimensions of organizational commitment, affective commitment (r(97) = 0.48, P<001), continuance commitment (r(97) = 0.62, P<001) and normative commitment (r(97) = 0.71, P<001). This implies that supportive organizations would produce teachers who are committed and will reciprocate through hard work and efficiency. Based on these findings, managers of educational organizations should innovate scheme to improve teachers morale in order to elicit commitment and better performance from them.

Keywords: Perceived organization support, Organizational commitment, Affective commitment, Continuance commitment, Normative commitment.

Introduction

In today's work environment, employees are viewed as one of the most important assets of any organization. Morrison and Phelps (1999) argued that the survival of modern organizations is anchored on high level of commitment among its workforce. Education being one of the most important institutional organizations of every nation, it needs a workforce that is committed to the organization. According to Fauziah, Rahmah, Rohani, Rasimah and Zabani (2010) teachers' commitment is crucial to effective schools because they are one of the most important assets in education industry. This has led to increased call for the re-examination of the role and benefits of teachers' commitment to their organization.

Colakoglu, Culha and Atay (2010) viewed organizational commitment in terms of the strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization. Borrowing from Porter, Steers, Mowday and Boulian (1974) they argued that such commitment can generally be characterized by at least three factors: (a) acceptance of the organization's goals and values, (b) willingness to work on behalf of the organization, and (c) strong motivation to remain in the organization. Earlier, Buchanan (1974) viewed organizational commitment as consisting of three components, identification (i.e. adoption as one's own the goals and values of the organization), involvement (i.e. psychological immersion or absorption in the activities of one's work role), and loyalty (i.e. a feeling of affection for and attachment to the organization). According to Meyer and Allen (1991) organizational commitment has three aspects: affective commitment (in which the employee's emotional attachment to identification with and involvement in the organization's activities in association with positive feelings), continuous commitment (the commitment based on valuing the organization and the employee sharing the organization life), and normative commitment (the passion people need to stay in the organization). All these models pointed at organizational commitment as individual's psychological attachment to their organizations.

Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch and Rhadddes (2001) suggested that commitment is a social exchange between employers and employees in which employees draw inferences concerning their organizations' commitment towards them (i.e. perceived organizational support), which in turn will contribute to their commitment towards the organization. The roots of the employee-organization relationship can be traced back to the theory of social exchange of Blan (1964) and norms of reciprocity by Gouldner (1960). They both referred to social exchange as a pattern of mutually contingent exchanges of gratification between two parties with a belief in reciprocity norm. The social exchange concept is then expanded to organizational support theory to explain the employee-organization relation. Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison and Sowa (1986) suggested that employees form a global belief concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. This belief refers to perceived organizational support (POS). Then supplying this belief, it is reasoned that organizational commitment occurs as an employees' response to felt obligation to the organization. Organization commitment can also be as a result of perceived equity and fair treatment. This simply means that employees can in response to perceived equity and fair treatment from the organization show more commitment to organizations' goals.

Previous studies conducted on perceived organizational commitment have found that there is a positive significant relationship between the two construct (Allen, 2001, Barlett, 2001, Wahab, Quaddus & Nowak, 2009; Beheshtfar & Heart, 2013; Alijanpour, Dousti & Khodayari, 2013; Rafei-Dehkordi; Mohammarli & Yektayar, 2013). However, some other studies provided contradictory issues that could be argued (e.g. Wayne, Shore & Hiden, 1999; Whitener, 2001). It is also important to replicate this study in Nigeria since most of the studies were done in western countries which have different organizational environment and culture with Nigeria. The present study is aimed at examining the role of perceived organizational support on organizational commitment among teachers of secondary schools in Nigeria. To achieve this, this study has proposed these hypotheses to guide the study.

i. Perceived organizational support will have a significantly relationship with affective commitment.
ii. Perceived organizational support will have a significantly relationship with continuance commitment.
iii. Perceived organizational support will have a significantly relationship with normative commitment.

Method

Participants

The sample comprised of 99 teachers drawn from five selected secondary schools (Union Secondary School, Anglican Girls Secondary School, College of Immaculate Conception, Holy Rosary College and University of Nigeria Secondary School) all located within Enugu Metropolis. The five schools were chosen because they are where qualified teachers can be found out of 99 teachers that participated in the study, 38 (38.38%) were males while 61(61.62%) were females. The age range of the participants was 24 to 59 and average age of 31.67 years. A simple random sampling technique was used.

Instruments

Two instruments were used for the study.

i. Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS)

This scale was developed by Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison and Sowa (1986). It measures the extent to which employees perceived that the organization values their career, contribution and concerned about their well-being. The original scale has 36-items in a seven-point likert type structure (1= strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). However, this study used (A short version with 16-items and a 5-likert response format (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The item-total correlation ranged from .30 to .67. It also had a reliability coefficient, chronbach alpha, of .88, and a test-retest reliability of .89.

ii. Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)

Organizational commitment of the employees was assessed through Allen and Meyer's (1990) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ). The questionnaire based on three-component model (Meyer & Allen, 1989) taps three dimensions of organizational commitment, affective, continuance and normative. The OCQ consists of 24 items, eight items for each dimension. Items 1-8 measures affective commitment (AC) 9-16 measures continuance commitment (CC) and 17-24 measures normative Commitment (NC). The items have a 5-point likert response format (1=strongly disagreed to 5 = strongly agree). Some items are positively worded while others are negatively worded. The questionnaire has chronbach alpha coefficients of .89, .75 and .79 for AC, CC and NC respectively.

Procedures

A total of 112 copies of Survey of Perceived Organizational Support and Organizational Commitment Questionnaire were distributed to teachers in the five schools who were willing to participate in the study. Out of 122 copies, 107 copies were returned and of this 107 that were returned, 8 copies were discarded as a result of improper and incomplete response. The study used data generated from 99 copies that were properly filled for statistical analysis.

Design/statistics

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design because copies of questionnaires were used to collect data from participants. Pearson Product Moment Co-efficient Correlation Statistics was used for data analysis.

Results

The study made use of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Statistics. Based on this analysis, the following findings were made.

Table: Descriptive and Correlation Statistics between Perceived Organizational Support and Dimensions of Organizational Commitment

Variables	M	SD	r
Affective Commitment	22.34	7.68	.48***
Continuance Commitment	23.85	9.56	.62***
Normative Commitment	25.87	10.28	.71***

*Note: *P < .05, **P < .01, ***P < .001*, N = 99

The result of the correlation analysis as presented in the above table shows that perceived organizational support is positively related to organizational commitment: r(97)=0.67, P<.01. Perceived organizational support also correlates with affective commitment r(97)=0.48, P<.001, continuance commitment r(97)=0.62, P<.001 and normative commitment r(97)=0.71, P<.001 The higher the employees perceive their organizations as supportive, the more they feel indebtedness to contribute to the organizations' goals.

Discussion

The study was made to determine the interrelatedness between perceived organizational support and organizational commitment of secondary school teachers in Nigeria. The purpose was to provide the empirical basis for psychological intervention in the promotion of organizational commitment among teachers in Nigeria. This is based on the fact that the more individuals are committed to their organization the more likely they are going to stay with the organization and provide a more qualitative service through experience.

The findings showed that perceived organizational support has a positive significant relationship with the three dimensions of organizational commitment. It showed that affective commitment which causes the dependency and belongingness to the organization, continuance commitment which causes the feeling of the need to remain in the organization, and normative commitment which causes ones' sense of duty and moral obligation to the organization correlated with perceived organizational support. This shows that a strong link exist between perceived organizational support and organizational commitment. Therefore, it should be indicated that the creation of support in the organization and its perception by the teachers will promote commitment at the level of the organization and enhance individuals' success, which is the necessity for the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization in respect of achieving final goals.

The result of this study can be explained using social exchange theory. The theory suggests that employees feel an obligation to help those who helped them. To this end, employee who feels that their organization is a supportive one feels obligated to reciprocate such gestures by greater identification with the organization and feeling obligated to uphold its values and goals. It implies that supportive organizations, that is, organizations that care for the well-being of its employees are likely to produce employees who are ready to promote the values and goals of the organization.

This finding has been found to be consistent with the previous empirical studies. Allen (2001) has earlier found perceived organizational support to be positively related with the degree at which employee identifies with the organization and wants to continue actively participating in it. Also the studies of Wehab,

Quaddus and Nowak (2009), Alijanpour, Doustia and Khodayari (2013) and that of Rafei-Dehkordi, Mohammmadi and Yektayar (2013) observed that perceived organizational support is a positive significant factor in employees' commitment to their organization. The findings of these studies also showed that the relationship between perceived organizational support and employees' organizational commitment is driven by the quest to reciprocate a kind gesture. According to them when employees feel supported by their organizations, they pay back by adopting positive work attitudes. Their findings and that of this study are consistent with social exchange model of organizational behavior.

The result of this study has implications for strategies on the promotion of teachers' commitments in their organization. Managers of educational organization should package organizational programmes like training, promotions and other developmental programmes in a manner that promote the well-being of their teachers. The perceptions on organizational support are important to teachers' perceptions of the quality of their social exchange relationships with their organizations and in turn affect their organizational commitment. (Behewstifar & Heart, 2013). In this light, there is need for educational organizations that want to provide qualitative learning to create a positive working environment. This will improve effectiveness and efficiency among their teaching staff and also guarantee its survival.

This current study suggests some areas for further research in order to take care of few limitations of the study. The study like earlier studies, made use of crosses sectional research design. It suggests that future studies will adopt longitudinal design. This will help monitor the progress of commitment among employees. Participants need to be expanded to include employees of other sectors other than teachers only. Also future research should look at the relationship between perceived organizational support and the three dimensions of organizational commitment to determine which among them correlates more with it.

Conclusively, a strong and direct positive significant relationship has been established between perceived organizational support and organization commitment among teachers in Nigeria. It is suggested that managers of educational organizations in Nigeria should innovate schemes to improve teachers' morale in order to elicit commitment from them. In doing this, teachers will develop strong sense of commitment to their organization which will in turn improve their quality of service and learning.

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