

Supervisor's personal characteristics and organizational commitment: Evidence from states agencies for mass education in North East, Nigeria

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Abstract

Organizational commitment is one of the widely researched areas because of its significance to organizational growths and development. Yet little is traceable to non-formal education settings, in Nigeria. The purpose of this study was to find out the correlation between demographic variables (gender, age and length of service) and supervisor's organizational commitment in North east, Nigeria. Correlational survey was carried out, using questionnaire for data collection. A total of 97 supervisors participated in 4 State Agencies for mass education of Bauchi, Borno, Gombe and Yobe states of northeastern, Nigeria. The findings show that, supervisors' organizational commitment and demographic variables (gender, age and length of service) are not significantly related. There is need to address these personal factors by encouraging supervisors to be committed, since supervisors in the agencies are significant drivers in achieving the objectives of mass education.

Keywords: Demographic variable, Organizational commitment, Supervisors, Mass education

Introduction

Organizational commitment is frequently described as the link between the employee and the organization, particularly the extent of performance, and identification with organizational programmes and policies (Dey, 2011). Organizational commitment according to Allen and Meyer (1990) can be regarded as "a psychological bonding that links the employee to his establishment. Organizational commitment is important in realizing organizational effectiveness and performance." Similarly, Allen and Meyer (1996), considered organizational commitment as one of the key indicators of sustainability of an organization. Various studies often focus on organizational commitment with variables like emotional intelligence (Seyel and Afzaal, (2013) job satisfaction (Meyer, et al, 2002) job performance (Jamal, 2011) turnover intention (Ahmad and

Rainyee, 2014; Park, Christie and Sype, 2014), organizational citizenship behaviour (Salehi & Gholtash, 2011). Though, some researchers indeed have reported organizational commitment relationship with demographic factors (Vandenberghe and Bentein, (2009); Affum- Osai, Acquah and Acheampong 2015). Conversely, little is known about employee's organizational commitment in the Nigerian non-formal education settings, where supervisors serve in unfavorable conditions with minimal job security, personal and career growths and progression, leading to high turnover as observed by researcher. Gaining awareness on how to attract and sustain employees is of paramount significance in ensuring effective service to the society. Moreover, Rhoades and Eisenberger, (2002) disclose the relevance of studying those variables since they are observed to be the correlates to the extent of commitment in

an organization. On this ground, it is of paramount significant to examine the organizational-based commitment in the non – formal education settings in the State Agencies for Mass Education, North East Nigeria. Extant empirical evidences cannot be generalized to formal education, because the samples examined are not from formal education setting. Secondly, non-formal education plays critical role in promoting national development and supervisors are significant to achieving the goals of the same. This paper focuses on supervisors' personal attributes such as: gender, age and length of in-service experience.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to determine the relationship between organizational commitment and gender, age and length of service of supervisors.

Research Hypotheses

Ha1: There is significant relationship between supervisor' gender and organizational commitment

Ha2: There is significant relationship between supervisor' age and their organizational commitment

Ha3: There is significant relationship between supervisor' length of service and their organizational commitment.

Literature Review

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment has been defined by different scholars, Dey, (2012) gives an explicit definition, which describes organizational commitment as passionate and purposeful level of affection an employee displays to the organization. According to Powell and Meyer (2004) "organizational commitment is referred to the degree to which employees identifies with the organizational goals which is not limited to work process and procedures, and equally resolve to apply effort, take part in processes of decision

making in accordance with the values of the organization." (p, 33). Thus, Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) presented organizational commitment as a connection to and belief of the individual in organization leads to a precise sequence of action. Employees who are committed to the official duties assigned to them are unique and outstanding among their fellows. Such kind of employees are characterized by their ideal attraction to their organization and they always focused on the achievement of their organizational goal (Carver & Candela, 2008). According to Krishna (2008), Cohen (2007), as well as Allen and Meyer (1996), organizational commitment as a concept and practical action has occupied a significant place of consideration in several sectors of human endeavours. Therefore, its constructs are multi-dimensional in nature. Some researchers such as Meyer and Allen (1991) upheld that organizational-commitment can be described by taking in to cognizance the employees desire, want, and obligation to stay with the employees.

In their contribution, Meyer and Allen (1991) viewed the mindset boundary that facilitate employee-employer relationship in an organizational setting into three (3) major levels. They are: first, Affective-Commitment which "talks about identification, involvement and emotional connection to the organization. Individuals with affective commitment continue to stay with their organization for the reason that *they want it*". Second, Continuance-Commitment which refers to "the mindfulness of the employees on consequences they would encounter upon leaving their jobs. Thus, it is concerned with the need of the employees to remain onboard." Third, Normative-Commitment with refers to "a sense of obligations feelings to maintain service. Employee ought, to *remain* due to high normative commitment" (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Furthermore, Meyer & Allen (1997) maintained that "employees who are committed are characterized by their loyalty and dedication to their workplace, safeguard

organizational resources and assets, share organization objectives”.

Analytically, various definitions of commitment are commonly grounded on and agreed that it is a force that link an employee to the employer (Bakan *et al.*, 2011). From the preceding discussions, this paper sees organizational commitment as a psychological association between employee and his organization, in terms emotional attachment, self-efficacy, as well as willingness and readiness of the employee to take part in the process of achieving the established organizational-goals.

Demographic Variables and Organizational Commitment

Researchers have observed different findings in studying organizational commitment and demographic information in organizations, hence the need to further investigation in this area (Bakan, Büyükbeşe, & Erşahan, 2011; Zhang & Jing, 2014). This study, mainly evolved around the following demographic attributes: i. Gender, ii. Age, and iii. Length of in-service experience in relation to organizational commitment. Kim *et al.*, (2014) opined that, personal characteristics play a significant role in defining how employees perceived their organization. In their respective studies, Mathieu and Zajac (1990), Meyer and Allen (1997), Meyer *et al.* (2002), and Nazari *et al.* (2012), advocated that, in explaining the nature and factors associated to employees’ organizational-commitment, demographic factors are significantly among the guiding pillars.

Gifford (2014) suggested, achieving organizational goals, objectives and mission requires not in small measure things that can systematically promote and facilitate the achievement of the predetermined goals. Mamman, Kamoche, and Bakuwa (2012), perceived that, demographic factors have the potentialities of affecting the organizational-commitment. Many questions still remain unresolved among researchers, especially, relationships between demographics and

organizational commitment (Emami, Alizadeh, Nazari, & Darvishi, 2012).

Organizational Commitment and Gender

Diverse results have been reported on the perceived influence of gender factors on organizational-commitment. Nazari, Pihie, Basri, & Idris (2012) and Marchiori and Henkin (2004) stated that, gender has been among the predictive factors to organizational-commitment in educational settings. However, Ngo and Tsang (1998) opined that there is no significant association in the midst of gender attributes and employees’ commitment. Conversely, meta-analytic result of Mathieu and Zajac (1990) reports that women showed higher affective commitment to organization than their men. Wainaina, (2015) reveals that, higher organizational commitment was shown by women lecturers as against their male counterparts in institutions of higher learning. In contrast, (Khalili & Asmawi, 2012) reported that, “averagely, male demonstrates higher affective, continuance and normative commitment in organizations when compared with females”. Hence, the current research work attempts to add value to this line of investigation in the context of non-formal education.

Organizational Commitment and Age

Some studies have shown relationship between age and organizational commitment could not show significant relationship, study by Agwu (2013) evidently reported that age is strongly related to organizational-commitment. In the same vein, Kura *et al.* (2012) discovered a significant positive significant relationship between organizational-commitment and age among sample respondents of teachers in public schools in Nigeria. Again, researchers like Amangala (2013); Al-Khatani, (2012); and Malik *et al.*, (2010) in their separate findings concluded that organizational commitment and age are significantly related, that older employees exhibit high commitment than the younger ones. On the other hand, Irvine *et al.* (1999), and Salami (2008), observed no correlation

links organizational-commitment and age-factor among their respondents. Therefore, this review depicts conflicting standpoints on the relatedness of organizational commitment with age. There is need to investigate this association from the context of supervisors in non-formal education settings as respondents.

Organizational Commitment and Length of In-service Experience

Researches on the correlational analysis linking length of in-service experiences and organizational-commitment have revealed inconsistent results. Hamid (2012) reported “a significant relationship between length of service and organizational commitment”. Similarly, Nazari (2012), reported “a significant relationship between length of service and organizational commitment among academics and industrial workers in Iran”. Salami (2008) reported the same in Nigeria. On the contrary, Tella, Ayeni and Popoola (2007) reported that “length of service and organizational commitment are not related among library employees in HEI”. In view of these contradictory outcomes from the review, there is a need for the cross examination of empirical evidences on the association between length of in-service experiences and organizational-commitment among supervisors in the non-formal education context is prompted in the SAME in north eastern Nigeria.

Research Methodology

This study sample was drawn among supervisors with permanent employment status in the State Agencies of Mass Education in Bauchi, Borno, Gombe and Yobe states in North East Nigeria. The study used correlational design. A total of 97 supervisors participated as respondent, and this was drawn from a population of 190 through proportionate random sampling technique, in line with Cochran (2016) sample size estimation criteria. Data was collected by researchers with the help of research assistances. Items on demographic data age, gender and length of service was developed, and an organizational commitment validated

questionnaire developed by from Meyer and Allen (1997) on 5-point Likert’s type scale comprising a number of 18 constructs was employed. The Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient of the instrument has reliability index of 0.79, hence the questionnaire was reliable. Data analysis was conducted using inferential statistics of Sphere man Rho correlations. SPSS was used to determine the correlation between the variables because age and length of service are not normally distributed. Similarly, Pallant (2007) stated that, a dichotomous variable like gender can be estimated using Spearman Rho correlation.

Results

Spearman Rho Correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between independent variables i.e. “demographic variables (gender, age, and length of service), with the dependent variable i.e. organizational commitment”. Therefore, Table 1 below shown the correlation coefficient of the relationships between the independent and dependent variables.

Table 1. Correlational Analysis between Demographic Variables (gender, age, and length of service) and Organizational-Commitment (n=97)

Independent Variables	Correlation Efficient (r_s)	P
Gender	-.056	0.33
Age	-.154	0.73
Length of Service	.139	0.52

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The result in Table 1 indicated that there is no significant relationship between gender and organizational commitment ($r_s = -.056$, $p > .05$). Thus, Ha1 which stated that “there is significant relationship between supervisors’ gender and their organizational commitment” is hereby proved rejected.

The result obtained in Table 1 revealed that, there is no significant relationship between age and

organizational commitment ($r = -.154, p > .05$). Thus, Ha₂ which stated that “there is significant relationship between supervisors’ age and their organizational commitment.” is hereby proved rejected.

Finally, table 1 presented above revealed that, there is no significant relationship between length of service and organizational commitment ($r_s = .139, p > .05$). Thus, the Ha₃ which stated that, “there is significant relationship between supervisor’ length of service and their organizational commitment.” is hereby proved rejected.

Discussions, Conclusion and Recommendations

This study discovered that the demographic attributes “i. gender, ii. Age, and iii. length of service” had no significant correlation with supervisor’s organizational commitment. Various empirical sources quoted revealed inconsistent outcomes on the correlational investigation linking organizational-commitment with demographic attributes. Theron, (2010) have empirically reported significant relationship between gender and organizational commitment, so also did by (Wainaina, 2015); Mathieu and Zajac (1990), different findings revealed that gender and organizational commitment significantly related (Gürses & Demiray, 2009). In contrast, researcher like Salami, (2008); (Chughtai & Zafar, 2006); Ngo and Tsang, (1998); reported non-significant relationship between employee’s organizational commitment and gender.

Al-Khatni et al., (2012) reported that older employees in organizations are highly committed than the younger employees. Similarly, Amangala, (2013); Malik et al., (2010) found that, age is positively related with organizational commitment, and that younger employees are found not to be as committed as the older employees. In addition, Kura et al. (2012) revealed in his study that “significant positive relationship exists between age and organizational commitment among teachers of unity school in Nigeria”. Conversely,

Irving et al (1997) found no significant association between organizational commitment and age. Corroborating this claim, finding from Salami, (2008) revealed that age and organizational commitment are not significantly related among his samples, hence could not predict organizational commitment, same view was earlier advance by Chughtai and Zafar,(2006).

Furthermore, empirical results have evidently proven that there is link between organizational commitment and tenure, although functionality of such connections are not clearly ascertain. According to Cohen (1993), there exists a strong correlation between tenure and organizational-commitment, since tenure was usually link to length of service as one of the precondition”. Mahanta, (2012) claims that being in organization for a longer duration makes one too connected, because putting more service years and engagements with colleagues usually increase ones’ level of connection. Jena (2015) reported positive significant relationship between organizational commitment and tenure. Meyer and Allen (1997) discloses that as long as employees’ length of service increases, so their commitment level. Their emotional connection eventually makes it difficult if not challenging for them to look for alternative work elsewhere. This assertion was supported by diverse finding Kaur and Sandhu (2010) disclose that, long term employees in an organization usually show stronger commitment. Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, (2002); Meyer et al., (2002) and Salami (2008). Iqbal, (2010); Arora, Nuseir, Nusair, & Arora, (2012) argue that, most often employees that served organization for a long duration have exhibited higher feeling for the goals and other outcomes of that particular organization. Personally, their relevance in the work increases, also make positive assessment of work which is attributed to longer duration of stay. Thus, justifying that the significant positive correlation between length of in-service experience and organizational-commitment exist.

In contrast, Adio and Popoola, (2010) found that correlation between length of in-service experience and organizational-commitment among library personnel in Nigeria was found to be non-significant. In the same vein, Chughtai and Zafar (2006) reported an insignificant correlation between organizational commitment and length of service.

From the far-reaching review, contradictory positions emerge on the correlation among gender, length of in-service experience and age with employee's organizational-commitment. One of the explanations for contradictory views would be attributed to boredom, where a longest serving employee may feel trapped, leading to unresponsiveness to the organization.

In relation to the finding of this study, all the three demographic variables (gender, age and length of service) in the context of non-formal education in SAME are not significantly related to organizational commitment for the following reasons, supervisory work was traditionally found to be male dominated profession in the sample states. Indeed, it is not unconnected with the cultural background of the respondent, within their customary context that could have influence their organizational commitment. This view was consistent with Agwu (2013); and Affum Osei, Acquah and Acheampong (2015) who assert that, contradiction between gender and organizational commitment could be partly attributed to cultural orientation and research method adopted in relation to the study context.

One of the reason why age is not significantly related to organizational commitment could be due to high rate of unemployment generally experience in Nigeria, especially among youths. therefore, many supervisors, get employed quite late in their age, mostly when many demands have burden them, especially that of immediate family, and on the other hand extended family orientation which is still relevant in many communities within the northeast. In view of these reasons many supervisors engage in other sources of income

generating usually farming and part time jobs to augment the deficits in their income, these practices couple with managerial shortcomings which are often political have compounded the system, culminating in low work and organizational commitment among supervisors, leading to multiple occupation and multi-work schedules'.

According to finding of this study, organizational commitment is not significantly related to length of service, this could be conceivably as a result of lack of regular promotion and recognition couple with not attaining much higher level in the service due to seeming neglects the system suffers.

This study evidently offers information on the supervisor's demographic variables and the interplay of these variables with organizational-commitment in the context of SAME in North-East Nigeria, Thus, there is need for policy makers and administrators to redirect attention to improve supervisors organizational commitment, through some deliberate organizational policies to addressed some of the challenges highlighted, there is need for government to address the problem of organizational and work commitment of supervisors from a broad policy angle that affects the individual, encompassing the social as well as the professional factors. For example, provide equal gender representation initiatives to attract more women, this might lead to positive work culture. It was also evident that, condition of service is another factor that needs to look in to, particularly salary and other incentives to mitigate the effect of low income of supervisors which happen to be a threat to their commitment. Career paths policies should be reform to reflect on promotional criteria which must conform to realities of present days, where productivity recognized and adequately compensated. This study is limited since the study sample was relatively low to generalized the findings to other SAME and organizations in the states, since sampled respondent are supervisors in selected SAME in the North-East Nigeria. Therefore, similar investigations should be carried out in other

settings across the states and other regions, in addition to other organizations to find more evidence on the relationship of those variables and organizational commitment, also to look at other demographic variable such as educational qualifications, marital status and income among supervisors and other employees to adequately address personal factors affecting organizational commitment.

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