EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND PERCEIVED JOB STRESS AS DETERMINANTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AMONG FUEL DISPENSERS IN OWERRI.

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ABSTRACT

The role of fuel dispensers in the development of economies like Nigerian economy cannot go unnoticed. They occupy very significant position in the downstream oil sector and play great role in the stabilization of the economy. They work in most uncharitable situations and ensure that the economy does not ground because the fulcrum of Nigerian economy is oil. This study therefore critically examined the link between emotional intelligence and perceived stress as predictors of organizational commitment. Using simple random sampling technique, 200 participants were selected for the study. They were 100 males and 100 females from 4 filling stations in Owerri. Their age was between 18 years to 30 years. Two hypotheses were tested using multiple standard regression. The results indicated that both emotional intelligence and perceived stress predicted organizational commitment of fuel dispensers in Owerri. The study recommends that management of any organization should endeavor to build on the emotional intelligence resources of the employees and remove any impediment that may cause stress among the employees. More so, psychologists especially counselors should be part of management so that they can provide professional advice from time to time to the organization.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Perceived Stress, Organizational Commitment

INTRODUCTION

For any organization to remain relevant to the economic development of the society, the activities of the employees play a great role in realizing it. The employees must be ready to devote more time, energy and sacrifice a lot to ensure that the organization remains afloat. Employees and marketers in the downstream oil industry have continued to face high level of competition. The oil marketers in which fuel dispensers are significant part of this population face tremendous competition occasioned mostly by global market situations and politics. The organizations are in many instances faced with extreme market conditions that only a viable, competent and committed workforce can be able to deliver in terms of profit.

Thus, the commitment of the employees and in this circumstance fuel dispensers must be total, absolute and unwavering so that the business aims and objectives can be achieved. Fuel dispensers work under strenuous conditions and hazardous environment and are always at the risk of death in view of the circumstance and nature of their operations. However, the world economic challenges do not give fuel dispensers any exception as they are always expected to deliver on assignments and be effective in realizing the objectives of the organization. The effectiveness as expected must be hinged on commitment to ideals of the organization in any circumstance they may find themselves.

Researchers have continued to come up with varying definitions or sentences of the meaning of organizational commitment. Organizational commitment is the level of attention an individual showcases to issues and situations affecting the organization. It

encompasses the quality of response to the needs of the organization and also the ability to stand in the gap to things that affect the organization. According to Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979), organizational commitment is the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization. It connotes an eagerness to serve the organization without any sign of bitterness and rancor. Organizational commitment indicates the strength of identification with the goals, values and mission of the organization. It serves as a gauge in the assessment of the rate of effectiveness of the employees and defines the borderline in identifying actually employees who share the aspirations of the organization. It indicates the level and quality of relationship that exists between the organization and the employee. Organizational commitment defines the probability of remaining in the organization and also evolves the approach to follow in addressing the issues that arise as the employee remains in the organization.

Organizational commitment is considered to be a multi-dimensional construct by several researchers. For example, Meyer and Allen (1997) conceptualized and proposed a model of organizational commitment that includes three distinct components; affective, normative and continuance commitment. The affective model indicates the interest or determination to remain and abide with the organization due to emotional and psychological attachment and passion for the organization. In this model, the employee has a feel for the organization and desires to ensure that the organization survives against all odds. In the affective domain, the individual mobilizes the workers towards the goals of the organization through the activation of their affective resources. The normative commitment indicates the feelings of obligation of the individual based on

perceived attachment to the organization goals (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Singh & Gupta, 2015). The individual believes in the goals of the organization and shares in the philosophy behind the goals of the organization. One great advantage of normative commitment is that the employees are part and parcel of the development of the goals and were involved in the whole process of implementation. In normative commitment, the employees have a sense of ideological identification and obligation to the ideals of the organization. They have a sense of ownership as the goals and objectives usually stem from the ideological and sublime leanings of the employees. Continuance commitment refers to a state where employees wish to continue their stay on a job because they fear they may suffer financially, socially and economically if they take up another job opportunity. Organizational commitment develops gradually and it is built over time especially as the organization and the individual strive daily to fashion out the best for the organization and the employees. Organizational commitment is actually an important variable especially for fuel dispensers in their continued effort to withstand the vagaries of challenges facing them in the discharge of their duties. Apart from being committed to the organization, fuel dispensers are also expected to be emotionally intelligent in order to meet the challenges in a competitive economy like Nigerian economy.

Emotional intelligence is the capacity to be aware of, control, and express one's emotions, and to handle interpersonal relationships judiciously and empathetically. It describes ability, capacity, skill, or self-perceived ability to identify, assess, and manage the emotions of one's self, of others, and of groups. It consists of interrelated emotional and social competencies, skills and facilitators that determine how well we

understand and express ourselves, understand others and relate with them, and cope with daily demands, challenges and pressures. The work of fuel dispensing involves interacting with people on daily basis who come to patronize the organization. These customers come with varied conditions in terms perception, ideology, and orientation and expect to be satisfied. The employee makes effort to accommodate these individuals and tries to balance the behavior that is usually exhibited by the customer and the rules and regulations guiding the organization. Emotional intelligence entails the ability to manage ones emotions and that of others (Mayer, 2008). This management of emotions involves and encapsulates emotional awareness which is the capacity to collate emotions and relate them to responsibilities like constructive thinking, solving problems and control on reactions especially self -regulating emotions like cheering up or calming down. It is seen as the ability to manage the body's physiological and psychological conditions like stress, anxiety, communication, empathy, solving problems and conflict management. Emotional intelligence involves all efforts aimed at perceiving, controlling, interpreting and evaluating emotions. For the fuel dispensers, emotional intelligence enables the consummation of all the necessary skills needed in the delivery of the assignment given by the organization. It guides thoughts, creativity and harnesses the rare talents and skills of the employee needed for the growth and development of the organization.

Emotional intelligence is an organizing framework for categorizing abilities relating to understanding, managing and using feelings (Salovey & Mayer, 1994). It helps to define strength and abilities that engender productivity and achievement of goals. These abilities when harnessed properly propel commitment on the employees and the organization gets improved. Commitment as an important decimal makes any organization to devote more to understanding the emotional variables that help employees like fuel dispensers work harder and not be distracted as they work daily in the organization. Emotional intelligence gravitates the resources that mobilize employees for commitment. The resources can be dormant or inactive due to constrained factors but emotional intelligence reenergizes them and the abilities are reawakened for the growth and development of the organization. A study by Nikolaou and Tsaousis (2002) show a strong relationship between some components of emotional intelligence and organizational commitment. The results revealed that the use of emotions in emotional intelligence had strong links with organizational commitment in spite of the weak and average links between the control of emotions and understanding emotions with organizational commitment. Interestingly, Mubashir (2017, Adesine (2017), Karabi and Monoshree (2018), Mehboob (2016), and Abhishek and Rajeev (2016) noted in their varying researches in India that emotional intelligence predicted organizational commitment. Generally, positive correlations were found between emotional intelligence and organizational commitment. Also, the researchers stated that emotional intelligence is a key factor in increasing organizational commitment. In another study, Carmeli (2003) found that affective commitment had positive relationship with emotional intelligence. In fact, employees with high emotional intelligence had higher levels of affective commitment and attachment to organization. Furthermore, there was a negative relationship between emotional intelligence and continuance commitment, and continued commitment of a person with high

emotional intelligence decreased. It was found that there was high positive relationship between emotional intelligence and affective organizational commitment. Lack of affective commitment makes resources to be dormant and unutilized in the organization. Apart from the resources of the employees being dormant due to debilitating factors in the workplace, perceived stress can be a major factor in the achieving high level of commitment from the employees.

Stress is a fact of life and for any organization to achieve her aims and objectives, stress activation is a significant issue to be considered. Stress can be essential to an organization if managed well, but it can also be debilitating to the organization if not managed well. However, the impact of stress on any matter in the organization is usually determined by the perception of the matter by the employees. Stress is determined by the appraisal of a situation in an organization. The perception of an issue in an organization goes a long to indicate if the issue will be stressful or not. Some individuals adapt easily to stressful situations and may achieve substantial progress in stressful environments while some others may become tensed easily at minimal stress levels and may become paralyzed when exposed to stressful situations (Oyelaran, Tudunwada, Abidoye & Sanusi, 2016).

More recently, stress is understood as a feeling which occurs when an individual's working or living conditions or circumstances make demands beyond the individual's capacity to handle such a situation physically or emotionally (Oboegbulem, 2007). In simple terms, stress is a feeling individuals experience in the course of responding to a physical or mental demand which requires application of energy. Usually, stress is triggered when an external stressor (or event) exceeds a person's psychological, emotional, as well as physiological resources (Ragin, 2011). Stress indicates a situation where an individual is weighed down by things that are too strong for the person to manage.

Velnampy and Aravinthan (2013) argue that work stress has a negative and significant relationship with organizational commitment. Role conflict and ambiguous role as a trigger of stress have an influence on the decrease of organizational commitment, which means there is a negative and significant relationship between perceived stress with organizational commitment. For the fuel dispensers, servicing the deluge of customers and maintaining the routine of rules and regulations draw the resources of the employees out.

Deepa and Amit (2016) conducted a study on the relationship of teacher effectiveness, teacher stress on teachers' commitment. 450 teachers with doctorate degree and without doctorate degrees, with different levels of experience were selected from 45 selected colleges of education taking, 10 teachers from each institution randomly. Questionnaire was used for the study. The findings of the study revealed that there is significant relationship in the teacher stress to teacher's commitment. It shows that stress has an effect to teachers' commitment where a teacher feels reluctant in teaching and other activities in the class.

Mardliah and Choi (2015) investigated a topic on the role of occupational stress on organizational commitment among medical practitioners. The determinants of occupational stress that have been investigated under this study include role ambiguity, role overload, and work family conflict. The sample consists of medical practitioners from Malacca. 386 medical

practitioners were invited to participate in the questionnaire survey. A cross sectional study was used to examine the relationship between occupational stress and organizational commitment. Descriptive analysis, Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis were employed to analyze the data. According to the result, the level of role ambiguity and role overload was high. However, there was a moderate level of work family conflict. The findings also revealed that there is a significant relationship between occupational stress and organizational commitment in a negative way. Only role ambiguity had positive significant relationship with organization commitment. The result also shows that role ambiguity and role overload were predictors of job satisfaction.

Stress according to Martins, Carlson and Buskiot (2007), is a pattern of physiological, behavioural and cognitive responses to stimuli (real or imagined) that are perceived as endangering one's well-being. They went further to state that prolonged stress can produce anxiety which may impair one's ability to perform a task. It implies that any fuel dispenser experiencing high level of stress may break down, feel vaguely weak, tense, restless, slow and generally tired and may become too sick to work or refuse to work any further. In other words, stress can inflict low productivity. Stress is not simply any event that triggers negative emotional responses but it is a two-way process where individuals interact with their environment. In other words, stress can impact individuals' level of commitment or functioning. It is negative only when individuals perceive the situation as stressful and their resources are inadequate to handle environmental stimuli especially in fuel dispensing. Sy, Tram, and O'Hara (2006) and Nikolaou and Tsaousis (2002) maintain that employees with high emotional intelligence confront low occupational stress

in their job environment, yet employees with low emotional intelligence have less self-awareness, and as a result, in the face of difficult conditions, they are not able to cope with their feelings and have too much stress which, in turn, has a negative influence on their job satisfaction.

Statement of the Problem:

Fuel dispensers are indispensible people in the downstream oil sector that work assiduously to ensuring that Nigerian economy does not collapse. They work continuously in making sure that the needs of the customers are adequately met. Meeting these demands of the customers are not only the challenges faced by fuel dispensers, they also work to deliver on the goals and objectives of the organization. Unfortunately, fuel dispensers work in the most uncharitable work conditions upon the fact that they hold the economic ace. In most instances, they are not kitted very well and in most cases their salaries do not come promptly. Also, they usually work in the most uncommon work structure and shift which affect their cognition and perception of what life and work mean. This study is a strong attempt at looking at whether emotional intelligence and perceived stress can predict organizational commitment of fuel dispensers in view of their important role in sustaining the nation's economy.

Purpose of the Study:

This study examines the possibility of emotional intelligence and perceived job stress capability of predicting organizational commitment. However, in specific terms, this study looks at:

1   If emotional intelligence will predict organizational commitment of fuel dispensers in Owerri.

2 To examine if perceived stress can predict organizational commitment of fuel dispensers in Owerri.

Hypotheses:

1. Emotional Intelligence will significantly predict organizational commitment of fuel dispensers in Owerri.
2. Perceived Stress will significantly predict organizational commitment of fuel dispensers in Owerri.

Method

Participants:

A total of two hundred participants took part in this study. They were one hundred males and one hundred females. The participants were selected through simple random sampling technique from 4 filling stations in Owerri. Fifty participants were selected from each of the filling stations. Twenty five males and twenty females. The filling stations were Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) mega station at Onitsha road Owerri, Total filling station Egbu road Owerri, Tonimas filling station Okigwe road Owerri and Ebere Links filling station Port Harcourt road Owerri. The participants were mainly single persons. The age range is 18 – 30 years and they are mostly graduates from Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education.

Instruments:

Three instruments were used in this study. They were

Emotional Intelligence test by Schutte (1998), Job-Related Tension scale by Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn and Snock (1964), and Organizational Commitment Scale (OCS) by Buchanan (1974).

Emotional Intelligence test by Schutte (1998) The scale measures specific aspects of awareness and expression of emotion, outlook on life, depressed mood, ability to regulate emotions and impulsivity. It contains 33 items . As expected, higher scores on the 33-item emotional intelligence scale were associated with less alexithymia as measured by the Toronto Alexithymia Scale [$r(24) = - 0.65$, $p < 0.000$], greater attention to feelings as measured by the Attention subscale of the Trait Meta Mood Scale [$r(48) = 0.63$, $p < 0.000$). Udeagha (2011) revalidated the scales using Nigerian samples. The Cronbach alpha was .72 with test re-test reliability procedure and a split half reliability of .80.

The second scale which is the Job-related Tension (JT) was developed by Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn and Snock (1964). It is used to test perceived stress in organizations or work place. It is a 15-item inventory designed to assess the nature, cause and consequences of two aspects of organizational stress. It measures tension, discomfort, uncertainty, indecisiveness and distress that a worker experiences as a result of the social and physical circumstances of the work setting. The norm for American samples are M = (n=132): 2.84 F (n =94): 2.81. Oseghare (1988) provided the psychometric properties for Nigerian samples which are M (n =216): 2.35 F (n=238): 281. The Nigeria reliability co-efficient is .39 and validity is .46. The Nigeria norm or mean scores are the basis of interpreting the scores of clients in this study. Scores higher than the norms indicate high level of job tension and stress while scores lower than the norms indicate the absence of organizational stress.

The third scale Organizational commitment scale (OCS) was developed by Buchanan (1974).The scale contains 23 items that were designed to assess the extent to which a worker is affectively attached to the achievement of the goals and values of an organization. It is scored on a 7 point likert format from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). The scale has three dimensions namely: identification, involvement and loyalty. The norm for the scale is 95.48. Scores higher than the norm indicate that they manifest adequate aspects of organizational commitment and scores lower than the norm indicate inadequate aspects of organizational commitment. Buchanan (1974), reported coefficient alpha of .86, .84, and .92 for identification, involvement and loyalty test respectively, with a validity coefficient of .62 while Mogaji (1997) provided the Nigerian psychometric properties which are 25.87, 28.54 and 38.90 respectively.

PROCEDURE

Permission was gotten from the Human Resources/Ethics department unit of the various filling stations used in the study.

After properly explaining the purpose of the research and obtaining their consent, they were presented with the study's questionnaire which contained the three measures alongside some demographic questions. The participants were allowed adequate time to complete the questionnaire because of their busy work schedules. They were assured of their confidentiality as the purpose is for research only. Those who asked questions related to the instruments were provided with useful answers to guide them in the completion of the questionnaires. In all, 250 questionnaires were distributed with only 200 of these returned fully completed and found usable for the study after adequate data screening.

Design and Statistics

The design for this study is a Cross-Sectional Survey Design. This is because a large number of samples were surveyed at within a particular time frame. Data analyses were done using Standard Multiple Regression Analyses on SPSS Version 17

Results

Table 1: Summary Table of Correlation Coefficients of Organizational Commitment and Emotional Intelligence on Perceived Job Stress

		Organizational Commitment	Emotional Intelligence	Perceived Jobs Stress
Pearson Correlation	**Organizational Commitment**	1.000		
	Emotional Intelligence	.009	1.000	
	Perceived Jobs Stress	-.013	-.036	1.000

Table 2: Multiple Regression of Organizational Commitment and Emotional Intelligence on Perceived Job Stress.

Variables	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	f	β	df	t	Sig
	.016	.000	-.010	.025		2,197		.975
Emotional Intelligence					.009		.122	.903
Perceived Job Stress					-.013		-.182	.855

The first hypothesis which states that emotional intelligence would predict organizational commitment of fuel dispensers in Owerri was significant therefore the hypothesis was accepted.

Hence, this implies that emotional intelligence is a good predictor of organizational commitment especially among fuel dispensers in Owerri.. (B=.009, t.(2,197) = .122, p>.05)

The second hypothesis which states that perceived job stress would significantly predict organizational commitment of fuel dispensers in Owerri was significant. This shows that the hypothesis was accepted.

Discussion

This study examined emotional intelligence and perceived stress as predictors of organizational commitment among fuel dispensers in Owerri. Two hypotheses were tested in the study, the first hypothesis which states that Emotional Intelligence will

significantly predict organizational commitment was accepted. This implies that emotional intelligence does predict organizational commitment of fuel dispensers. This study is consistent with the research of Mubashir (2017, Adesine (2017), Karabi and Monoshree (2018), Mehboob (2016), and Abhishek and Rajeev (2016) who noted that emotional intelligence predicted organizational commitment in their study of nurses in India.. Nowadays, emotional intelligence is recognized as one of the solutions for increasing job satisfaction and organizational commitment and reducing occupational stress among the experts. Relative familiarity of the researcher with the target organization and the conversations with employees during data collection indicated that lower level needs were not satisfied and higher level of needs were not noticed.

However, the second hypothesis which states that perceived stress will significantly predict organizational commitment of fuel dispensers in Owerri was significant. This implies that perceived stress does predict

organizational commitment. A number of studies have shown the correlations between role stress and organizational outcomes. For instance, job stress has been related to job attitudes, including job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, and turnover intentions (Sweeney, and Quirin, 2009). It also has negative influence on employees, such as, lower job satisfaction and, increased chances of burnout, higher rates of absenteeism, raised turnover intent, and an increased risk for health problems (Lambert, 2009). Mathieu and Zajac (1990) posit that highly committed employees feel the effects of stress more than less committed employees do. They might experience more negative reactions to such stressors than less committed ones (Meyer, 2002). However, not few studies suggest an inverse association between work stress and organizational commitment (Boyas, and Wind, 2010; Lambert,2009; and Nikolaou and Tsaousis, 2002). Sweeney and Quirin (2009) found that occupational stress did not have any significant direct effect on affective commitment, yet job satisfaction was a mediator between job stress and affective commitment. Darwish (2002) noted that job satisfaction directly and positively influences affective and normative commitment and negatively influences continuance commitment. Also, job satisfaction mediates the influences of occupational stress on various facets of organizational commitment, except continuance commitment.

This result is in line with the finding of Syeda, Marium and Beenish (2017) and Melvina (2013) who also assert a significant effect of perceived stress or organizational commitment of secondary school teachers. Also the findings of Simbarashe. (2015), Raja and Syed (2017), Cooper, Raut ,Faragher (2016), Sattar and Jamil (2004), Nur and Demi (2017) and Mardliah and Choi (2015) are Contrary to the findings of

this study. This might be due to the variables studied, participants studied, sample used and Age studied.

Implication of the Study:

In essence, the implications of the study show that emotional intelligence has impact on organizational commitment. This is true because many fuel dispensers are likely aware of their emotions and have the ability to control and express their emotions and handle interpersonal relationships judiciously and empathetically; despite the difficulties and challenges they face daily. They are mostly graduates and in many instances study, understand and manage the varying emotions displayed by customers as they discharge their duties in line with the objectives of the organization. The second result and findings imply that perceived stress does predict organizational commitment of fuel dispensers. This may likely be due to their ability to control the feelings and thoughts they have on how much stress they are under at a given point in time. Since stress is a state of mental tension resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances, the fuel dispensers choose to have a positive mind set to their commitment in the organization they find themselves, thereby, not perceiving the difficulties and challenges faced as being stressful and uncondusive. The high level of unemployment in the country may be another reason as the workers may try as much as possible to cover or pretend not to feel stress so that they do not lose their jobs as they may not find another one again.

Limitation of the Study

In the course of the study, the researcher encountered certain difficulties and limitations. First, accessing the participants and their willingness to participate in this study was a huge challenge because most of the fuel dispensers were usually busy at the

point the researcher met them. Secondly, the samples for the study were not much enough to enable generalization of result due to the time frame for the study. Also, the researcher encountered some delay in the field due to the process of waiting for some fuel dispensers who took the questionnaire home due to their busy schedule to return them.

Suggestions for Further Study

Further researchers should embark on investigating other variables that might likely predict organizational commitment such as self esteem, Age, Gender, Locus of Control. Personality, etc. There should be increase in the number of participants to enable a healthy generalization of results. Also more organizations should be used, not limiting it to fuel dispensers.

Recommendations

From the result of the study, the researcher highly recommends that owners filling stations, and all managers of people in the downstream sector must ensure that the psychological capabilities of their employees are enhanced so that they can withstand the new trend of challenges from customers and pressure in the economy and high level of competition. Also, situations and circumstances that cause stress among the employees must be removed. No organization grows in an atmosphere of stress especially the one occasioned by the management. On that note, any stressful work condition or structure should be avoided. There should be on the ground, psychologists, counselors and functional counseling department that can always help these employees keep pace with their emotions and manage stressful circumstances that may arise due to the nature of their work.

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