

Job-Characteristics Dimensions and Employee Continuance Commitment

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Abstract

Effort towards retaining committed of regular nonacademic staff has remained a recurrent concern, indicating that, employees' commitment among university workers, could have been compromised. However, even when investigated into, more extrinsic and less intrinsic factors are applied to determine the commitment. Hence, the study approached this gap from job-characteristics dimensions to employee continuance commitment. The cross-sectional survey research design was adopted and, data collected from 377 regular nonacademic staff using validated and reliable copies of a questionnaire. Multiple regression analysis was applied as the inferential statistics. Results from multiple regression analysis conducted found that job-characteristics dimensions had a significant effect on employee continuance commitment [$R = 0.726$, $F(5, 371) = 78.081$, $p < 0.05$]. Also, task identity, task significance, and feedback had a significant positive effect on continuance commitment. On the strength of the statistical findings, it was recommended for management emphasize on task identify, significance and, feedback to enable continuance commitment of non-academic staff.

Index terms— continuance commitment, job-characteristics dimensions.

1 Introduction

Continuance commitment commentary has engendered several debates as to whether employees stay and perform optimally in an organization as a result of intrinsic and or extrinsic factors. Interestingly, the uniqueness, dynamism, and complexity of man are unfathomable and unpredictable, and the same can equally refer to what triggers an individual's commitment (Brumley, 2014). Globally, academics, business operators, and administrators for over a decade, are increasingly acknowledging employees' commitment as a factor in attaining organizational goals (Nzewi, Chiekiezie, Ekene, Raphael, & Ebuka, 2017; Shahid & Azhar, 2013). However, context observations and workplace practices within and among different industries have hybridized to depict commitment problems as turnover, absenteeism and sub-optimal performance (Ebeh, Uhiara, Sydney-Agbor, & Nwankwo, 2013; Gupta, Shaheen, & Reddy, 2017).

According to Allen and Meyer (1990), continuance commitment is based on the costs that employees associate with leaving the organization, and it could be dependent on extrinsic and or intrinsic factors. Mouhamadou, Peter, and Moussa (2016) noted that continuance commitment occurs when employees stay in the organization because of the recognition of the costs associated with leaving the organization. Therefore, the economic cost of leaving the organization could predict continuance commitment. Nevertheless, Allen and Meyer (1991) claimed that continuance commitment could be influenced either by monetary rewards (Aina, Adeyeye, & Ige, 2012), structure (Ardrey, Pecotich, & Ungar, 2001), withdrawal intentions (Ortiz & Lau, 2011), and or human resource management practices (Shahid & Azhar, 2013). However, Ebeh, Uhiara, Sydney-Agbor, and Nwankwo (2013) argued that, employee commitment may not only be as a result of the organization type and benefits but, the inherent characteristics of the job such as aspects of the task the employee is engaged in, the degree to which the job is defined and is under the control of the employee.

Job characteristics also referred to as job enrichment or job design (Magaji, Akpa, & Akinlabi, 2017; Salau, Adeniji & Oyewunmi, 2014), allows employees more control and responsibility for how their job is performed subject to knowledge, skills and ability (Egwakhe, 2014). Thus, achieving job characteristics involve redesigning of jobs in a way that increases the opportunities for an employee to experience feelings of responsibility, achievement, growth, recognition, autonomy, the significance of the job, feedback in the work setting and having better control (Magaji, 2015). However, Akeke, Akeke, and Awolusi (2015) and Herzberg (1959) claimed that every job must have five core dimensions which are, skill variety, task significance, task identity, autonomy, and feedback to achieve job characteristics.

Contextually, though many institutions, including educational institutions' assertion are that employees are their greatest asset and agents of success, the notion of employee continuance commitment, which is a dimension of commitment is often overlooked. Also, the lack of commitment to work has remained one of the quality values deficient among most personnel in higher educational institutions (Egwakhe & Osabuohien, 2009; Kiiza & Picho, 2015). Reports of nonchalant attitude to work, laxity, mediocrity, and ineptitude reigns highly among most staff members in Nigerian universities (Akinsanya & Oludeyi, 2013; Oludeyi, 2015). The problem becomes more worrisome as reports of issuance of certificates with incorrect bio data, missing scores, upgrading of failed grades at result computation level, hiding failed grades and selling of grades, is on the increase (Amune, 2015; Asiyai, 2015).

2 Literature Review

Conceptually, Stebbins (1970) and Wang, Indridasson, and Saunders (2011) referred to continuance commitment as what is preventing a person from changing to another. Zopiatis, Constanti, and Theocharous (2014) described continuance commitment as a psychological state that is different from value commitment since it is not as a result of the presence of rewards rather, it is from the presence of penalties which are associated with leaving a position. Oludeyi (2015) affirmed that continuance commitment had been shown to affect individuals' intention to keep their position and stay as a part of a project or organization as, Enyia (2016) noted that people have the knowledge of the economic concerns associated when leaving a position or organization. Umoh et al. (2014) argued that, as against the submission of Stebbins (1970), the costs associated with leaving an organization might include a wide variety of entities, some of which are measurable and others which are more intangible. Hence continuance commitment could develop out of the perceived cost (benefit against loss), and requires that the employee should be aware of these benefits and losses.

Job characteristics involve ensuring that a job is designed to motivate and enhance performance (Magaji, 2015). Salau et al. (2014) claimed that job characteristics is a design of job that increases the volume of employees' autonomy, control, skill varieties and responsibility which invariably helps to reduce rigidity, tediousness, and lack of creativity. Davoudi and Mehdi (2013) proposed job characteristics as 'vertical loading' of a job implying that an enriched task which depicts the character of the job should provide a range of tasks to be carried out with an adequate feedback mechanism, encouragement, and communication. As a result, job characteristics allows the employee to work innovatively and accordingly because of the expansion of role and responsibility (Obi-Nwosu, Chiamaka, & Tochukwu, 2013). However, Hackman and Oldham (1975) posited that variety, autonomy and decision authority are three ways of adding challenge to a job, while job enrichment and job rotation are the two ways of adding variety and challenge. Thus Vijay and Indradevi (2015) asserted that for a task to be referred to as enriched it should have the five job enrichment dimensions which include: skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback.

3 a) Skill variety

Skill variety refers to the degree to which the job requires different skills and talents. Derek and Laura (2000) opined that movement of employees from one task to another within a particular organization and allowing workers to adopt a variability of tasks in their work helps in avoiding repetitiveness, dullness, and boredom. Several researchers have claimed that when a variety of skills are necessary to complete a task and those skills are perceived to be of value to the organization; employees find their work to be more meaningful (Bratton, 2007; Magaji, 2015). As a result, an employee can draw from several different skills and abilities as well as upon a range of knowledge (Ali & Aroosiya, 2010). Thus, whereas a job that has limited skill variety is likely to be less stimulating and may result in boredom, jobs that are high in skill variety are perceived by employees as more challenging because of the range of skills involved (Kemboi, Biwott, Chenuos, & Rutto, 2013; Pee, 2011). However, very high skill variety may deplete employees' mental resources and lead to mental overload and increase job pressure (Chen & Chiu 2009). The above assertions were corroborated by Awolusi (2015) that despite the advantages of skill variety, the strategies implemented in achieving skill variety have to be prudently weighed.

4 b) Task Identity

According to Choge, Chepkinyang, and Chelimo (2014), task identity is defined as the extent to which an individual can complete a whole and identifiable piece of work. Scholars have opined that employees who work on a tiny part of whole work are unable to identify their broadened to produce a whole product or an identifiable part of it, then task identity has been established (Hasebur & Sheikh, 2014; Lunenburg, 2013). Lunenburg (2013) indicated

that task identity creates a sense of responsibility for completion that acts as a motivational driver and increased commitment. Omid and Alborz (2014) added that it assists employees in understanding the link between the jobs assigned to them and other activities in the organization. As a result, task identity is a critical element of employee personal and workout outcomes since the entire job is viewed from a holistic view and not viewed for its components (Nyabundi & Kagiri, 2016). Thus employees working in jobs with low task identity feel that they lack personal accomplishment, feel bored, and perceive their jobs as meaningless (Nyabundi, & Kagiri, 2016;Pee, 2011). However, when task identity is very high, employees are likely to feel solely accountable for the results of their work and this may result in stress and negatively impact commitment (Pee, 2011; Nyabundi & Kagiri, 2016).

5 c) Task Significance

Scholars defined task significance as the degree to which the job has a substantial impact on the lives or work of other people, both in the immediate organization or in the external environment (Choge, Chepkiyeng, & Chelimo, 2014;Lunenburg, 2013). Academics have claimed that if employees understand the significance of their tasks, they will seek to increase their capabilities and learning. Such individuals continually desire to improve their work knowledge to maintain the value of their job. (Omid & Alborz, 2015). Consequently, Salauet al. (2014) asserted that task significance centers on how essential the task is to the overall efforts of the organization both locally and internationally. Hence, when task significance is very high, it will serve as a driving force and motivational tool for employees to increase and exert more efforts on the job (Lynton & Pareek, 2000). Accordingly, Fourman and Jones (1997) submits that familiarization of the workers with how different fragment of the organization works collectively, be aware of what the end product is, what it does and who uses it, since an organization is a "system" that depends on the performance of each segment operated by various employees is paramount.

6 d) Autonomy

Sisodia and Das (2013) defined job autonomy as the extent to which employees have a say in scheduling their work, selecting the equipment to be used, and deciding on procedures to be followed. Several scholars have claimed that job autonomy refers to the extent to which an employee can determine the pace, sequence, and methods to accomplish the job (Magaji, 2015)

7 e) Feedback

Hellriegel and Slocum(2011) opined that job feedback is the degree to which carrying out the work activities required by the job provides the individual with direction and clear information about the effectiveness of the individual's performance. However, feedback can be positive or negative, but it is best when it is balanced appropriately (Lunenburg, 2013). As a result, feedback should frequently occur rather than be delayed until the annual evaluation meeting. Sole (2009) claimed that feedback does not stop until it goes further to communicate back to the employees. Employee's evaluation through appropriate feedback mechanism to a considerable extent help employees to monitor progress within the organization to carry out duties, tasks, and responsibilities and this feedback can be made available on a daily, weekly, monthly, and quarterly basis (Kemboiet al., 2013). Therefore, Salauet al. (2014) affirmed that feedback in return should not just be every year but also as frequent and timely as possible to maintain and sustain performance and measure commitment. However, whereas too much feedback may have a negative effect, too much negative feedback can threaten an employees' sense of competence while too much positive feedback can cause an employee to feel ingratiated (Kemboiet al., 2013).

Empirically, previous studies have provided evidence of strong correlations between dimensions of job characteristics and the commitment of employees (Don-Solomon& Luke, 2016; Volmeret al., 2012). Other studies found that employees, who are more productive and can stay longer on the job, were able to highlight higher commitment ratings as a result of job satisfaction and job design(Azeezet al., 2016; Velnampy & Sivesan, 2012).However, some studies provided evidence of only a few dimensions of job characteristics significantly related to the commitment of employees' dependent on the type of organization, type of job, and position (Kónya, Mati?, & Pavlovi?, 2016);as studies have shown that a low commitment has is associated with low levels of morale (Fika, Ibi,& Abdulrahman, 2016; Ushie, Agba, & Okorie, 2015).

Further, previous studies have shown that employees working in jobs with high task significance believe that their actions benefit others (social impact) and valued by others (social worth) (Grant 2008; Salauet al., 2014). In line with these findings, Pee (2011) found that task significance is positively related to employee commitment; while high levels of job control and autonomy are negatively linked to role conflict and role ambiguity (Spector, 1986). Conversely, employees with less job autonomy have only pre-defined strategies to fulfill tasks (Humphrey et al., 2007) Cohen (2007) focused on commitment. The theories proposed that some factors in the workplace cause job satisfaction, while a separate set of factors cause dissatisfaction. That, often, work should be arranged as job enlargement, rotation and or enrichment to create the opportunity for employees to take part in planning, performing, and evaluating their work. Also that removing some of the control management has over employees and increasing the accountability and responsibility workers have over their work would eventually, increase employee autonomy. Further, an individual's intentions and general perceptions of commitment were developed in the socialization process and were influenced by personal beliefs, values, expectations about the job and prior

experiences before entry into the organization since, socialization is mostly influenced outside work (pre-entry into institution) (Wei Bo, Kaur, & Jun 2010). Inferring that as a result of the personality and socialization process of an individual, whereas skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback could have a positive and significant effect on continuance commitment for an employee it may not be the same for another employee.

8 III.

9 Methodology

This work adopted the cross-sectional survey research design to attempt to understand a particular population at a time and to ensure that the amount of uncertainty characterizing a decision in a situation is clearly defined through highly structured approach (Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin, 2012). The decision to use cross-sectional survey is consistent with the study of Onabajo(2011) and Oyelere et al.,(2015) A sample size of four hundred and thirty (430) constituted the sample size determined by utilizing the formula developed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) for sample determination for a finite population. The study adopted a multiple-stage sampling technique. The research was conducted through a well-structured questionnaire from regular non-academic staff to obtain large amounts of data needed from a large number of people in a short period, to quantified data to compare and contrast other researches, to measure change, and add to empirics. Items in the questionnaire were adopted and adapted because the questionnaire have been used in different countries and industries.

The pilot test conducted was on the questionnaire along with validity and the reliability test. Content, criterion, and construct validity were established (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) to determine the reliability of the instrument. The face content or face validity (scale's validity) was applied to measure how well the content of the research measurement instrument measures what it is designed to measure. The construct validity was addressed through the review of literature; adopting and adapting instruments used in previous research that has been critically reviewed and validated (Skill Variety (?) = 0.71, Task Identity (?) = 0.89, Task Significance (?) = 0.86, Autonomy (?) = 0.79, Feedback (?) = 0.71, and Continuance Commitment (?) = 0.73) (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006). While the criterion validity was used to measure the ability of the research instrument to predict future outcomes. The reliability result through Cronbach's alpha coefficient from the internal consistency test revealed (?) = 0.871 (with the lowest being 0.723; and the highest 0.895). Based on the results of the pre-test result as depicted by the Cronbach's alpha that was greater than (>) 0.70 and closer to 1.0 (Livingston, 2018; Unnally, 1978), the structured questionnaire was considered reliable. The work used primary data sourced from the sampled private universities and analyzed by using The multiple regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis at 95% confidence interval.

IV.

10 Results and Discussions

The retrieved copies from the administered four hundred and thirty (430) questionnaires was three hundred and seventy-seven (377) which represented a response rate of 87.7%, The study assumption was that, job-characteristics dimensions (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, feedback) have no significant effect on employee continuance commitment. Therefore, to test the formulated hypothesis, a multiple regression analysis was done by the researcher, as presented in Table ??1.

11 a) Interpretation

The multiple regression aggregate results in Table ??1 showed that the relationship between job characteristics dimensions (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, feedback) and employee continuance commitment was strong, positive and statistically significant [$R = 0.726$, $F(5, 371) = 78.081$, $p < 0.05$]. Moreover, the goodness of fit model presented in Table ??1 shows that with Adjusted $R^2 = 0.506$, implies that about 50.6% variation in employee continuance commitment is explained by variations in job characteristics dimensions. This relatively high moderate association is attributed to the fact that job characteristics dimensions yielded some equivalent results in terms of employee continuance commitment. However, the model failed to explain 49.4% of the variation, meaning that there are other factors associated with employee continuance commitment which were not fitted in the model and thus, the study assumption which states that job-characteristics dimensions (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, feedback) have no significant effect on employee continuance commitment is hereby rejected.

Further, Table ??1 presents result of individual multiple regression analysis. The results revealed that out of the five job characteristics dimensions, task identity [$\beta = 0.118$, $t = 2.286$, $p = .023$], task significance [$\beta = 0.158$, $t = 2.932$, $p = 0.004$] and feedback [$\beta = 0.474$, $t = 8.163$, $p = 0.000$] have positive and statistically significant effect on employee continuance commitment. Autonomy [$\beta = 0.199$, $t = 1.934$, and $p = .064$] have positive but no significant effect on employee continuance commitment. While skill variety [$\beta = -0.088$, $t = -1.783$, and $p = .075$] have negative and no significant effect on employee continuance commitment.

The model equation parameter estimate depicting good fit for Job Characteristics dimensions (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback) and Employee Continuance Commitment is, therefore;

ECC = $-0.858 + 0.207\text{TI} + 0.249\text{TS} + 0.578\text{FB}$ Where: ECC = Employee Continuance Commitment TI = Task Identity TS = Task Significance FB = Feedback

The regression model equation indicates that ? 0 is -0.858 when X = 0. The value -0.858 implies that statistically without job characteristics dimensions, there seem to be a negative effect on employee continuance commitment. Further, the coefficient (parameter estimate) results indicates that on job characteristics dimensions, for one-unit increase in task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback; employee continuance commitment increases by 0.207, 0.249, 0.184, 0.578 units respectively (that is, statistically, employee continuance commitment will increase by 20.7%, 24.9%, 18.4%, and 57.8% respectively). Indicating that statistically, based on data retrieved for this study and analyzed, of the five job characteristics dimensions only task identity, task significance, and feedback have a positive effect on employee continuance commitment. However, the aggregate result from the multiple regression analysis as earlier stated [R = 0.726, F (5, 371)]

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13 b) Discussion of Findings

The findings in Tables 4.1 revealed that job characteristics dimensions (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, feedback) have a significant effect on employee continuance commitment in selected private universities in Ogun State. Whereas the aggregate result (ANOVA) agreed with the findings from previous studies conducted in universities that, job enrichment is a strong predictor of work-related attitudes as, there is a positive correlation between job depth, core job dimension elements of job enrichment, workers' commitment and performance (Oludeyi, 2015; Salauet al., 2014), there were disparities in the individual regression result (Coefficients). However, Velnampy and Sivesan (2012) claimed that employees who are more productive and stay longer on the job were able to highlight higher commitment ratings as a result of job enrichment. Farajiet al. (2015) affirmed that individual's job characteristics have a positive and significant influence on commitment such that employees' commitment can be increased through redesigning and enriching employees' job.

The individual coefficient results for the study hypothesis revealed that while, skill significance, task identity, and feedback had a positive and significant effect, autonomy and skill variety had no significant effect on employee continuance commitment although, autonomy, had a positive link with employee continuance commitment. Supporting these findings, Magaji (2015) found that employees with greater job autonomy feel responsible for jobs done and perform better when there is freedom, autonomy, and opportunity to decide what and how to perform and accomplish their jobs. Kariuki and Makori (2015) supported the study findings that people whose work is autonomous, experience a feeling of responsibility and are more likely to invest effort into their work, even in the face of obstacles. Nevertheless, though such feelings of self-worth as a result of having autonomy on the job can generate high levels of engagement having too much autonomy can backfire on commitment (Kariuki & Makori, 2015). The submissions in this discussion could be the reason, although autonomy had a weak positive relationship, it has no significant effect on employee continuance commitment in this study. It could be that since employees with more continuance commitment focus more on the economic benefits they stand to gain and are less concerned about the freedom the job offers hence they are obligated to stay in the institution.

Further, Bratton (2007) pointed out that when a variety of skills are necessary to complete a task, and those skills are perceived to be of value to the organization, employees find their work to be more meaningful. Aina and Omoniyi (2014) added that one way to achieve task variety is through job rotation that is, moving employees from job to job within the institution, thus allowing employees a variety of tasks in their work and helping to prevent boredom. Magaji (2015) supported Bratton (2007) and Aina and Omoniyi (2014) that, using only one skill to do the same task repeatedly can be boring, typically causing the employee's productivity to decrease after a period. Nevertheless, skill variety does not guarantee continuance commitment. Consequently, since findings in this study revealed that skill variety is not statistically significant on employee continuance commitment, could imply that skill variety will not determine perceived sunk costs (Oludeyi, 2015), as employees with continuance commitment are committed to the job not because of the skill variety required but as a result of either personal investments or what they stand to gain.

Consistent with this study finding is the work by previous scholars that there is a positive relationship between task identity and commitment of employees (Davoudi & Mehdi, 2013; Lunenburg, 2013; Salauet al. 2014). Further, Stegeret al. (2013) found that perceptions on task significance could be enhanced by redesigning work such that it could be manipulated through interactions with people as task significance enables employees job to have a substantial impact on the lives of other people whether inside or outside the organization environment. Also, studies have consistently demonstrated that task significant work is especially meaningful and positively affects commitment (Allanet al., 2014; Nzewiet al., 2017), as high task significance could serve as a driving force and motivational tool to increase and exert more efforts on the job (Lynton & Pareek, 2000; Mid & Alborz, 2015).

Additionally, Mone and London (2010) discovered that the absence of feedback mechanism generates job dissatisfaction among employees as the system is seen as ineffective and unfair hence increasing employees desire to leave. Likewise, Lunenburg (2013) affirmed that job feedback give employees knowledge of the actual results of work activities, and such knowledge improves the individuals' effectiveness and continuance commitment. Therefore, Kónyaet al. (2016) asserted that job characteristics has a positive effect on the varied dimensions

of commitment. More so, according to the Job Characteristic Model (JCM) by Hackman and Oldham (1976), the ability of the person to make a psychological connection with the job defined the influence of the task on the person. Consequently, selected personality characteristics could influence individual perceptions, which then determined whether intrinsic aspects of the job would be motivational or not.

14 V. Conclusion and Recommendations

Following the data analyzed and findings established the study results showed that job characteristics dimensions had a statistically significant positive effect on employee continuance commitment. However, the individual coefficient results revealed that out of the five job characteristics dimensions, task identity, task significance, and feedback had a positive and significant effect on employee continuance commitment. Autonomy had positive but was not significant; while skill variety had a negative and no significant effect on employee continuance commitment. On the strength of the statistical findings, it was recommended for management emphasize on task identify, significance and, feedback to enable continuance commitment of non-academic staff. Also, future researchers should extend the study to public universities and academic staff in both private and public universities.

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Philips Consulting, 2014).

Regrettably, studies have shown that similar crisis earlier highlighted is gradually creeping into the operations in private universities (Amponsah & Onuoha, 2015; Magaji, Akpa, & Akinlabi, 2017; Oludeyi, 2015).

Consequently, since several studies conducted on employee commitment in various sectors have applied extrinsic factors such as reward and benefits, salary, training and development, and promotion (Aina, Adeyeye, & Ige, 2012; Oyelere, Opute, & Akinsowon, 2015; Umoh, Mamn, & Mnim, 2014); researchers have demonstrated the need for more studies on employee commitment using intrinsic factors such as, job characteristics (Awolusi, 2013; Magaji, 2015; Oludeyi, 2015), in universities and other sectors. Hence establishing scope and unit of analysis gaps. It is on this premise that this work investigated whether job characteristics dimensions could affect employee continuance commitment in selected private universities in Ogun State Nigerian. The work is organized into a

literature review after the introduction, methodology,

presentation

recommendation.

II.

of results,

Figure 1:

Figure 2:

Figure 3:

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Variable	Correlation Coefficient (R)	Coefficient of Determination (R ²)	Parameter Estimate (B)	Standard Error (S.E.)
Joint Results (FWB & SW)	0.716 a	0.513	0.000 -	-.858 -
Individual Results	Beta			
Skill Variety	-.088	.075	-.138	1.783
Task Identity	.118	.023	.207	2.286
Task Significance	.158	.004	.249	2.932
Autonomy	.119	.064	.184	1.934
Feedback	.474	.000	.578	8.163

b. Predictors:(Constant), Job Characteristics (Feedback, Skill Variety, Task Identity, Task Significance, Autonomy)

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Source: Results extracted from Regression tables (see appendix I)

Number of companies: 377

Level of significance 0.05 (5%)

Significant at $p < 0.05$

Figure 4: Table 4 . 1 :

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