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Debate on the Role of Organizational Silence Behaviors and Employee Efficiency

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Abstract

Organizations are growingly demanding their staff to be innovative, to express their ideas and to be responsible for the excessive expectations of the customers, and focus on the quality service delivery as an indicator of changing world. However, it has been observed from literature that organizations find it difficult to achieve their set goals due to lack of committed employees. Thus the paper investigated the role of organisational silence behaviours on employee efficiency in selected private Universities in Ogun State, Nigeria. The work made use of quantitative survey design where questionnaire was employed as the instrument of data gathering from six hundred and ninety six employees from five selected private universities in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Index terms—

1 Introduction

rganizational silence, and ways of dealing with it have great importance in organizational discussions. Employees who have a determining role in giving services and establishing a relationship with customers, their attitude and behaviour towards customers affect the satisfaction, quality of the services which, in its turn are effective in the improvement of organizational performance **??**Bageri et al., 2011). Organisational silence not only slows down organisational development but also causes several consequences such as decreasing in employees' commitment levels, causing internal conflicts, reducing decision making process, blocking change and innovation, preventing positive or negative feedbacks to the management. It also causes an increase of behaviours such as breaking down of morale and motivations of employees, absenteeism, tardiness which negatively affect individual and organisational activities. Employee's performance remains sine-qua-non for building appropriate work behaviour and disposition in higher institutions (Okoro & Okoro, 2014). Employees' also tend to perform well if they are given the privilege to participate in decision making process and empowered to take initiative and responsibility (Gupta & Shaw, 2014).

Several studies have been carried out in relation to the effect of organisational silence behaviours on employee efficiency but the findings seem contradictory **??**Frances, **??**015) conducted a study on Organizational Silence: A Survey on Employees Working in a Telecommunication Company. The study confirmed the direct and indirect effects of participative decisionmaking leadership behavior and information-sharing leadership behavior on the negative psychological feelings of employees, employees' silence behavior, and the work performance. Establishing the evaluate criteria for, we should decide whether the manager has participative decision-making leadership behavior and information-sharing leadership behavior. In order to ensure the rationality of the evaluation, that need to be considered as one of the key to evaluate business managers. We can also give more guidance on how to implement the leadership behavior of effective participative decision-making and sharing-information in fostering outstanding managers. In short, the study concludes that the importance of the leadership behavior of participative design-making and sharinginformation should be highlighted in work. It is benefit for enhancing the enterprise performance In contrast, Nafei (2016) research study on the Impact of Organisational Silence on Job Attitudes: A Study on Pharmaceutical Industry in Egypt. Results indicate that supervisors' attitudes to silence,

top management attitudes to silence and communication opportunities are associated and predict employee silence behaviour. The research has found that there is a significant relationship between organisational silence and job attitude. Also, the research has found that organisational silence directly affects job attitude at the pharmaceutical industry in Egypt. In the light of these findings, the paper determined if there is a significant effect of organisational silence behaviours on employee efficiency of selected private Universities in Ogun State, Nigeria.

efficiency are often referred to, namely static efficiency and dynamic efficiency. Static efficiency relates to refining existing products, processes or opportunities; making improvements within existing conditions. Dynamic efficiency refers to the continuous development of new products, processes or opportunities, so that profitability improves. Something is only efficient when it is effective. In other words: something is efficient if it has a useful effect. It has to be functional. Efficiency is the ability to act or produce effectively with a minimum of waste, expenditure or unnecessary effort. The focus is on the resources and speed with which organisational goals are achieved. The effectiveness of your organisation is determined by how successfully you assign resources in order to achieve your organisational goals in the right way. In other words, how well your organisation converts input into output, such as products, programmes and services. In this way effectiveness contributes to the success of your organisation.

Efficiency measures relationship between inputs and outputs or how successfully the inputs have been transformed into outputs (Katrina, 2012). To maximize the output Porter's Total Productive Maintenance system suggests the elimination of six losses, which are: reduced yield-from start up to stable production, process defects, reduced speed, idling and minor stoppages, set-up and adjustment and equipment failure. The fewer the inputs used to generate outputs, the greater the efficiency. According to **??**inprayong & Siengthai (2012) there is a difference between business efficiency and organisational efficiency. Business efficiency reveals the performance of input and output ratio, while organizational efficiency reflects the improvement of internal processes of the organisation, such as organisational structure, culture and community. Excellent organisational efficiency could improve entities performance in terms of management, productivity, quality and profitability.

Effectiveness and efficiency are exclusive, yet, at the same time, they influence each other; therefore it is important for management to assure the success in both areas. Efficiency is all about resource allocation across alternative uses (Kumar & Gulati, 2010). It is important to understand that efficiency doesn't mean that the organisation is achieving excellent performance in the market, although it reveals its operational excellence in the source of utilization process.

2 b) Organizational silence

According to Bagheri, Zarei, and Aaeen, (2012) early definitions of silence equated it with loyalty and the assumption that nothing was wrong if concerns were not being voiced. Today this situation is seen as a reaction and recession. Organisational silence is an inefficient process which can waste all organizational efforts and may take various forms, such as collective silence in meetings, low levels of participation in suggestion schemes, low levels of collective voice and so on (Nikmaram, Gharibi, Shojaii, Ahmadi, & Alvani, 2012). While in a changing world, organisations need for employees who express their ideas; employees also choose organisations in which they can express themselves because both employees and managers have high motivation and high performance in a place that silence doesn't exist. How to break silence culture and establish a free climate to encourage employees' voice are big challenges faced to mangers **??**Beheshtifar, Borhan, & Moghadan, 2012). It is obvious that a silent climate can work against organisational outcomes and vice versa Hence, Brinsfield, Edwards, and Greenberg (2013) defined Organisational silence as the lack of effective interactions among staff and it stands opposite to the concept of organisational voice. The term organisational voice, which means stating effective opinions and ideas, is discussed as opposite to the phrase organizational silence. Organisational silence occurs when organisational voice does not exist. In other words, when the down-top relationship weakens in the organisation, organisational voice would be undermined too and organisational silence would replace it. Also, Ozdemir, and Ugur (2013) defined organisational silence as the condition where the employees do not share their opinions or concerns about the company issues with both their employers and their colleagues. Bagheri, Zarei & Aaeen, (2014) stated that with the passage of time, organisation silence brought low quality of work for organisation. Hence, this not only hurts the organisation but the employee as well

3 c) Top management characteristics

The reasons for organisational silence are attributed to organisational biases, negative reactions from management, lack of objectivity, lack of trust, personality characteristics of managers and their limited experience (Yildiz, 2013). The reasons can be explained in five headings: the first are administrative and organisational reasons, as the individuals resort to organisational silence for fear of negative reactions leading to many problems related to decision-making, organisational efficiency and poor performance (Robbins, & Judge, 2013). The second is the fear of social isolation, as talking about work problems leads to damage in social relations within the organization **??**Morrison & Millikon, 2003). The third is limited experience, as the previous experiences by the individuals regarding the negative results they Debate on the Role of Organizational Silence Behaviors and Employee Efficiency encountered make them avoid problems or discussing them with their coworkers or superiors,

despite their awareness of the importance of standing up early. The fourth reason is the fear of damaging the relations, as the fear of losing relations with colleagues who are valuable is hard to concede and the fifth and last reason is work related concerns, as fear of losing a promotion and being abused.

4 d) Communication opportunity

Once a relationship is established, and the lines of communication are open, it is undeniably easier to have others on your side and others who are willing to help you out, both professionally and personally. **??**isenberger & Stinglhamber (2011) acknowledged the dynamic relationship among trust, relationships, and power when the say, sometimes building a relationship so that others will help you requires nothing more than being polite and listening. Being nice to people is effective because people find it difficult to fight with those who are being polite and courteous. When that key component of mutual understanding is absent in an organisational setting, however, silence comes into play, and a myriad of power schemes and competing agendas can influence the decision of whether or not to communicate concerns. Donaghey, Culliane, Dundon and Wilkinson (2016) suggest ways in which management, through agenda-setting and institutional structures, can perpetuate silence over a range of issues, thereby arranging employees out of the voice process. When a dominant group voices certain opinions, these perceptions become the dominant ideologies that float across the organisation. The subordinate viewpoints are therefore never brought to the forefront because they are inevitably silence. Ozturk, Eryesil, & Beduk (2016) in their study noted that the employees who feel that their ideas and opinions are valued by the management will trust their organisations more and as a result, this will prevent the silence climate from happening within an organisation. If job security and principle of meritocracy are promoted in an organisation, it will lead to an increase in employee commitment and a decrease in fear, which in turn, will create suitable conditions to stop organisational silence within a company. As far as the findings of this study are concerned, it has been found that compared to men, women have a relatively bigger tendency to show silence behaviour. In order to decrease silence behaviours within an organization, the management should periodically organize seminars in which employees feel more confident in terms of expressing their opinions.

5 e) Supervisors' characteristics

The freedom to express dissenting opinion may be restricted when working under the leadership of a supervisor with prestige and power, because the subordinate tends to the option of silence due to fear of the negative impact of expressing the dissent opinion (Turner & Pratkanis, 1998). Power and status of the supervisor can increase or decrease the silence of subordinates. It can be concluded that silence could increase in the presence of a powerful supervisor (Edmondson, 2003). Study by Owuor (2014) found out that silence had an effect on both the employees and the organisation. On the employees it was found that silence affected their level of commitment, trust, and fear. However it also found that silence cause stress that lead to depersonalisation and feelings of low personal accomplishment, as well as negative job attitudes. The study also found that to the organisation, silence would mean the organisation not benefiting from intellectual contribution, problems not identified, and development of a negative organisational culture. It would also be detrimental to organisational learning.

6 f) Official authority

Official authority is based on the strength of the position or location in the organisational structure. Vakola and Bouradas (2005) concluded that Organisations today need not only to recruit but also to retain and motivate talented employees. Managers may consider OS as an important variable when they explore organisational climate and culture or when they want to create an environment where talented people would choose to remain or wish to join. These practical implications are also important in a change context where the truth must be heard in order to be able to effectively implement and institutionalize the change and improve the existing situation.

7 g) Subordinates perception of feedback

The effects of organisational silence are not limited to the organisation, as it can negatively affect the behavior of individuals working in the organisation. These effects are represented in the individual's feeling unappreciated, lack of the individual's ability to control, and the individual suffering from cognitive dissonance. This is because silence makes it difficult to the individual to strike a balance between his beliefs and behaviors (Panahi, Veisehb, Divkharc, & Kamarid, 2012). OS correlates negatively with three dimensions of organisational trust (trust in the organization, trust in leadership, and trust in the supervisor). This means that the more silence means less trust (Nikolaous, 2011). OS has a negative impact on the removal of inadequacies and mistakes occurring in the organisational activities as well as on the establishment of a healthy feedback mechanism. In an organisation without feedback mechanisms, mistakes turn into a mechanism of carrying out activities or become more severe **??**Milliken & Morrison, 2003).

Nafei (2016) discovered that although employees are expected to contribute to the development of organisation with their knowledge, ideas, opinions and suggestions, they sometimes prefer Debate on the Role of Organizational Silence Behaviors and Employee Efficiency to remain silent. Justice can be as a reason. It is noted that Perceived justice, especially procedural justice can be important in employers' decision to speak up about organisational issues. Employees choose to be silent because of their managers and maybe they fear, fear of of one element

(communication system), results in the failure of other (performance). Organisational communication and organisational performance of public and private sector universities turned out to be interrelated with each other. Proctor (2014) opined in a study effective organisational communication: a key to employee motivation and performance that organisational communication plays a vital role in employee motivation and performance as real changes are taking place in modern organizations which confront the new reality of tighter staffing, increased workloads, longer hours and a greater emphasis on performance, risk-taking and flexibility. Today's organisations are run by multi and cross functional teams which show little tolerance for unquestioned authority. To deal with this situation, the art of persuasion and the effort to find the correct emotional match with your audience is necessary. Shonubi, and Akin taro (2016) recommends that for an effective and efficient organisational performance, management must embrace; more clarity of ideas before communicating; better understanding of the physical and human environment when communicating; purpose of communication must be thoroughly analyzed; when planning communication, consultation should both be top down and bottom up, and all facts must be implicit and explicit; consideration should be given to the content and tone of the messages; the languages must be messages the receiver would find valuable; communication with precise messages and are short run often possess long run importance; all interested parties in communication should be encouraged to be good listeners; immediate actions must be accompanied and accomplished with communication; and lastly effective feedback and follow up mechanism process must succeed effective communication.

8 i) Theoretical

Social exchange theory (SET) is among the most influential conceptual paradigms for understanding workplace behavior. Its venerable roots can be traced back to at least the 1920s (Malinowski, 1922), bridging such disciplines as anthropology (Firth, 1967;Sahlins, 1972), social psychology (e.g., Gouldner, 1960; Homans, 1958; Thibault & Kelley, 1959), and sociology (Blau, 1964). Although different views of social exchange have emerged, theorists agree that social exchange involves a series of interactions that generate obligations **??**Emerson, 1976). Within SET, these interactions are usually seen as interdependent and contingent on the actions of another person **??**Blau, Debate on the Role of Organizational Silence Behaviors and Employee Efficiency 1964). One of the basic tenets of SET is that relationships evolve over time into trusting, loyal, and mutual commitments. To do so, parties must abide by certain rules of exchange. Rules of exchange form a normative definition of the situation that forms among or is adopted by the participants in an exchange relation **??**Emerson, 1976). In this way, rules and norms of exchange are the guidelines of exchange processes.

The strength of the theory is based on the fact that it is important for managers to understand the significance of social exchange to get to know the level of commitment of employees **??**Mitchell & Cropanzona, 2005). This implies that employees interpret human resource practices and the trustworthiness of management as indicative of the personified organization's commitment to them (Whitener, 2001). Similarly, **??**itchell and Cropanzona (2005) concluded that exchanges with a positive outcome will result in reciprocal responses (Whitener, 2001). When negotiating, there is an exchange of social activities (Redmond, 2015). Also, when negotiating, both parties want to maximize their values. The best outcome would be a win-win situation, where both participants benefit. For example, if a person gets a job offer from a company, both parties negotiate about the employees' allowances. Hence, in a negotiation, it is doubtlessly true, that there is some form of social exchange between them. An example would be the negotiation about wages, working hours, vacation days or the distribution of tasks and duties (Redmond, 2015). Generally speaking, when researchers discuss relationships, they are referring to an association between two interacting partners (whether individuals or institutions). As reviewed earlier, management research has extensively examined different forms of interpersonal exchange. Of special interest to social exchange theorists are differences in the parties involved in the relationships (Levine, Kim, and Ferrara 2010).

9 III.

10 Methodological Review

Past research on the study variables employed survey research design with multiple regression method of analysis to examine the combine effect of explanatory variables on dependent variable in their study. Such studies are **??**rhan ; employed moderating regression method of analyses in their study. Based on these past studies methodological review, multiple regression method of analyses has the ability to determine the combine, moderating effect of more explanatory variables on the dependent variable. Multiple regression method of analysis has the ability to determine the relative effect of more predictor variables to the dependent variable and also identify anomalies. However, one of the inadequacies of the multiple regression analysis is that of its complex data sets which can lead to false conclusion if not properly analysed. In this study, survey research design and multiple regression method of analyses will be employed to examine the effect of explanatory variables on the dependent variable in the study. In addition, moderating regression method of analysis will also be employed to determine the effect of the moderating variables of the study (organisational justice and organisational culture) on the link between dependent and independent variables.

Five private universities were used based on year of establishment (1999-2009) and academic excellence. The selected private universities include Babcock University, Bells University, Covenant University, Crawford

University, and Crescent University. The target population consisted of regular faculty and staff. A sample size of 696 was obtained using the formula recommended by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Items used in the questionnaire were adopted and adapted based on conceptual review. The pilot test was conducted using two private universities in Ogun State namely, Christopher University and Mountaintop University. The content validity was used to determine how well the research instrument measures the intended items. While the construct validity was determined by reviewing literatures and obtaining validated research instruments. The reliability of the research instrument was subjected to internal consistency method. The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using the Cronbach's Alpha correlation coefficient and Cronbach coefficient of 0.7 and above was considered adequate for an adapted questionnaire; as results ranged from 0.704 to 0.948 **??**Livingston, 2018).

Therefore, the multiple regression equation was established based on the representation of organisational silence behaviours. Thus the model was formulated as: Y = f (X) Where: Y = Dependent Variable (Employee Efficiency) X = Independent Variable (Organizational Silence) Where: x 1 = Top Management Characteristics (TMC) x 2 = Communication Opportunity (CO) x 3 = Supervisors Characteristics (SSC) x 4 = Official Authority (OA) x 5 = Subordinates Perception of Feedback (SPF)

IV.

11 Results and Discussions

The inferential statistics was applied to determine whether organizational silence behaviours have no significant effect on employee efficiency in selected private universities in Ogun State. **??** reveals the result of the multiple regression on the effect of organizational silence behaviours (top management characteristics, communication opportunity, supervisor characteristics, official authority and subordinates perception of feedback) on employee efficiency of selected private university in Ogun State. The table shows that organizational silence dimension when combine to determine their effect on employee efficiency of selected private university in Ogun State produced a coefficient of multiple correlation, r = 0.474 and an adjusted R2 = 0.218 at p = 0.000 < 0.05, indicates that percentage of variation in employee efficiency jointly explained by the explanatory variables is 47.4% and other factors that are not studied contributes a balance of 52.6%.

12 Model

The table further reveals that the coefficients of the regression model designed to investigate the effect of organizational silence dimension on employee efficiency are provided. From the results, top management characteristics, communication opportunity, official authority and subordinates perception of feedback has significant effect on employee efficiency of selected private university in Ogun State while supervisor characteristics does not. This therefore indicates that a percentage increase in top management characteristics will have a 39.6% increase in employee efficiency of selected private university, a percentage increase in communication opportunity will have an 17.5% increase in employee efficiency of selected private university, a percentage increase in supervisor characteristics will have an 4.1% increase in employee efficiency of selected private university, a percentage increase in official authority will have a 12.0% increase in employee efficiency selected private university, while a percentage increase in subordinates perception of feedback will have a 12.7% increase in employee efficiency of selected private university. The final regression model for thus becomes: EE = 10.091 + 0.396(TMC) +0.175(CP) +0.120(OA)+0.127(SPF)??eq2

Where: EE = Employee Efficiency TMC = Top Management Characteristic CO= Communication Opportunity OA = Official Authority SPF= Subordinates perception of feedback Based on the regression equation above, taking into account all organizational silence dimension (top management characteristics, communication opportunity, supervisor characteristics, official authority and subordinates' perception of feedback) have significant contributions to employee efficiency. The a priori expectation was that the variables of organizational silence dimension will have a significant effect on employee efficiency. Thus, the null hypothesis should be accepted if ? 1? 5 ?0 and p?0.05 H 02 otherwise it has to be rejected. Based on the results in the table, the coefficients of the measures of organizational silence dimension are not equal to zero and their p values are found to be higher than 0.05. Since we have predictors hypothesis and conclude that organizational silence dimensions have significant effect on employee efficiency of the selected private university in Ogun State.

13 b) Discussion of findings

The test of hypothesis two revealed that organizational silence variables have significant effect on employee efficiency. This position was taken based on the fact that more predictors were found to have significant contributions to employee efficiency. Discussing this finding, Bag & Ekinci (2018) revealed that effective communication creates mutual understanding between management and workers which helps in building genuine relationship among both parties in the organizations. Also, this study reveals that poor communication can affect workers performance. Therefore, organizations should regularly articulate it policies, goals and objectives to it workers in other to improve work performance. That is, communication is a means through which the task and the resources needed to carry out an assignment, the roles and duties and the expected results are made known to the subordinates which makes work easier for better performance. Also, managers need to communicate with employees regularly to get feedback and offer suggestions in other to prevent confusion about

future job assignments; this will help improve workers performance and organizational productivity. In addition, top managers should communicate directly with their subordinates on issues of importance. Organizations should eliminate the barriers on communication and create efficient, participative, and transparent communication medium to improve workers commitment.

Hamdi and Rajablu (2012) state that the findings of public and private sector universities on organizational communication system functioning and organizational performance scores revealed harmonization between organizational communication and organizational performance. It was concluded that independent variable (Organizational Communication) had significant effect on dependent variable (Organizational Performance) of public and private sector universities. In addition, on the basis of organizational communication scores and organizational performance ranking scores of universities, it was concluded that organizational performance improves subsequently when organizational communication system performs well. Both organizational communication and organizational performance are interdependent. Imperfect functioning of one element (communication system), results in the failure of other (performance). Organizational communication and organizational performance of public and private sector universities turned out to be interrelated with each other. Proctor (2014) opined in a study effective organizational communication: a key to employee motivation and performance that organizational communication plays a vital role in employee motivation and performance as real changes are taking place in modern organizations which confront the new reality of tighter staffing, increased workloads, longer hours and a greater emphasis on performance, risk-taking and flexibility. Today's organizations are run by multi and cross functional teams which show little tolerance for unquestioned authority. To deal with this situation, the art of persuasion and the effort to find the correct emotional match with your audience is necessary.

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14 V. Conclusion and Recommendation

As a result of statistical analysis, there was statistical significance effect of organisational silence behaviours on employee efficiency of the employees in the selected private Universities in Ogun State. Nigeria. Administrators should address the organisational silence behaviours using the suitable way to achieve work interests. Administrators should be concerned of University workers who have high efficiency at work, to reinforce the benefit of organizational silence among them and increase their self-efficacy. Administrators should heed the field studies to monitor the methods for dealing with the organisational silence behaviours taking into account the work interests and the workers in the selected Universities. [1]

Figure 1:

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