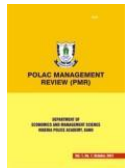




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MEDIATING ROLE OF ORGANISATIONAL IDENTIFICATION ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANISATIONAL JUSTICE AND EMPLOYEE TASK PERFORMANCE: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

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Abstract

Academic institutions play significant roles in the development of many countries in terms of human resource development, quality researches, industrial consultancy services, etcetera which are major functions performed by the lecturers in tertiary institutions. However, in Nigeria the performance level of university lecturers has been very unsatisfactory. It has been shown that lecturers' performance is not satisfactory in Nigerian universities and has been one of the factors responsible for the decay in the education sector. In the same way it was shown that perceived organisational injustice among other things is responsible for the poor performance of the lecturers; therefore there is the need for an urgent solution to the problem. This paper proposes a conceptual framework to examine a mediating effect of organisational identification on the relationship between organisational justice and employee task performance. The Paper concludes that organisational identification will mediate the relationship between organizational justice and employee task performance.

Keywords: Employee Performance, Extra-role Behaviour, Organizational Identification, Organizational Justice, Task Performance

1. Introduction

Employee performance has been one of the most interesting area in organisational researches. One reason for this has been the significant role employees' performance plays towards the accomplishment of the organisational goals and objectives. Whatever an organisation engages cannot successfully achieve it without the concerted effort of its employee performance (Saetang, Sulumnad, Thampitak & Sungkaew, 2010). More importantly, efficient employee performance has been related to the ability of an organisation to achieve and sustain competitive advantage in terms of cost reduction, quality product and services, and high level of organisational

efficiency which consequently lead to higher profitability (Ogbu & Oaya, 2018).

Task performance is the job assignments that are necessary to achieve main organisation objectives, and they are primary employee responsibilities that are specified in his job description that are equally recognised by the organisation formal reward system (Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994). Failure of an employee to carry out his task performance may fail the entire organisation. This is because task performance is a behaviour that directly relates to the central organisation objective. Examples of a lecturer task performance are teaching, research and community service (Walbe & Gyang, 2019). Recently studies on employee performance have shifted attention to the

performance of academicians in various institutions of higher learning (Adeniyi, Festus, & Alarapebabatunde, 2018; Kassim, Asyraf, Muhammad, & Mohd, 2018; Mehmood & Ahmad, 2016; Vanitha, 2018; Wilkins, Butt, & Annabi, 2017). This is because lecturers with their strategic role as highest tertiary institutions teachers have a significant contribution in realising the major developmental goals of any countries (Subiyanto & Djastuti, 2018). That is why lecturers' performance becomes the issue of significant concern (Adeyemi, 2018). As such, institutions of higher learning have been given the necessary attention and also identified as an effective tool for a country's developments in terms of human resources development, policies incubation from researches and high-quality courses, engaging in community and consultancy services that are necessary for industrial development (Kassim et al., 2018). Moreover, the level of any country's development is determined by the quality of knowledge of the people in that country (OECD, 2012; Hedger, 2019). This is one of the reasons many countries in the world are rapidly developing because of the quality of their educational system capable of producing a vibrant workforce and breathtaking researches (Abubakar, 2018).

Some developing countries, such as Malaysia leverage education as the source of competitive advantage and are making much income mostly from international students because of their robust education system (Kassim et al., 2018). Hence many countries are investing heavily to develop the capacities of their lecturers and higher institutions to provide sound education and research for them to achieve meaningful development (Abubakar, 2018). However, in other countries mostly in Africa and Asia the issues of poor standard of education is persistently prevailing (Adeyemi, 2018).

In Nigeria, the higher education system faces many challenges such as low standard, poor students' performance among other things. A problem which causes mass exodus of Nigerian students to foreign countries for a better quality education (UNESCO, 2020). It was predicted that the large percentage of international students from Africa in many countries

around the world are from Nigeria as a result of poor standard of education (Abubakar & Dutse, 2017). Even though many factors were identified as contributing to the problem (Abubakar & Dutse, 2017). It was shown that lecturers' performance is not satisfactory in Nigerian universities and has been one of the factors responsible for the decay in the education sector (Otti, 2017; Times Higher Education, 2019).

It was indicated that the performance level of universities lecturers in Nigeria had been consistently falling over the years (Walbe & Gyang, 2019; Iroegbu, 2019; Onah & Anikwe, 2016). This resulted in the graduation of half-baked students because the problem of teachers' performance has a direct effect on the students' and university performance as a whole (Minon, 2018; Sukirno & Siengthai, 2011). It was further argued that lecturers performance has a strategic role and is the main factor determining students' performance and consequently, the university performance (Minon, 2018; Rego, 2003). Thus the lectures' incapacity to perform their job effectively renders the students less competitive and unemployable globally (Nobei, 2017). This is the reason for the unrelenting outflow of Nigerian students to abroad for better university education (David, 2017). According to UNESCO (2020) there were about 85,251 Nigerian students in various countries worldwide, costing Nigeria about \$2Billion annually despite economic hardship and the consequent rise in the value of foreign exchange. Related to this, executive secretary of National University Commission (NUC) Rasheed (2018) during a workshop on the proposed higher education reform in Nigeria, where he called on the participants to proffer solutions to the challenges facing higher education in Nigeria including lecturers and students poor performance among other things.

Also, in terms of quality researches, Nigerian academics have always been at the bottom of the chat, and only a few universities appeared in the world universities ranking, due to their weak performance in relation to their counterparts worldwide (Abubakar & Ahmed, 2017). In a recent world universities ranking by Times Higher Education (2021) indicated only five out

of 195 Nigerian universities appeared in the world ranking of 1526 universities. University of Ibadan at 401-500, Lagos State University at 501-600, University of Lagos at 601-800, Covenant University is at 801-1000 whereas University of Nigeria, Nsukka was at 1001+ in the ranking. The major reasons for the low ranking include low-quality teaching and research, weak international outlook and low industry income from knowledge transfer (THE, 2019). From all the five universities that appeared at the ranking, none of them came from Northern Nigeria. As such, there is a need to look at the necessary steps to address the problem of lecturers' performance in various universities in Nigeria to promote their relevance in world academia. More essentially because quality education has been identified as an ingredient for national development and autonomy (Sukirno & Siengthai, 2011). Thus, Ogunbawo (2019) opines that, until the problem of lecturers' performance is address in Nigeria the problem of falling education standard cannot be solved. Therefore there is an urgent need to put efforts to find a lasting solution to the problem of lecturers performance in Nigerian universities (Inuwa & Muhammad, 2016; Ogbulafor, 2011).

The issue of poor lecturers' performance has been attributed to so many factors in Nigeria. However, Onyeizugbe, Musah, and Adedire (2020) relate the problem to the issues of organisational injustice within the universities system. The problems of organisational injustice are rampant across all forms of organisational set up in Nigeria, including intellectual organisations like universities. There have been issues of injustice with regards to recruitment, promotion, sponsorship, courses allocation, appointments, training and development, etc. (Efanga, Aniedi & Idante 2015; Mgbechi, Gabriel, & Nwaeke, 2014). This has resulted in low performance of the lecturers because of the negative emotional effect of their perceived injustice from the school managements and the government (Onyeizugbe et al., 2020). Unless various universities' managements solve the problem of injustice, the lecturers' performance will continue to fall as there will

be no emotional attachment between the universities and the lecturers.

Hence, there is the need for fair treatment of the Nigerian university lecturers' by the university management and the government to motivate the lecturers to perform their primary responsibility as expected of them. This can also go a long way to address the problem of poor lecturers' performance to have effective teaching, quality research and consultancy services to better position Nigerian Universities in the global academic environment. On the other hand, literature indicated that organisational justice has been widely used to predict employee performance in a number of studies (He et al., 2017; Devonish & Greenidge, 2010; Kalay, 2016; Efanga, Aniedi, & Idente, 2015; Lam, Schaubroeck & Aryee, 2002; Virgolino, Coelho & Ribeiro, 2017; Mehmood & Ahmad, 2017; Supriyanto, 2013; Iqbal, Rehan, Fatima & Nawab, 2017 Onn, Nordin, Yusof, Moorthy, & Na, 2018). The majority of the studies mentioned found significant relationship between organisational justice and employee task performance (Devonish & Greenidge, 2010; Mohyeldin Tahir Suliman, 2007; Mehmood & Ahmad, 2017) as such number of scholars were of the view that a mediator should be introduced to mediate the relationship between the organisational justice and employee performance (example, Ghosh et al., 2017; Mehmood & Ahmad, 2016; Sandhu et al., 2017; Pattnaik and Tripathy, 2018). More relevance to the current study is the study of Pattnaik and Tripathy (2018) who after thorough review of justice-performance literature the authors suggested empirical examination of a mediating effect of organisational identification in the relationship between organizational justice and employee performance.

Therefore, this study aims to propose a conceptual framework for empirical examination of a mediating role of organisational identification on the relationship between organisational justice and employee task performance. The paper being a conceptual is divided into four sections, namely: introduction, literature review, method and conclusion.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Concept of Employee Task Performance

Traditionally the word “employee performance” relate to the specific task assigned to an employee in his/her job description known as task performance (Badawy & El-fekey, 2017). Task performance is also known as in-role performance (Williams & Anderson, 1991). They are those employee efforts that are exerted towards the achievement of the organisation core technical activities that directly involved in the accomplishment of the central organisation objective (Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994). If on the other hand employee fails to carry out these tasks may attract a penalty or cause him/her to lose the job whereas performing it well will be rewarded (Pattnaik & Tripathy, 2018). Rotundo and Sackett (2002) saw task performance as behaviours that contribute to the production of goods and services. They, however, maintained that this definition does not include only behaviours that are stated in the employee’s job description. Similarly, Williams and Anderson (1991) defined task performance as behaviours that are recognised by the formal reward system and are part of the employee job requirements, as stated in his/her job description. According to Borman and Motowidlo (1993), task performance is different across different kind of organisations. That is what may be seen as task performance in a manufacturing organisation is quite different from what is obtainable in a university. For the present study task performance is the primary responsibility an employee carries out in an organisation which is the basis for his or her recruitment.

2.3 Concept of Organisational Justice

In the process of managing organizational resources to achieve a desired objectives certain rules, regulations and procedures are undertaken to make sure things happen accordingly, however, in the process an employee may perceive the occurrence of justice or injustice associated with procedures adopted by the organization (Pracha, Malik, Azeem & Yasmin, 2017). This is due to the fact that employee-organization-relationship is such of mutuality where social exchange takes place; a situation where employees offer their

services in return for something of value, for example, salary, promotion, etc (Cropanzano, Preher & Chen, 2002). Organisational justice can be defined as a total justice covering the entire aspect of the organization (Parven & Awan, 2018). According to Pracha, et al., (2017) organisational justice is very vital because injustice in various form in the organization affect both employees and organization performance. Similarly, evidence has suggested that employee fair treatment is related to positive work outcomes and work performance in the organization, whereas unfair treatment leads to negative behaviours such as theft, work place aggression, low work commitments, etc. (Cropanzano, at al., 2002; Baldwin, 2006). Traditionally, the main focused among earlier justice studies has been on distributive justice alone (Cropanzano et al., 2002). This is due to the fact that the emphasis then was more on the fairness of reward or punishment than the processes that lead to the distribution of rewards or interpersonal relationship (Deutsch, 1975). While this is the case, Alexander and Ruderman (1987) argued that to fully understand the effect of justice in a social settings like modern complex organisations one must consider the process and the outcomes of the decision that lead to the perception of justice occurrence. Therefore all other forms of justice should equally be considered (Alexander & Ruderman, 1987). Similarly, three forms of organizational justice have been identified in the previous studies (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Pattnaik & Tripathy, 2018). Therefore current study adopted the three forms of organizational justice namely: distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice

2.3.1 Distributive Justice

Unto 1975 early justice studies concentrated mainly on distributive justice as the emphasis then was more on fairness with regards to the reward or benefit employees get from the organization, most of the studies emanated from the work of Adams (1965) which focused on equity theory to analyse fairness (Colquitt et al., 2001; Cropanzano & Chen, 2002). Clay-Warner, Hegtvædt and Roman (2005) saw distributive justice as “fairness in the distribution of a set of outcomes to a defined

circle of recipients.” They maintained that in most of the justice studies the major concern has been injustice with regards to pay. Cropanzano et al., (2002) defined distributive justice as “the fairness of outcomes received” Additionally, Baldwin (2006) added that distributive justice deals with whether outcomes are being distributed proportionate to inputs based on the equity principle of Adams (1965). Outcomes in this respect can be wages, salaries, social or management approval, job security, promotion, and career opportunities, appointments, etc. on the other hand inputs could be education, training, expertise, experience and effort or contribution. Generally people expect their input to commensurate with the output they receive from the organization (Clay-warner, Hegtvedt & Roman, 2005). Kulik and Ambrose (1992); Cropanzano, Byrne, Bobocel, and Rupp (2001) and Baldwin (2006) maintained that it is difficult to determine the specific level of reward in commensuration with a given level of output; people tend to make this judgment in relative terms looking for a contribution-output ratio that is similar to that of their peers.

2.3.2 Procedural Justice

Procedural justice as conceptualized by Masterson, Lewis, Goldman and Taylor (2000) “concerned individuals’ perceptions about the fairness of formal procedures governing decisions.” (p. 4). According to the authors procedural justice doesn’t concern with the process of distribution of rewards or punishment, but lay emphasis on fairness of the decisions that lead to the distribution of the said reward or punishment in the organization. Similarly, procedural justice refers to the fairness in the means by which distributions of output or decisions are made (Clay-warner, et al., 2005). According to Frixell and Gordon (1989) perception of procedural justice is more related to attitude or behaviours that affect the organization example organizational commitment, identification, OCB, etc. whereas perception of distributive justice is more related to personal outcomes like job satisfaction.

2.3.3 Interactional Justice

Interactional justice as an extension of procedural justice (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). Introduced by Bies and Maog (1986) refers to the quality of the interpersonal relationship or interaction that take place in the process of the distribution of output and input between individuals in the organization especially between superior and a subordinate (Cropanzano et al., 2002). According to Murphy et al., Interactional justice is the most relevant justice perception for social exchange relationships. When individuals perceive that they are being treated with honesty, respect, and openness, they perceive high levels of interactional justice. Cropanzano et al., maintained that interactional justice mostly occur when a superior treats subordinate with respect and dignity and also when he/she provides justification or reason for taking a particular decision. Similarly, a study by Mikula, Petri, and Tanzer (1990) found out that a considerable number of their research subject did not see injustice in the manner distributing reward or the procedures followed but in the manner in which they were treated in the interpersonal relationship between them and their superiors. Their study supported Beucrei and Baron (2001) assertion that interactional justice is the most sensitive among all other form of organizational justice.

2.4 Organisational Identification

Organizational identification has long been identified as an important factor in the area of organizational behaviour, it is a factor that strengthen positive relationship between organisations and their employees and at the same time gives an employee psychological sense of belonging and ownership to the organization (Edwards, 2005). It has been related to so many positive job outcomes in the organisations (Cheney, 1983). Employees who identify with a particular organization are likely to stay with the organization, cooperate with other workers and behave in such a way that maintains the best interest of the organization (Edwards, 2005; Knippenberg & Knippenberg, 2002).

According to Cheung and Law (2008) Organisational identification can be defined as “an individual’s psychological attachment to an organization.”

Moreover, previous studies have shown that individuals with high organizational attachment may exhibit a lot of behaviour favourable to the well-being of the organisation (Christ, Dick, Wagner, & Stellmacher, 2003). Similarly, Hall, Schneider, and Nygren (1970) stated that, “organizational identification is the process by which the goal of the organisation and those of the individual become increasingly integrated or congruent” (p. 176-177). They maintained that a better way of integrating oneself into the organization is to merge the organization values and goals into one’s identity. This is supported by Ashforth and Mael (1989) assertion that in a situation where an employee relates his/her self-identity with an organization through organizational membership and or experience the organizational success or failure becomes his or her. This motivates an employee to work in the best interest of the organization.

2.5 Theoretical Framework for the Study

The framework for the current study is set up in the light of social exchange theory. Social exchange theory by Gouldner (1960) and Blau (1964) maintains that people live as social organisms where everyone depends on one another, it is a situation of mutuality where one provides something to others and expects something in return from them (Cropanzano & Hartnell, 2009). Although these kinds of relationships are governed by some rules of engagement, but most organisational scientists favour the rule of reciprocity (Masterson & Hall, 2000). According to them, the rule of reciprocity maintains that “in a social relationship individuals pay others in kind, returning good with good and bad with bad” (Bateman & Organ, 1983; Karatepe, Ozturk, & Kim, 2018).

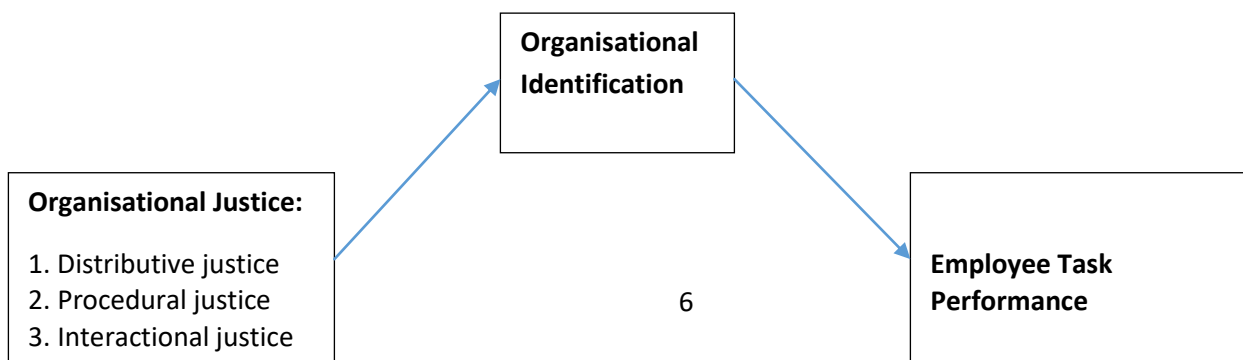
In the organizational context social exchange occurs when employee offer their service to the organization

and in return expect monetary and non-monetary compensation otherwise known as tangible and socio-emotional benefits (Virgolino, Coelho, & Ribeiro, 2017). Because of these kind of expectations when employees receive goodwill from their organisation that is when the organization meet their needs in good manners they become indebted towards the organization by developing a sense of obligation to do good to the organisation in returns through performing their job as expected of them (Swalhi & Zgoulli, 2017). Whereas as if the treatment was contrary to their expectation from the organization they may attempt to retaliate in any forms of organisational counterproductive behaviours (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001).

A number of authors have identified organisational justice as central to the smooth conduct of social exchange relationship in an organisation (Murphy, Wayne, Liden, & Erdogan, 2003). According to Folger and Cropanzano (1998) employees modify their behaviour according to their perception of justice prevalence in their relationship with organisation, if they perceive just treatment they aim to reciprocate most desirably to the organisation.

Apart from this, organisational justice has been related to the way employees feel respected and appreciated in the organisation which in turn influences them to use organisational membership to define themselves as belonging to the organization a feeling that makes them contribute to the success of the organisation through positive job outcomes including task performance (Liu & Liu, 2014).

Based on the foregoing, the current study proposes that organizational identification mediates the relationship between organizational justice and employee performance this could be explained diagrammatically as follows:





Independent Variable

Mediating Variable

Dependent Variable

Figure 1 Conceptual Model

Source: The researcher, 2021

3. Methodology

The study is going to use survey to examine a mediating effect of organizational identification on the relationship between organizational justice and employee task performance. The sample of the study using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula will be 337 out of 2753 lecturers from three conventional universities (BUK, FUD and KUST) in Kano state, Nigeria. Descriptive and inferential statistics will be used to analyse the data, specifically structural equation modeling (SEM) will be used with the help of AMOS software packages.

4. Conclusion

This paper proposes a model consisting of organizational justice, employee performance and organizational identification where the organizational identification comes as a mediator. It was shown earlier

that, due to the nature of social exchange relationship in an organization employees always expect and want fair dealing from the organisation and it is based on this understanding that the employees decide to reciprocate the gesture paying good with good and bad with bad depending on whether justice or injustice occur. This is the case with the university lecturers in Nigeria due to the perception of injustice from the school management the lecturers performance has been very poor this resulted in poor academic performance of their students as well. So to address the problem current study proposes a model where organizational identification comes as a mediator between the justice and performance this is with a hope that organisational identification could reinforce the effect of the justice on the performance. Therefore, a model is hereby proposed for empirical testing.

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