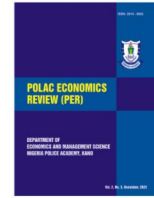




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THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF TRUST ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT BREACH IN NIGERIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES: A PILOT TEST.

Shakur Faruk

Department of Economics and Management Science,
Nigeria Police Academy, Wudil- Kano

Abstract

Against the incessant problem of psychological employment contract in organizations, as such, it is crucial to look at likely factors that would influence the perception of employees regarding their employment contract. Thus, the objective and purpose of this paper is to conduct a pilot test on organizational justice, trust and psychological employment contract breach. A 5 point-linkert scale to measure was employed, as well as using Version 24 of SPSS to scrutinise the Cronbach alpha and reliability of the instruments for measurement. A convenience sample size of 25 to 30 was used in achieving the objective of the study, while experts in the related field of this research accessed the content and face validity. The result of the study found that the instruments are reliable and can be used for studying larger sample size. Based on the result of the pilot test, it is recommended that the instruments are valid, reliable and showing evidence of rational normality, as such, good for further studies with larger sample size.

Keywords: Organizational Justice, Trust, Psychological Employment Contract Breach, Pilot Study.

1. Introduction

In any organization, employees generally feel happy to put in their best beyond the defined task, and organizations are expected to reciprocate by obliging to offer more to employee on their rightful entitlement as it goes a long way in determining the employee perception on the job (Ali & Anwar, 2021; Umar & Ringim, 2015). It is important for organizations to put into consideration factors that will positively influence employees' perception in relation to their employer regarding the employment contract. This is because the normative expressions of collective agreements, which includes working hours, pay, wages as well as other benefits associated with employment in accordance to norm make up employment contract, hence it is legally enforceable by individual employees as right (Brown, Deakin, Nash & Oxenbridge, 2000). And as such, employees look up to the employment contract as a factor binding them to their employer.

It is expected that employers ensure full compliance with the contents of the employment contract as it goes hand in hand with the employee perception. This

implies similar investment between employee and employer to strike balance (De Jong, Schalk & De Cuyper, 2009; Mmamel, Abugu, Ilechukwu, Ogbo, Onodugo, Ofoegbu, & Okwo, 2021), as well as inability to strike such balance results to negative effect on the perception of employment contract (Robinson & Morrison, 2000). This is because employees are lured and agreed to put in their effort in the organization based on the content of the employment contract which serves as an influencing mechanism to them. Thus, expecting the employer to leave up to expectations by fulfilling the promises embedded in the employment contract.

Unfortunately, workers in place of work regularly perceive that their employer did not or are unable to sufficiently fulfil the promises made to employees, and therefore cultivate the feelings and perception that the agreed employment contract has not been fulfilled leading to perceived breach (Topa & Jimenez, 2017; Mmamel, Abugu, Ilechukwu, Ogbo, Onodugo, Ofoegbu, & Okwo, 2021). Employees always accept employment offer from the employer based on the

terms and condition of service embedded in the employment contract, and thus put in their best in discharging their duties. But reverse is always the case when the employer did not fulfil the promises previously made (psychological employment contract breach). Furthermore, Morrison and Robinson (1997), defined psychological employment contract breach as the perception of employees regarding the level at which their employer did not fulfil or rather failed to deliver its promises. When the employer fail to honour the promised made to employee, the late perceived breach of psychological employment contract as it influences their behaviours negatively leading to feelings of frustration and disappointment.

It is on this note that the research by Delcampo, Rogers and Jacobson, (2010) emphasized that breach of employment contract by the employer is absolutely associated to the employee's feelings and perceived discrimination in the place of work. Employees that are experiencing psychological contract breach have the tendency of engaging in deviant behaviours (Asante, Liang, Chen, Mensah & Wang, 2021; Costa & Neves, 2017). Additionally, when employer did not fulfil the promises made to employee, trust is negatively affected (Wang, Qiao, Wang, Sheng, & Newaz, 2021; Walker, 2013). This is due the fact that the employee will lose confidence on the employer as a result of perceived disappointment of the psychological contract.

However, understanding the antecedence and consequences of the psychological employment contract breach is of utmost importance because organizations would be better placed in managing the employee expectations, and this will go a long way in enhancing the implementation of management practices that will reduce the effect of such breach perception in the organization (Cable, 2008). Measures and templates of proper handling of the employees by the employers would be clearly understood when there is clear view of these consequences as well as antecedents.

Furthermore, Coyle-Shapiro and Neuman (2004), emphasized that there is an increased focus on psychological contract breach due to changes in employer activities which makes psychological contract breach to be more pronounced and common. This is because employers are previously considered to be "caretakers", for employees, since they assist them developing and planning their career (Cavanaugh & Noe, 1999). But in the recent times, psychological

contract is perceived to be less concerned about long-term relationship of the employment because employees are nowadays liable for their own occupation planning and development.

Additionally, going by the review of previous literatures, it is evident that researches on psychological contract breach are carried out in Europe and North America and few studies in Africa (Hussain, 2014). Knowing fully well that scholars have questioned imposing the findings from western countries on other nations due to cultural differences (Hui, lee, & Rousseau, 2004; Fu & Deshpande, 2012). Thus the present study try to make contribution by examining psychological contract breach in the Nigeria context which is a West African country, or rather a country in Africa.

Also, empirical research findings on the association among organizational justice and breach of the psychological contract is found to have mixed results. Several studies were conducted on the association between organizational justice and psychological contract breach. Thus, the researches that revealed a positive and significant relationship includes the following: Cassar and Buttigieg, (2015); De Ruiter, Schalk, Schaveling, and Van Gelder, (2017); Rosen, Chang, Johnson and Levy, (2009), while other studies found negative relationship (Peng, Jia-Jing & Lin, 2016; Wen-Hai, Tao-Sheng, Li-Chi & Wen-Chang, 2017).

This inconsistency in the results necessitated the introduction of mediating variable of trust in clarifying the association that exist between organizational justice and psychological employment contract breach (DeConinck, 2010; Lo & Aryee, 2003). In accordance with the information that was derived from review of previous literatures, this paper conduct a plot study with the view of integrating trust as mediating variable on the relationship between organizational justice and psychological employment contract breach, focusing on the context of Nigeria public universities (Barron & kenny 1986).

Gay, Mills and Airasian, (2006), maintained that pilot test is an outfit preparation where by a small scale of the research/study trial is carried out before proceeding to the main research. The small scale preliminary study is carried out so as to access feasibility, cost, time, and adverse events, as well as improving on the design of the study before executing the full-scale research

project. Hence, this article conducted a pilot test so as to accomplish the afforested objectives by checking the validity and reliability of the instrument for measurement.

Conducting the present pilot test would enhance the researchers' ability correct as well as predicting likely exertion when carrying out the large or full scale study. This is because this study will enhance checking of the validity and reliability of the instruments for measurement. Based on this, Sekaran and Bougie (2010), and Saunders (2011) maintained that instrument for measuring validity is the level at which this particular instrument of measurement is appropriately computing what it is actually meant to measure. Also, Sekeran and Bougie (2010), emphasized that reliability of measurement is known as the level where by the measuring instrument is stable, free from error and shows a level of consistency over time and cutting across different items in scale.

The coefficient of Cronbach's alpha is the reliable consistent Inter –item which is regarded as the best common test and it was used in this pilot test, knowing fully well that testing the consistency and accuracy of measuring instruments is important (Hair, Money, Samouel & Page, 2007). It is on this note that this paper conduct a pilot test with the aim of examining the effects of organizational justice, trust as well as psychological employment contract breach in the context of the Nigerian public universities.

2. Literature Review

This section will present a review of relevant literature on the psychological contract breach and also establish the association among the study variables. The variables involved in the study are psychological contract breach, organizational justice and trust concepts, empirical review and theoretical framework would be provided.

2.1 Conceptual Issues

Organizational Justice

The concept of organizational justice has theoretical and empirical advantages as it practically captures the perception of employee regarding fairness or unfairness of psychological contract (Fieseler, Bucher & Hoffmann, 2019), and has been identified long ago by researchers as prerequisite for an effective running an organization (Greenberg, 1990), thereby enhancing the

contentment and satisfaction of employees working in an organization.

Psychological Contract Breach

Psychological contract breach is considered to be the perception of an individual regarding non fulfilment of promises made. The understanding of such perception will enable the employer to focus on how to ameliorate or avoid the existence of negative perception at work place. The employee's has the perception that the employer should ensure fulfilment of the promises made in accordance to employment or psychological contract (Dantas & Ferreira, 2015), and when employee have the perception that the employer fail to fulfil its obligations and promises, they tend to view it as a breach of psychological contract by the employer (Rousseau, 1995).

Trust

Trust is defined as the ability of an employer to be susceptible to the conduct of an employee (Pussa & Tolvanen, 2006). It was also defined as an employee's views concerning the probability that employer's upcoming decision and action will be encouraging, or to some extent not harmful, to their wellbeing (Morrison & Robinson, 1997).

2.2 Empirical Review

The empirical studies on the association between organizational justice and psychological contract breach appeared to be mixed. Number of researches was carried out on the association between organizational justice and psychological contract breach. Among the studies which reported a positive association includes the following: Malik, Bakri, Ajmal and Malik (2019) examined the relationship between organizational justice and psychological contract breach in Pakistan. Their study was based on social exchange theory and quantitative method was used to analyse sample size of 306 employees working in public banks. The result of the study found a significant relationship between procedural justice and psychological contract breach.

Cassar and Buttigieg (2015) examined the mediating effect of psychological contract breach the relationship between organizational justice and emotional well-being. The study used sample size of employees in United States manufacturing, and the result of the research found that psychological contract breach partially mediates the relationship between organizational justices and emotional well-being, and

that justice in organization influences employees' perceptions of psychological contract breach.

Meanwhile, the following studies found negative relationship, Peng, Jia-Jing and Lin (2016) carried out an investigation on the relationship between organizational justice and psychological contract breach, with a sample size of 94 store workers of a Taiwan restaurant chain. The result of the study revealed that procedural justice which is an aspect of organizational justice was found to have a significantly negative effect on employee psychological contract breach. Chih, Chiu, Lan, and Fang (2017) carried out a study psychological contract violation in relation to its effect on perceived justice and behavioural intent within consumers putting into consideration social exchange theory. 487 samples size of questionnaires was distributed via online survey and the result of study showed that both distributive justice and procedural justice has a significant and negative outcome on violation of psychological contract because of the existence of breach.

Furthermore, trust is said to be a crucial element for any constant social relationship (Blau, 1964). DeConinck (2010) noted that trust is rarely used as a mediator on job outcomes and suggested its use on the variable such as organizational justice. Lo and Aryee (2003) stated that it is paramount for researchers to adopt a more integrative orientation by investigating the antecedents and outcome of psychological contract breach as well as the mediators and moderators of these consequence, and scholars are of the opinion that there is need for mediating variable for the purpose of explaining the relationship that exist among the independent variable and dependent variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

2.3 Theoretical Framework

Organizational Justice Theory

Social scientists have recognized justice as the basic requirement for smooth running of organization as it influences employee job perception (Usmani & Jamal, 2013; Greenberg, 1990) and researchers of justice reiterated to employers that "being fair costs little and pays off handsomely" (Brockner, 2006). Previous studies have revealed that organizational justice is related to psychological contract breach because the feelings of injustice leads to negative results for

employers and organization in general (Nyarko et al., 2014), and have been found to relate to breach-outcome relationships (Knoppe, 2012). The concept of organizational justice theory is crucial to any organization as it smoothing the relationship between employee and employer (Moorman, Blakely, & Niehoff, 1998).

Based on this, it would therefore opined that the academic staff who perceived psychological contract breach due to inability of its employer to meet up to expectation towards them, would not have trust in their employer, and this would degenerate to unfriendly working atmosphere. It is on this note that the theory of organizational justice was used in this study so as to explain the relationships that exist between organizational justice, trust and psychological employment contract breach, as it goes a long way in showing the unique value of justice and fairness ideology in influencing breach of psychological employment contract in work place.

3. Methodology

According to Gay, Mills and Airasian (2006), pilot test is defined as the trial and preparation where by a small portion of the population or sample is tested before the real study scale execution. This process usually contain few sample size ranging from 15 to 30 respondents, though it might be above this number if there numerous study stages (Malhotra, 2008). The reasons for conducting pilot test are (i) for the purpose of assessing how valid and reliable is the survey instruments; and (ii) to ascertain the actual condition of the research which would enable the researcher to forecast and handle possible challenges in the course of the main study (Aminu & Shariff, 2015 ; Surucu & Maslakci, 2020).

It is in accordance to the above that the researcher conducted a pilot test and distributed few sample size of 30 copies of questioner to respondents. The researcher ensures that the distributed questionnaire passed through the initial screening stage of consulting experts for face validity before distributing to respondents. Thus, 25 copies of filled questionnaire were retrieved from the respondents. As stated earlier, Sekaran and Bougie (2010) emphasized that the coefficient of Cronbach's alpha is regarded as the best recognized assessment of inter-item uniformity reliability, which is why the present study conducted it in the pilot test. The

version 24 window of SPSS was used to analyse the retrieved questionnaire so as to examine the cronbach alpha, as doing this will ascertain if the measuring instruments are reliable or not.

3.1 Measurement of Variables

This study employed the application of closed ended multiple-choice questioner for the purpose of the perception of respondents. Also, a five points likert-scale was employed for the purpose of measuring all the variables since it is reliable and appropriate for this type of research (Alreck & Settle, 1995; Neuman & Robson, 2008; Hair et al., 2010; Churchill & Peter 1984), knowing fully well that rating scales is always used for measuring latent construct in the field of social sciences (Churchill & Peter 1984). This likert scale is the most common used in recent times and it ranges from strongly agree to strongly disagree which makes it user-friendly, as well as providing acceptable reliability result (Willits, Theodori & Luloff, 2016).

Additionally, past studies emphasized that mid-point scale gives accurate and better result (Krosnic & Fabrigar 1997), as it enhances participants' ability to comfortably indicate their precise position on the subject matter (Schuman & Presser, 1981). This is because compelling respondent to reply in a specific way could lead to measurement problem (Krosnick & Fabrigar, 1997). Thus, Elmore and Beggs (1975) stressed the need to maintain five points likert-scale due to the fact that increasing the number of scale above five will not have any meaningful impact on the reliability rating. Evidence have also showed that past studies on behavioural research used 5 point likert scale as done in this study (Ghorbani, Branch & Dimneh, 2012; Goail, Perumal & Noor, 2014; Shehu & Mahmood, 2014).

Furthermore, the key variables in this pilot test includes: organizational justice, trust and psychological employment contract breach and they would be measure uni-dimensionally. The first section contains 9 items that intend to measure psychological employment contract breach in the context of the Nigerian public owned universities. The second section consist of 20 items that would measurement lecturers perception of organizational justice in Nigeria public universities, and lastly, trust has 7 items that would measure the level of employer trust in Nigeria public universities.

4. Presentation and Discussion of Results

4.1 Face and Content Validity

For the aim of ensuring the adequate representation stance of the measuring items as well as proper measurement, an orderly assessment of ability of the scale in ascertaining what it is theoretically aim to measure was examined. This is always executed through distribution of few sample size features to a group of specialist in the related filed so as to pass decision on the appropriateness of the chosen items for the variable measurement (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tathan, 2010; Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). In most cases, content and face validity have always been used interchangeably, even though they are similar but not the same because there exist a paramount conceptual difference between them (Dulan, Rege, Hogg, Gilberg-Fisher, Tesfay, & Scott, 2012).

Another name for Content validity is logical validity, and it means the level to which a measure epitomizes the entire aspects of a particular construct. It is the level at which the measuring items represents the actual sample of the theoretical content area of a research construct (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Thus, for the purpose of the content validity to meet the initial and required pool of items, it requires face validity. It is on this note that Nunnally and Bernstein, (1994) defined face validity as showing the level at which measuring items reflects what it is meant to measure. Face validity level at which users or respondents pass judgement on measuring items regarding their appropriateness to the targeted construct objectives (Anastasi, 1988; Nevo, 1985). It is the sensibility, relevance or appropriateness of the test as well as its items in accordance to how they appear to the respondents that are providing answers to the questions asked. Are these tests looking meaningful and valid to the respondents? Thus, face validity connotes the level to which the respondent views the test content, as well as the relevance of the context in the administration of the test.

However it has become paramount for researchers to conduct content and face validity of the measuring instruments, and it is on this note that a sample of the measuring instrument of this article was distributed to specialist in the related study area. This is done so as to ensure the suitability, sufficiency as well as the comfortable of the measuring items of the study construct. Meanwhile, few lecturers teaching and conducting research in the university Utara Malaysia

who are well acquainted with the context of the present research were like wisely contacted for the purpose of ensuring the appropriateness of the instruments. Some observations were made leading to the re-phrasing of the items for the aim of ensuring its clarity and easy understanding to the respondent in accordance to the subject matter. The whole process was completed in a month, as the researcher was able to derive an appropriate instrument for the pilot study based on the accurate input and observations of the lecturers and specialists.

4.2 Reliability Test

Even though content and face are carried out, it is very essential to test for reliability in a study/research. According to Hair et al., (2011), the least acceptable level of internal consistency reliability of measure is 0.70, knowing fully well that internal consistency reliability test is the furthestmost widely method being used (Litwin, 1995). The internal consistent validity evaluates the level of consistency through and across factors within a test, and Cronbach's alpha is the generally used internal consistency measure (Cortina, 1993; Sekaran & Bougie, 2010).

The Cronbach's alpha indicates the level of consistency, as it shows the meaning of number of factors degree and scale of their inter-correlations (EL Hajjar, 2018). It is on this note that Cronbach alpha test was used for this pilot test in determining the internal consistency measurement. The version 24 of SPSS was used in examining α and the findings revealed that the items are reliable. This is because the findings shows that generally, all the measures have high reliability criterion which ranges within 0.825 to 0.916, and it is in harmony with standard reliability value of 0.70 as

emphasized by scholars (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006; Hair, Money, Samouel & Page 2007; 2010; Sekaran & Bougie, 2010).

Meanwhile the following items Cronbach alpha was derived from the items: Nine (9) items were measured for psychological contract breach with $\alpha = 0.916$, more so, 20 items of organizational justice was measured with $\alpha = 0.917$, and 7 items of trust were measured and got $\alpha = 0.825$. From this alpha result of the variables under the present study, it shows that the items are reliable since they scored above the standard benchmark of 0.07, and such useful for conducting the main study with larger sample size.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusively, the aim of this research is to execute a pilot test for the purpose of checking the validity and reliability of the measuring instruments in preparation for larger scale sample size of the study. The questionnaire was adapted from previous studies for the present pilot test which was distributed to specialist and lecturers in Universiti Utara Malaysia. Thus, necessary observations and correction were implemented based on the suggestion of specialist in the field of study. The Cronbach alpha was examined and the study found that the items are reliable and suitable for conducting further study/research.

The result of the study found that the instruments are reliable and can be used for studying larger sample size. Based on the result of the pilot test, it is recommended that the instruments are valid, reliable and showing evidence of rational normality, as such, good for further studies with larger sample size.

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