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ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND EMPLOYEES' COMMITMENT IN MODERN ORGANIZATIONS

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Abstract

After examining organizational culture and employees' commitment in organizations, this paper concludes by asserting that employees' commitment to organizational goals and objectives will be impossible in the face of multitudinous and variegated challenges facing workers such as inability to pay his/her bills, meet up societal expectation of owning a house, car, pay children school fees and other social demands. Employees that can meet the above needs, and are well treated by the organization are likely to be committed employees. The paper therefore recommends that employment in organizations should be based on merit. This is so because any employee or staff that comes into organizations climbing on the back of any person will almost always be loyal and show commitment to that person and not to the organization as a whole.

Introduction

Everybody is born into an organization, grows up in an organization, works in an organization, die in an organization and buried by organization members. We all come into organizations as young, vibrant men and women but leave at an advanced or old age assuming we serve out our service years in such organizations.

We spent our youthful years working for organizations we expect can help us meet our societal and financial needs because at old age our services will no longer be needed or the value of such services will miserably depreciates. At old age we are expected to be at home enjoying our last days. At this time what will we be enjoying if we didn't save for the raining day? Organizations are part and parcel of human existence. No individual can ever live life outside the influence of organizations. Man cannot really live without interactions with other members of the society either in the family, church/mosque, and place of work, market or any other social organizations. Thus, man cannot always produce everything he needs all alone without entering into relations with others.

Social relations of production expresses a relationship of control between two people engaged in production with regards to the location of the means of production. A typical example of social relations of production is the one between the peasants (workers) and the feudal lord in

a feudal system. Yuri Popov has given a very interesting illustration with a young man leaving the village to the city located hundreds of miles away to look for a job. As he finds one, a definite relation of production will be established with his employer.

According to Popov (1984):

> the worker offers the employer his labour power,
>
> that is, his capacity for labour. He is allowed the
>
> temporary use of the means of production, which belongs
>
> to the employer. That man no longer work for himself
>
> but for his employer. Here, it is not their personal relations
>
> but their (social) relations of production that are important.

This obviously means that nobody is an island. We all enter into relations with others in order to earn a living, either working for others or managing such organizations.

Theoretical Framework

This work uses Theory Z to explicate the concept of organizational culture. Theory Z was propounded by William G. Ouchi (1981). It focuses on the organizational and behavioural side of management. Its basic assumption is workers and how they are key to increase performance in work organizations.

Ouchi offers several ways to manage people so that they can work more effectively to increase productivity. Performance is believed to be dependent upon commitment to an overall vision, mission, philosophy, participative decision making, trust and intimacy by organization members. The likely work behavior and attitudes of employees are explainable by this theory.

Hoy and Miskel (2008) observed that the success of Japanese corporations was one of the first contemporary analyses of corporate culture. He argued that the success of effective corporations in Japan and America was a function of distinctive corporate (organizational) culture; one that was internally consistent and characterized by shared values of intimacy, trust, cooperation, teamwork, and egalitarianism. Success of these organizations was not as much a matter of technology as it was of managing people. He labeled the American organizations with these values as theory z cultures.

Theory Z organizations have a number of properties that promote distinctive features and one of these is long-term employment opportunities. This creates in employees a sense of job security and commitment to the organizations. The process of slower rates of promotion creates more opportunities to broaden experiences and more diverse career paths as employees perform different functions and roles. Participative and consensus decision making demands cooperation, teamwork and values that are communicated and enforced within the organization. Individual responsibility for collective decision making demands an atmosphere of trust and mutual support.

Concern for the total person is a natural part of the working relationship which tends to be informed and emphasizes the whole person and not just the individual role. This holistic perspective promotes a strong egalitarian atmosphere, a community of equals who works cooperatively on common goals rather than on formal hierarchy. Hence, theory Z organizations are structured and operated to promote the

basic values of intimacy, trust, cooperation and egalitarianism. It involves the organization's policies on employment, decision making, and division of labor and delegation of authority, organization's self-evaluation, promotion, control systems, career paths, and extensive commitment to all aspects of the employees' life, including family life.

When applied to organizations, theory Z addresses the following: trust, intimacy, employment procedures, shared control, decision making, training, motivation, interpersonal skills, quality control and other managerial processes.

What is organization?

One of the oldest definitions of organization which is still relevant to the purpose of this work is from Weber (1947) who sees organization as a" corporate group", a social relationship which is either closed or limits the admission of outsiders by rules…so far as its order is enforced by the action of specific individuals whose regular function is, of a chief or head and usually also an administrative staff. From this definition, individuals interact within the organization; the organization has a limited boundary-it includes parts of the population and excludes others; a structuring of interactions is imposed, that is, a hierarchy of authority and a division of labour in carrying out functions are instituted.

Scott (1974) defines organization as "collectivities" established for the pursuit of relatively specific objectives on a more or less continuous basis. According to him, there are certain distinctive features of organizations which include:
a) Relatively fixed boundaries
b) A normative order
c) Authority ranks
d) A communication system and

e) An incentive system which enables various groups of members to work together in pursuit of common goals.

Both Weber and Scott present the traditional view of organization by looking at it from the rational purpose of its founders. Modern organizational theorists have argued that this approach is misleading because as an organization grows, it generates processes which have little to do with its original rational objectives.

Modern theorists view organizations as complex open systems continuously interacting with their environments (Fedor, 1998). Schein (1980) goes ahead to explain four main sources of what constitute complexity in organizations. These are; First, is the difficulty of defining and delineating the appropriate boundaries of any given organization and determining its relevant environment?

Second, organizations are generally known to have several goals or fulfill several functions. Some of these functions are primary or secondary, while others are manifest or latent, and all of them are dictated by cultural, social and economic forces which impose conflicting demands on the organizations.

Third, the organizations carry within themselves representatives of the external, or employees who bring with them demands, needs, expectations and cultural norms that conflict with organizational norms.

Fourth and finally, the nature of the environment is itself changing very rapidly, thereby forcing the organization to frequently review its goals, modify its functions and devise appropriate coping mechanisms or strategies to remain relevant (Carley and Lee, 1998; Walker, 1998).

Organizations are so important that hardly can any success be recorded or profit made without the social relations of production. That is why good and successful leaders of organization must be good students of organizational theory.

Classification of organization

There are various ways organizations are classified. But this work will follow Carlson (1964) classification model. According to this model, organizations are classified into type 1, 2, 3 and 4 organizations

Type 1 Organizations: In this organization type, organizations select the clients and the clients in turn also select the organization, example private schools, colleges and universities, private hospitals, law firms, private shopping malls, etc.

Carlson calls them 'wild organization' because they struggle for survival. Their survival depends on peoples' patronage. Their existence is not guaranteed without patronage. Client patronage of this type of organization is closely tied to their standard of performance. They don't have a steady flow of client if they don't perform well or appear to do so.

Type 11 Organizations: Here, the organization does not select clients but the clients select the organization. For example, the child selects the school he wants to attend whether privately owned, state owned or federal owned schools, colleges, polytechnic or universities. The patients also select the type of hospital he wants to receive treatment, could be private hospitals, polyclinics, General hospitals, teaching hospitals, etc apart from referral cases. The major disadvantage here is lack-lustre performance, knowing that whether

they perform well or not they will still be patronized.

Type 111 Organizations: In this organization type, organizations have a choice of the clients; the clients have no choice of the organization, example children in motherless babies' homes. These motherless children did not choose to be in such homes but circumstances beyond their control force them to be there. The motherless babies' homes choose these children as clients but these children did not choose the home but people choose the homes for them.

Type 1V Organizations: Here, neither the clients nor the organizations select each other. In other words, the organizations do not select the clients and the clients do not select the organizations. Examples of these types of organizations are prisons, mental or psychiatric hospitals. This type of organizations does not compete with other organizations and so whether they perform well or not, their existence is guaranteed by the government through funding. Because of this, they usually provide poor quality services and are usually slow to perceive change and even slower to adopt it.

What is Organizational Culture?

Organizational culture is a way things are done in the organization.
According to Ouchi (1981), organizational culture can be seen as a set of symbols, ceremonies and myth that communicate the underlying values and beliefs of that organization to its employees.

Some organizations have been able to articulate the essential values in their cultures and some have even written down these values and made them part of formal training to be imbibed by new entrants in the organization. The culture of an organization is all the beliefs, feelings,

behaviors and symbols that are characteristic of an organization.

More specifically, organizational culture is defined as shared philosophies, ideologies, beliefs, feelings, assumptions, expectations, attitudes, norms, and values.

Lunenburg and Ornstein (2008) put forward the following as characteristics of organizational behaviour:

a) **Observed Behaviour Regularities:** this comes about when organizational members frequently interact, use common language, terminologies, rituals and ceremonies relevant to the organization and common goal.

b) **Norms:** these refer to acceptable standards of behavior within the system. Example standard/acceptable work ethics, yardsticks for either promotion, demotions, sanction, etc, which are known and accepted by all organization members.

c) **Dominant values:** every organization has core or dominant values which it cannot trade with. Such values are held in high esteem. Examples of such values may include low level of absenteeism, truancy, minimal dropout rate, high graduation rate, intolerance of examination malpractice, drunkenness, high efficiency, etc.

d) **Philosophy:** this refers to policies guiding an organization's mode of operation. They are usually reflected in the organization's mission statement and philosophy which all organization members are to key into.

e) **Rules:** these rules help maintain discipline within organization. They show the "dos" and "don't" of the organization and members overtime are expected to internalize them. Member's actions and performances are guided by these rules, if they are to be socialized into the organization.

f) **Feelings:** this is the overall atmosphere that is conveyed in an organization by its physical layout and the way members interact with clients and others outside the organization.

Organizations import energy from the environment in the form of information, people, and materials. This energy undergoes a transformation designed to channel behaviour towards organizational goals and fulfill members' needs.

Administrative processes such as motivation, leadership, decision making, communication and change and organizational structures such as job descriptions, selection systems, evaluation systems, control systems and reward systems all have significant impact on organizational culture and vice versa.

Characteristics of Organizational Culture

Uyanga and Ekang (2018) have suggested the following as fundamental characteristics of organizational culture:

• **Member identity:** this refers to the extent which staff identifies with the organization as a whole rather than with their job only.

• **People focus:** the management focuses on people working within the organization and new entrants into the organization more than outsiders.

• **Team orientation:** this has to do with the degree to which work activities are organized around team rather than individuals.

• **Unit integration:** units/departments within the organization are encouraged to operate in a coordinated and interdependent manner.

- **Control measures:** rules, regulations, policies and supervision are used to control the behaviour of employees or organization members.
- **Attention to details:** the degree to which employees are expected to exhibit precision, analysis and attention to details.
- **Innovation and risk taking:** the extent to which employees tolerate risks, environmental hazards, culture assimilation and are encouraged to be innovative and think outside the box in finding solutions to organization's problem.
- **Reward criteria:** the degree to which rewards such as salaries, recommendations for promotion or appointment, leave of any kind and other fringe benefits are made to employees based on performance and commitment rather than on ethnicity, favouritism, and "female credentials". The same is applicable to how queries and punishments are meted out to staff.
- **Conflict tolerance:** staff are encouraged to accommodate one another and criticize constructively without bias or prejudice.
- **Means-ends-orientation:** the degree to which management focuses on results rather than on the techniques or processes used. Most organization leaders are interested in the results but de-emphasize the processes or procedures involved. This approach however, should be discouraged especially in the teaching-learning process as it is most unethical for teachers not teach but rather resort to aiding and abetting examination malpractice.

- **Open system focus:** this involves the extent to which the organization monitors and responds to changes in the environment. The approach really needs to be stressed as most employees are resistant to change. They do not believe in innovation neither are they willing to adapt to change in the ever changing world.

Functions of organizational culture

According to Robbins, Judge and Vohra (2012), functions of organizational culture include:

a) It has a boundary-defining role, meaning it creates distinction between one organization and the other.
b) It conveys a sense of identity for organizational members.
c) Organizational culture facilitates the generation of commitment to a course of action better than individual self-interest, and increase consistency of staff behavior.
d) Organizational behavior reduces role conflict as staff is aware of what to do or not to do within the limit of their functionality.
e) It provides a standard to which all organization members should adhere to or be seen as outlaws.

However, organizational culture may as well have its disadvantages, for instance, over conformity, barrier to change, diversification and atomization, etc.

How to create and sustain Organizational Culture

Organizational culture does not just occur, it is created, cultivated and reared and rarely fades away after being established. Every organization has its own customs, traditions, and general ways of

doing things based on what has been done before and how successful it was.

The ultimate source of organizational culture according to Mowday (2003) is the founder(s) of such organization. Founders have vision of what the organization should be like and impose such vision on all organization members.

According to Mowday (2003), organizational culture is created in the following three ways First, the founder(s) hire and keep only employees who think and feel the same way they do. Non-adherents/conformists receive query, suspension and sometimes outright dismissal.

Second, the founder(s) indoctrinate and socialize these employees to their way of thinking and feeling.

Finally, the founder(s) personal behaviour encourages employees to identify with him (them) and internalize their beliefs, values and assumptions. When the organization succeeds, the founder(s) personality and behaviour become part of the organizational culture. Subsequent leaders can break away from such values and instill their own beliefs and value systems if they apply the transformational leadership concepts.

Transformational leaders strengthen organizational culture by communicating and enacting their vision of the future. To Schein (1983) and Schuitle (2009) cultural values are particularly reinforced when leaders behave in ways that are consistent with the vision of the organization. For example, Thomas Watson Jr., a Chief Executive and the owner of a company was being reprimanded for not displaying the company's badge before entering the premises by the guard Rather than firing the guard, he praised him for doing his work well. Leaders of organizations should always mind what they do even in

secrets because members may be watching them with a view to doing the same thing.

Three factors, according to Stone (2007), come to play in sustaining organizational culture. These are the selection practices, the socialization methods and the action of top management.

1.   Selection practice has to do with the process of identifying and hiring individuals who share the same vision and have the knowledge, skills, aptitude and abilities to perform the job within the organization successfully and adhere to organizational norms.

2.   Socialization methods: here new employees must be indoctrinated into the organization's culture and norms. New employees are potentially likely to distort organizational culture or ways of doing things if not checked or controlled by the management. A new employee should be a good student of organizational politics. They should closely observe what goes on in the organization and align themselves properly. Organizational politics could be a good servant but a bad master. It is more like a dual purpose sword. It slashes the throat of the weak while like Excalibur; it further strengthens the hand of the strong. Organizational politics is real in every organization and used wisely it better our lots, and used badly it plunges the organization into disaster.

3.   Top management: the action of top management also has a significant impact on organizational culture through what they say and how they behave. They may determine, for

example, how much freedom employees enjoy the appropriate dress code like in the military and Para-military organizations, law and medical professions, penalty for various offences committed, criteria for promotion or appointment into offices in the organization and other forms of rewards to the employees.

What is employee commitment?

We have Babel of voices and opinions regarding what employee commitment are all about. I will plead to take an intellectual refuge in the coverage provided by Becker (1994). He sees employee commitment as the process by which an individual increases the involvement which he or she has in a particular career or institution, thus decreasing the likelihood of changing to another career. In other words, the employee so love his job and the organization he is working for and is not in a hurry to leave both the job and the organization. He derives financial, social and material satisfaction from the organization he is working for. In another instance, Mullins (1999) defines employee commitment as encapsulating giving all of oneself while at work. Put differently, the employee puts in all his being to ensure that organizational targets are met and goals achieved.

O'Reilly (1996) defines organizational commitment as typically conceived of as an individual's psychological bond to the organization, including a sense of job involvement, loyalty, and a belief in the values of the organization. Employee commitment involves using the organization's time constructively, paying attention to details, making that extra effort, or going the extra mile, accepting change and challenges, cooperation with others to achieve organizational goals. It also involves self-development, respecting organizational policies, abhorring pride in abilities, seeking improvements and giving loyal support to the organization.

Employee commitment also finds expression in the strength of an employee's identification and involvement in a particular organization as characterized by a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values. It is the readiness of the employee to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization and remaining a good member. The employee is ready to give his or her best to the growth of the organization he is working or consulting for. From all these explications, it is evident that there exist a relationship between organizational culture and employee commitment to work in any organization.

Organizational Culture and Employee Commitment in modern organizations: An analysis.

It is an incontrovertible fact that employee's commitment to work shares a family lineage wit organizational culture. They may in fact be related cousin. They are so related to the extent that divorcing one from another may do grave damage to reality. Employee commitment to a large extent depends on organizational culture.

It is to be noted that organizations create its own culture through its vision and mission statements and make its members or employees to imbibe same. Those who deviate from such vision are usually brought back into the organization's fold through counseling or sanction so that there will be one shepherd and one vision. No organization condones, at least for a long time, members who refuse to internalize organizational culture because in the long,

this will injure the success story of the organization.

Organizations that expect commitment from their members must be able to meet their needs. Workers have needs they expect their organizations to help them meet such as decent houses, cars, children school fees, medical bills and other societal expectation of workers. Any organization that fails in these great expectations should not expect commitment from its employees because their employers have failed in meeting their personal needs, family needs and societal needs. Any worker who cannot meet up these needs cannot be a happy worker. And as we all know, an unhappy worker cannot be a productive worker, all things being equal. Therefore, any organization that expects commitment from its employees should avoid doing the following:

- Unnecessary and frequent downsizing of the workforce as this will make the remaining staff to be sleeping with both eyes open and be psychologically detached from the organization. They may be there physically in their work places but their minds are not there. Also prospective serious applicants will not find such organizations attractive enough for them to work. Even in the unlikely event that they come into such organizations as workers, they will have their feet in two worlds at home in none. They will always be looking for a job better for them outside such organizations. This shows that the organizational commitment is weak.

- Paying poor salaries to workers: this may tempt some employees to moonlight, usually at the detriment of the organization they are working for. Others will pay cursory interest to their

jobs and will see no reason they should work and die for an organization that cannot meet their basic needs.

- Appointment and promotion should not be based on patronage. A situation that recruitment, appointment or promotion to higher offices take on the chameleonic colouration of family relationship, ethnicity, patrimonialism, prebendalism, 'benefits captured', ecclesiastical connection cannot augur well for such organization, at least in the long run.

- Selective treatment of staff in organizations in terms of promotion or sanction should be avoided if employee's commitment is to be sustained. New staff should not be preferentially promoted or given appointment over the older as much as possible. Such a scenario will bleed bad blood within the veins of older employees and the question of staff commitment to an organization will be seriously challenged. A situation where relatively newer staff is given positions of responsibility in organizations higher than those of older staff should be handled with caution.

- Communication patterns in organizations should be handled with adroitness and the administrative finesse of a communication expert. A scenario where memo and circular contents from the management to staff are couched in the equivalent of a military command is not only damaging to the psyche of organization members but could even breed contempt and insubordination. Employees are not slave and should not be treated as such. They are in fact, partners in progress. Workers are always the

proverbial donkey with whose blood and toil the whole edifice of any organization is built and sustained. Employees contribute more to the success of any organization than we may ever know. Without their labour, no organization can ever survive, thus they deserve better treatment.

Bob Galvin, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Motorola, when praised for the success story of Motorola, responded thus: "Motorola is a thousand times bigger than when I came in as a young man… we all made it happen. I helped a little".

This speaks volume of the fact that workers actually made the success story of any organization possible with little contribution from the CEO. But before this success story workers have to be committed to their work. The CEO of every organization should always know that they merely make a bunch of other people's flowers (ideas and skills) with little or nothing from him but the string (finance) to bind them together. Every employee is important to an organization and should be appreciated by the management.

Conclusion:

After examining organizational culture and employees' commitment in organizations, this paper concludes by asserting that employees' commitment to organizational goals and objectives will be impossible in the face of multitudinous and variegated challenges facing workers such as inability to pay his/her bills, meet up societal expectation of owning a house, car, pay children school fees and other social demands. Employees that can meet the above needs, and are well treated by the organization are likely to be committed employees.

Recommendations:

Based on this work, the following recommendations were made:

a. Employment in organizations should be based on merit. This is so because any employee or staff that comes into organizations climbing on the back of any person will almost always be loyal and show commitment to that person and not to the organization as a whole.

b. To expect commitment from employees, workers should be paid a "living wage". It is only then that the worker will give his best to the organization and not seeing himself as working in a nursery that needs to be transplanted to the main farm, where he expects to grow and flourish and bear more fruits for himself, his family members and friends to enjoy.

c. Every organization should make its vision and mission statements known to employees and make them to key into such. In fact, these should be hung in top management offices in the organization to draw visitors' attention to them. These vision and mission statements should also be placed in strategic positions within the organization's premises to draw people's attention to them.

d. Frequent downsizing of the organization's workforce should be the last option by the management if employee's commitment is to be retained. Employees who are constantly afraid of losing their jobs will most likely not be committed to organizational vision, mission, goals and objectives but rather be more concerned with what they can get from the system before they are shown the way out. Such workers can never be

committed to the organization. In this instance, we cannot but be extravagant with praise to those organizations that make downsizing of the workforce their last option.

e. Finally, and very importantly too, we should all know that no matter how long we work in an organization, one day we will exit that organization. This can be through dismissal, termination of appointment, resignation, incapacitation or death. How has your organization prepared you for old age or exit from the organization? I asserted at the beginning of this work that employees come into organizations young but leave at old age, assuming they put in all their productive years in the service of that organization. How workers will feel at old age when they exit the organization can enhance their present commitment to the organization. Will the worker retire to a life of misery and penury or to that of happiness and abundance? Please do not be deceived, good retirement plans can garner workers worker's commitment to the organization. After all, most of the corruption cases witnessed in the Nigeria's civil service is to take care of the future after retirement, such as building one's personal house, buys a car, finish training one's children and making investments one can fall back on before retirement. Because in Nigeria, the fear of retirement without savings or investments is the beginning of wisdom.

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