INFLUENCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE ON LECTURERS COMMITMENT IN CONTINUING EDUCATION INSTITUTE: IMPLICATION FOR POLICY MAKERS

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Abstract

The paper investigated the influence of organizational climate on lecturers' organizational commitment. The research employed a correlational design with a total sample of 60 participants from continuing education institute of Borno State, Nigeria. Data were collected through survey method and analyzed using inferential (Pearson correlation and multiple regression) statistics analysis. The findings of the study depicts the presence of significant and strong relationship between organizational climate and organizational commitment (p < 0.05), also organizational climate appeared to be predictor of lecturers organizational commitment in continuing education institute of Borno State (β = .206, t = 3.564, p< .01). In view of the findings, recommendations were offered to the institute to enable them establish norms with regard to acceptable behaviors in the institute, implications for policy and practice were drawn in addition to need for further studies.

Keywords: Organizational climate, organizational commitment, Continuing education Institute, Lecturers.

1. Introduction

The recent work environment was massively seen to be not the same from previous years as a result of overwhelming challenges that organizations at all level face. These challenges, among others, consist of increased competitiveness occasioned by technological innovations, transformed nature of organizational structures, challenges confronting workers, such as redefining employment status, sketchy work schedules' and responsibilities and work life which compel all organizations to attract committed employees. In contemporary work organizations in Nigeria most employees seem to perceive their managers and supervisors as often inclined to use top-down, command and control management techniques, which have been regarded as responsible for failed work relationship between bosses and their subordinates. This in turn might fail to cultivate trust, respect and confidence among staffs, which are usually affecting organizational performance, effectiveness, productivity and commitment. The problems which individuals face in organizational environment might significantly impact on their commitment, administrators and supervisors behaviours to large extent influences worker behaviour. Moreover, Yılmaz, (2008) opine that one of the reasons that reduces organizational effectiveness and productivity is the low level of organizational commitment.

One of the channels through which the above mentioned issues could be addressed is organizational climate (OC). However, creation of an appropriate organizational climate is not a secondary choice for contemporary organizations; rather it is vital to ensure substantial merit-based excellence under the intense global competition. The ability to attain the stated aims and objectives largely depends upon a number of variables from qualitative and quantitative standpoint such as the administrators in the academic and administrative staff, legislation, economic status, autonomy, organizational structure and so on. One of the most significant elements listed under human resources is academic staff. One of the ways to ensure efficiency of the academic staff is to try to maximize the value of their organizational commitment to a high level. Organizational climate determines the working environment in which the employees feel contented or discontented. Perception of organizational climate influences the commitment of the employees (Kumar, 2014). The general climate is a combination of a support from all the concerned quarters, which is from the management, people working in different levels, good supportive personnel policies and practices as well as the positive attitudes towards the development of the people as well as their organization (Døjbak, Burton, Obel & Lauridsen, 2008). Organizational climate is considered among the important management and technical processes that top managers should take into account to achieve highly valuable outcomes such as organizational commitment. Randhawa and Kaur (2014) opined that organizational commitment refers to loyalty and bond of an individual with his/her organization.

Organizations, including higher education institutions (HEIs), continuing education institutes not an exception, are structured by three core components: organizational climate (OC), supervisory and peer relationships (Narasimhan, 1997). Thus, strength and weaknesses are imminent in such organizations as success and failure

could take place, especially with regard to all the three core components mentioned above. In view of this understanding, climate is imperative to educationists and others, for it provides them with a connection between organizational procedures, practices, concerns, needs and the welfare of individual workers (James, Choi & Neil,2008).

A good organizational climate plays a major role in enhancing an employee's sense ofcoherence, which, in turn, is related to changes in the employee's well-being (Feldt,Kinnunen, & Mauno, 2000). Organizational Climate in general, is defined as the perceived attributes of an organization and its subsystems as reflected in the way an organization deals with its members, groups and issues. Organizational climate reflects the summary perceptions held by organizational members towards their organization. It represents the psychological state which is strongly affected by organizational conditions like structures, systems and managerial behaviour. It is the perception of how things exist in the organizational environment that is composed of several dimensions which in turn will depend upon the kind of organization. It is, thus, the manifestation of the attitudes of organizational members towards organization itself.

Nigeria, like most developing economies in the world, regard education as vital tool for national development. Thus, education remains a central activity which facilitates the acquisition of knowledge and skills that are required to uplift and brings about the mark of an educated and useful individual in the society, however, this could only be possible when lecturers that are saddled with the responsibility are committed. Lecturers are critical resources in the education business and to date no readymade substitute was on ground to replace them. National advancement and growth are to a large extent attributed to the quality of education provided to the citizenry. However, recent indicators reveal that it was in decline, which according to some researchers could be ascribed to many underlying forces not limited to inability of governments at all levels to keep up to their commitments to reflect the socio economic and technological needs and realities of the nation, especially to a large extent glaring infrastructural deficits, insufficient incentives, ill equipped system of education in addition to more and more inimical working environments occasioned by delay in payment of wages and salaries worsening lecturers social status and recognition with its concomitant effect on quality of output, where the products are not employable due to low quality. Wherever they were eventually employed most of them lack the prerequisite skills to function well. Undeniably, the above enumerated situation is worrisome; the institute of continuing education Borno state might not be immune to the above scenario. Moreover, Ogunyinka, Okeke and Adedoyin (2015) and Osokoya, (2010) describe the above scenario as vicious circle seemingly contributing to the lowering status of education in all forms and in all levels in the country. Similarly, Ekpiken and Ukpabio, (2014) expressed same view, indeed maintained that the development is adversely impacting on the economy. Where there is inadequate amount of resources and pitiable quality of lecturers, the attainment of good quality in higher education will be difficult (Aluede, Idogho, & Imonikhe, 2012). Given the unfortunate state of the continuing education institute of Borno state which comprise of high lecturers' absenteeism from work, poor attitude to work, high turnover, and low capacity for nation building, there is therefore a pressing need for a study to determine how lecturers could be supported through the creation of enabling organizational climate in order to overcome and evade low organizational commitment.

From the above empirical justification, we could state that enabling organizational climate is seemingly not instituted and this has resulted in low lecturer commitment. Moreover, researchers have examined numerous organizations with a view to establish the contribution of organizational climate to organizational commitment. This is because earlier researches have emphasized that with clear perception of work roles, appropriate support and supervisions, combine with better decision making mechanism within the organization enhances employees understanding of the organizational goals, and positive perception of the organizational climate might enhance organizational commitment. Previously, researchers have significantly examine learning environment in the formal school setting with emphasis on primary, secondary schools to some extent very little trace of Higher educational institutions. Numerous researches attest to development of this field of research, for instance Ghavifekr & Pillai (2016); Mosheti, (2013); Hoy, (2012). To address this lack of knowledge and to provide viable information to decision-makers within the continuing education institute which is statutorily HEIs to make informed decisions this study was aptly conceived, Thus, the crux was to examine the relationship and influence of organizational climate on lecturers' organizational commitment, since the researchers could not trace any studies that have investigated the overall institutional environment of the institute. Earlier research shows discrepancies between perceptions of climate by employees at different levels of organization (McMurray and Scoot 2013) thus, academic staff perceptions on the overall climate and how it does affect their organizational commitment which has been neglected by earlier studies were surveyed in order to examine the institute as whole as well as possible sub-climates that might exist in the environment. The ideas gathered from the lecturers' perceptions on the existing climate provide insight that will offer policy direction in the design of institutional

changes that ultimately promote excellence in the institute. It will also enable government and administrators also to identify areas to focus upon when developing their academic staff in the pursuit of improving the organizational climate.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Organizational Climate

Several studies have consistently established relationships between units/ department or organizational climate and worker output such as performance, satisfaction, improvement, commitment and involvement. Organizational climate is referred to a study of individual's perceptions on various units or aspect of the work environments in the organization. Enabling organizational climate plays a major role in enhancing an employee's sense of coherence, which, in turn, is related to changes in the employee's well-being (Mauno, Kiuru, & Kinnunen, 2011). Organizational climate has been identified as an antecedent of organizational commitment (Mohan & Sharma, 2015). Various research and educational studies have defined Organizational Climate in so many ways, but there seems to be agreement that the concept basically deals with human perceptions of their working environment (Hoy and Forsyth (1986). Hoy and Forsyth (1986), cited by Raza, (2010) described climate as a relative term and an enduring quality that is witnessed and experienced by lecturers, which in turn influence their behavior, and is itself shaped by group perceptions. Forehand and Von Haller (1964) cited by Torres (2013), defined organizational climate as denoting to the set of characteristics that describe an organization that (a) distinguish the organization from other organizations, (b) are relatively enduring over time, and (c) influence the behavior of people in the organization.

Organizational climate consists of cognate sets of behaviors, attitudes, norms and practices manifesting among the individual workers of a particular organization. Zeinabadi and Salehi (2011) disclosed that organizational climate comprises related features that form the environment of an organization and is most often different from another system and it affects the individual member behavior. In its widest sense, it can be possible to describe organizational climate as exhibition of different behaviors of workers or individuals when faced with a challenging situation or conditions in relation to the environment, in which they operate. Subsequently, based on these conceptualizations, it is not out of place to say that organizational climate is the characteristic of the organization.

2.2 Organizational Commitment

Different researchers describe organizational commitment differently. According (2006), organizational commitment is defined as a construct that reflects the degree to which an individual identifies with his work, whether it is very important to his life and whether it represents a basic part of his selfconcept. Hence various connotations were used to describe organization commitment concept but there is consensus on the frequent constituent which seems to be the notion of an emotional bond – an intrinsic connection or identification of a person with something outside of oneself. Allen and Meyer (2000) defined that a committed employee is one who stays with the organization through thick and thin, attend work regularly, put in a full day, protect organization assets, and share organization goals Thus, Allen & Meyer (2000) described three dimensions of organizational commitment. These are affective (I want to), continuation (I need to), and normative (I have to) commitment.O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell (1991) defines organizational commitment as when "an individual's psychological bond to the organization, in addition to a sense of job involvement, loyalty and belief in the norms and values of the organization. From this perspective, organizational commitment is characterized by employee's recognition or acceptance of organizational goals and their willingness to exert substantial effort in achieving the objectives set out by the organization. According to Powell and Meyer (2004) organizational commitment refers to the extent to which employees identify with their organization and the managerial goals of the organization, including process and procedures defining the work, and subsequently showing a willingness to devote effort, participate in decision making process and assume organizational values. In other words we could state that when organizational members are bound by their actions and beliefs that sustain their activities and their own involvement in the organization, this state of being is referred as organizational commitment. Moreover, Bakhshi, Sharma, and Kumar (2011), see organizational commitment as observable behavior of organizational members committed to the existing groups within the organization.

These descriptions of commitment generally relate to Steer et al., (1977) definition of organizational commitment, who describes organizational commitment as "the individual's relative strength of an identification with and involvement in the organization". Grounding on the analysis of various definitions of commitment, as stated

earlier it does appear that there are some common agreements that commitment is a force that binds an individual to the organization. It is an individual's psychological attachment to an organization or a psychological bond that connects an individual to his/her organization (Velando, Franco & Santos 2006). From the foregoing definitions, and for the purpose of this paper, organizational commitment refers to a psychological connection individuals have in respect to their organization, described by a strong affiliation and identification with the organization and aspiration to contribute towards organizational goals. Commitment also is seen to influence employees' feelings of wellbeing, as well as organizations' overall success. Accordingly, Malik, Nawab, Naeem, and Danish (2010) indicated that the satisfaction with work-itself, quality of supervision and pay satisfaction had significant positive influence on organizational commitment of faculty members. Similarly, Budhwar, Mellahi, and Hashim (2010) examined the antecedents of organizational commitment among academics in a public university. The variables investigated included personal characteristics, job-related characteristics and job involvement characteristics. The results showed that strong co-worker and supervisor supports were related to commitment.

2.3 Relationship between Organizational Climate and Organizational Commitment.

The relationship between organizational climate and organization commitment has been studied by numerous authors and most of them found a strong positive relationship between organizational climate and organization commitment. Monika and Kaliyamurthy (2017) found that organizational climate perception is beneficial to both the employers and the employee, further describe that a change in positive in perception of employees towards the organization leads to participations in achieving organizational goals, also reiterate that, this solidify a harmonious working relationship between the employees and the employers significantly contribute to organizational commitment. Thus, opine that organizational climate significantly contributes to workers commitment and subsequently performance. In the past, Shirzadi, et al., (2013) describe that when employees remain loyal and committed to maintain membership in an organization the perception of climate in that organization deems to be conducive. Similarly, the above findings are as well acceptable to Gupta, et al., (2014) which found that, organizational climate was a significant factor among others that contribute to organizational commitment in educational systems. In addition Randhawa, et al (2014) maintained that organizational climate is found to be positive predictor of organizational commitment.

Raman, Ling and Khalid, (2015), examine the relationship of school climate and organizational commitment of teachers are found out that the climate of a school strongly influence teachers commitment, further maintain that the most significant positive contributions to teachers organizational commitment are collaborative supervision, teachers professional growth, work demand and pressures, however transparency in institutional structures did not contribute significantly to the teachers organizational commitment. This finding in other words explain that, when employees have positive perception of their organizational process and procedures they deem to demonstrate commitment to their organization, this is also evident from the assertion made by Saha, (2016) who maintain that to achieve employees organizational commitment, management practice should take in to consideration the provision of favorable organizational climate. Further describe access to training opportunities, teamwork, decision making, communication and fairness in employee appraisal, performance recognition and pay as dimension of organizational climate positively predict organization commitment. Hence organizational climate significantly contributes to organizational commitment of employees. In view of the above review we could state that organizational climates is related with and contribute significantly to organizational commitment. Although, in the cause of this review, a dearth in literature particularly in the educational system was observed especially in the HEIs. However, it is theoretically and empirically evident that there is direct contribution of organizational climate to organizational commitment.

3. Methodology

The study population consists of all lecturers serving in continuing education institute Maiduguri. Available record from the institution shows that there are 60 lecturers dispersed across 8 departments in the institute. Since the number is manageable the researchers considered all as a study sample, hence all the participants were chosen to have equal chance to participate in the research. Two instruments were adopted to measure the two variables of the research. The instruments are five point Likert type scale instrument ranging from (strongly disagree, disagree, somewhat Agree, Agree and strongly agree). Data was collected through administration of validated measures of organizational commitment (OCQ) by Allen and Meyer (1997) with 18 items, the instrument is having a Cronbach's alpha value of .949 which shows that the instrument is reliable and valid. Also organizational climate was measured using Personal assessment of college environment (PACE) with 46 items developed by (NILIE, 2005), the instrument recorded a Cronbach's alpha value of .963 which shows that the instrument reliable and valid. Furthermore, the instruments were subjected to both content and face validity by experts where their observations and comments were taken in to account by the researchers. Also, as a result of the fact that the

instrument originated from the corporate sector, some wordings in the questionnaire were modified in order to reflect educational context to make it more relevant. After establishing contact and permission with the respondents, the researchers administered 56 questionnaires to the respondents' and at final collection within the span of two weeks a total 49 responses were considered valid for analysis, representing 87% response rate.

4. Data Analysis and Findings

The data were analyzed using inferential statistics (Pearson moment correlation, and simple regression) to determine the relationship and predictive ability in the hypothesized model consisting organizational climate and organizational commitment

4.1 Relationship between Organizational Climate and Organizational Commitment

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) which measures the strength of the association that exists between two quantitative variables was conducted to examine the relationships between the independent variable (organizational climate) and the dependent variable (organizational commitment). The data proved no any violation of the basic assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. The strength of relationships was tested using Cohen (1988) rule as point out in Tseng (2010). The correlation matrix of the above mentioned variables and the interpretations are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Correlation Matrix between organizational commitment and organizational climate

Variable	Y	X_1	
Y (organizational commitment)	1		
X_1 (organizational climate)	.563**	1	

^{**.} Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson correlation analysis of Table 1 revealed that there is a high and significant relationship between organizational climate and organizational commitment of lecturers in continuing education institute of Borno State (r = .563, p < .05). This infers that, the more lecturers perceived the climate favourable in the institute the more committed they become.

4.2 Influence of organizational climate on organizational commitment.

Table 2: Simple Regression Analysis between Variables of the Study.

Variables	В	S.E	В	T	P		
(Constant)	2.281	.176		11.476	.000		
Organizational climate	.253	.057	.206	3.564	.000		
$R^2 = .064$; Adjusted $R^2 = .73$; $F_{(3,213)} = 8.721$; $p < .05$							

Note: B: - Unstandardized Coefficients; S.E:- Standard Error; β:- Standardized Coefficients.

In order to test for the influence of organizational climate to organizational commitment in the regression model, simple regression was conducted. All the preliminary assumptions were tested and non-violated the basic assumption test for normality, linearity, multicollinearity and homoscedasticity. Therefore, summary ANOVA result revealed that, the regression model is significant (F $_{(3,213)} = 8.721$; p = .000). Furthermore, the analysis indicates that about 6.49% of variance in organizational commitment was explained by the predictor variables entered in to the regression model. In table 2, regression analysis result depicts that organizational climate and organizational commitment are significantly related (β = .206, t = 3.564, p< .01). This simply means, organizational climate significantly predicts organizational commitment.

5. Discussions

This paper aimed to determine the relationship and predictive ability of organizational climate on organizational commitment among lecturers in continuing education institute of Borno state, Nigeria. Findings revealed that, organizational climate is significantly related to lecturers organizational commitment in continuing education institute, In other words, the higher the perception of organizational climate, the more committed lecturers would be. This infers that the ability of the institute administrators to identify different ways to create and improve harmonious working relationships among lecturers allow them to enjoy more benefits such as rational response, participation in decision making and greater levels of self-confidence and support. This is in agreement with the conclusion of Ahmed, Ismail, Amin and Islam (2014) who maintained that when employees perceive reasonable treatment from their supervisors, they are more likely to respond favorably by exhibiting a satisfactory attitude

towards their supervisors and organization. Good relationships, open lines of communication, respect and trust are all instituted elements within the climate of organizations. Similarly, this finding of the study is in accordance with the position of Shirzadi, et al., (2013) who described that when employees remain loyal and committed to maintain membership in an organization the perception of climate in that organization deems to be conducive. Similarly, the above findings are as well acceptable to Gupta, et al, (2014) which found that, organizational climate was a significant factor among others that contribute to organizational commitment in educational systems. This proves the fact that elements of organizational climate can be adopted in the course of influencing lecturers' commitment. In addition, the findings of this study is in harmony with the study of Randhawa, et al (2014) who maintained that organizational climate is found to be a positive predictor of organizational commitment. Indeed, the above assertions are as well in agreement with the assertion made by Saha, (2016) who maintained that to achieve employees organizational commitment, management practice should take in to account the provision of favorable organizational climate. Further describe access to training opportunities, teamwork, decision making, communication and fairness in employee appraisal, performance recognition and pay as dimension of organizational climate that positively predict organizational commitment. Hence, organizational climate significantly contributes to organizational commitment of employees.

In essence, the findings of this study established that the ability of the administrators in the institute of continuing education to create positive perception among lecturers, particularly on the organizational process and procedures leads to their commitment to the institute. Thus, administrators in the institute should step-up efforts in promoting an inclusive environment where participatory decision making is encouraged and develop a strong and positive instructional guidance, clear and dedicated mission focusing on student's achievement, safe and well-ordered environment which are of utmost importance towards the realization of the institute goals. Since researches have established that organizational climate perception is beneficial to both the institute and the lecturers, because positive change in the perception of the employees is influencing their commitment to the institute, hence solidifying the level of participations in achieving the institutional goals. Moreover, a harmonious working relationship between the employees and the employers significantly contribute to organizational commitment. This view was corroborated by Muhammad and Abdullah (2016), postulation that employees tend to remain committed to organizations wherever they discover good relationships consisting of trust, mutual appreciation and respect exists throughout the organization. Conversely, employee's negative perception of their supervisors or leaders would result in turnover intention, absenteeism, and eventually resulting in declined performance and lower commitment (Perryer, Jordan, Firns, & Travaglione, 2010; Zhou, Wang, Chen, & Shi, 2012).

6. Conclusion

This study has proven that there exists a significant and high relationship between organizational climate and lecturers' organizational commitment and also, organizational climate appeared to have high predictive ability on lecturer's organizational commitment perception. This simply depicts that organizational climate plays an important role in achieving organizational commitment of lecturers in the study context. Impliedly, the study findings highlight the need for administrators to take in to account the constituents of organizational climate for enhanced lecturer commitment in the institute for the attainment of objectives, since lecturers are critical components in the teaching learning activities. The findings of this study also provide valuable data to the administrators of the institute that can be used for informed decision making, to create process of self-assessment and critical evaluation in order to continue to improve the institute climate and to establish a baseline from which future climate assessment can be compared to. The findings further enhance our understanding of the staff's perceptions on this construct. Policy makers in the ministry of education and Agency for mass literacy need to play a key role of designing and formulating policies and programs that are geared towards favorable work climate to ensure lecturers remain committed in the system. This research adds to the existing limited works on organizational commitment in higher educational context, with particular reference to the continuing education institute of Borno state.

Based on the research findings the researchers make the following recommendations:

Administrators responsible for the overall affairs in the institute should utilize all components of organizational climate for enhanced lecturer commitment.

The policy makers in Borno state should take into cognizance the importance of enabling work climate towards organizational commitment of their workers especially when coming up with policy directions, planning, implementation and evaluation towards achieving institutional goals.

This study was limited to sampling the opinion of lecturers in the continuing education institute only; hence should not be generalized to other levels, future researchers should look in to the possibility of incorporating other participants such as administrators, and other non-academic staff as respondents. Also, future research should

focus on the perception of instructors/facilitators or teachers at diverse educational levels, ever since this research is only limited to the perception of lecturers at the continuing education institute.

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