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PREDICTING ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT FROM TRANSFORMATIONAL AND TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP STYLES AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN SOUTHWESTERN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between leadership style and organizational commitment of secondary school teachers. Participants were 420 (male = 200, female = 220) teachers randomly selected from five states in southwest Nigeria. Measures of leadership and organizational commitment were administered on the teachers. The results revealed that transformational, transactional and laissez faire leadership styles jointly predicted organizational commitment. While transformational and transactional leadership styles separately predicted organizational commitment, laissez faire leadership did not. Based on these findings, it is recommended that counseling and organizational psychologists should train principals to use transformational and transactional leadership styles in order to enhance organizational commitment of their teachers.

Key words: *Organizational commitment, Transformational leadership, Transactional leadership, teachers, motivation.*

Introduction

Many researchers have shown that organizational commitment has become of interest since its introduction in the early 1950s to the field of organizational behaviour (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Laka-Mathebula, 2004; Baruch, 1998). These authors believe that if properly managed, organizational commitment can lead to organizational effectiveness, improved performance, reduced turnover, and reduced absenteeism (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Mowday, 1998). The search for the potential organizational benefits gave rise to several studies that focused on the nature of organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Morrow & McElroy, 1993).

Leadership styles, conflict resolution strategies, impersonal characteristics, job characteristics, work experiences, structural characteristics and human resources management are some of the organizational factors within the organization that have been associated with organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Despite the numerous studies done on organizational commitment and other work outcomes, there still seems to be no clear understanding of how the factors said to be associated with organizational commitment contribute to its development or how those organizational factors can be managed to promote the development of organizational commitment (Laka-Mathebula, 2004; Beck & Wilson, 2001). Empirical evidence is therefore needed to unravel the development of organizational commitment.

Organizational commitment is widely described in the management and behavioural sciences literature as a key factor in the relationship between individuals and organizations. Mowday (1998) described organizational commitment as the factor that promotes the attachment to an organization. According to him, organizational commitment is an employee attitude or a force that binds him/her to an organization. Earlier on, Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979) defines organizational commitment as the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization. They mention three characteristics of organizational commitment: (1) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, (2) a willingness to exact a considerable effort on behalf of the organization and (3) a strong intent or desire to remain with the organization.

Meyer and Allen (1991) proposed that commitment as a psychological attachment has three forms: the affective, continuance and normative forms. According to them, affective commitment is an employee's emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organization. Continuance commitment is commitment based on the costs that employees associate with leaving the organization; and normative commitment is an employee's feeling of obligation to remain with the organization. Each of these dimensions is a possible description of an employee's attachment to the organization.

The notion that commitment is important for the realization of organisation and professional goals especially in the educational institutions has remained untapped by researchers. Few institutions have addressed the issue of commitment in Nigerian educational institutions. Most studies on organizational commitment have focused on industrial organizations (Adebayo, 2006; Salami

& Omole, 2005) with few focusing on secondary school teachers (Adeyemo & Aremu, 1999; Oredein, 2006). The study of the employee commitment should be important to educational institutions in view of the large amounts of public funds being expended on them and the roles they are playing in the development of the skills and knowledge of future employees and the community as a whole.

The study of organizational commitment among secondary school teachers is imperative and relevant to the Nigerian educational institutions because research evidence shows that most “secondary school teachers lack job satisfaction and have low motivation, and low commitment to their jobs” (Adegoroye, 1999; Uwaiemeiyi & Onyewadume, 2001). There is evidence of high turnover and low productivity in the teaching profession (Salami, 1999; Uwaiemeiyi & Onyewadume, 2001). Most teachers argued that their salaries are low and irregular; they have heavy work load and interpersonal conflicts. They work in unconducive and stressful environments and that there are no career prospects in the teaching profession.

Job security is also lacking due to the government’s reform policy that is predicated on rightsizing that involves reduction of workforce by 25% (Adebayo, 2006; Adegoroye, 1999; Nwachukwu, 2005). One of the challenges facing management of a downsizing organization is how to contend with how to handle the potential negative effects which may afflict survivors following a lay off exercise. Management interventions designed to reduce the negative consequences of downsizing and layoffs on survivors should be built on organizational justice and effective leadership styles (Adebayo, 2006). Given the gloomy, unfavourable and challenging working environments in which the teachers operate, it is probably only when effective leadership styles and organizational justice are ensured and integrated that the teachers would reciprocate and become committed to their career and their schools. Through their commitment, they will be ready to accept responsibilities and exert extra efforts towards the accomplishment of the educational goals or responding to the students and organizational needs.

The principal performs dual functions as an administrator and as a professional. As an administrator the principal is to be engaged in administrative duties such as planning, conducting meetings, attending to mails and visiting the ministry of education to resolve school problems (Oredein, 2006). As a professional, he/she is to supervise the teaching-learning processes in the school (Ajayi, 1985). The principal should exhibit effective leadership behaviour to ensure a high

level of cooperation between him/her and the teachers on the one hand and the students on the other in order to achieve the expected educational goals.

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and the norm of reciprocity. These are concepts used by researchers to explain the motivational basis of employees' behaviours and the formation of positive attitudes (Adebayo, 2006). According to these models, all relationships involve giving and taking - a reciprocal psychological contract that serves as bonds among social members. The social exchange theory suggests that individuals will give back commensurately to what they perceived they have received (or failed to receive) from the party in the relationship. This mutual reciprocity requires an employer to provide support to employees in terms of job security, caring for employees' welfare, and provision of favourable work environment, in return for their identification, loyalty and commitment to the organization. Thus when the leadership in an organization, provides support and motivation, allows workers to participate in decision making and demonstrates caring attitude towards workers needs, the workers will want to reciprocate by exhibiting positive attitudes (e.g. increased organizational commitment). The model proposed here is that transformational and transactional leaderships will be related to organizational commitment; and that laissez faire leadership style will not be related to organizational commitment of secondary school teachers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between leadership styles (transformational and transactional forms) and organizational commitment among principals and secondary school teachers.

Leadership Styles and Organizational Commitment

Some authors have defined leadership as a position, a person, a behavioural act, a style, a relationship, or a process (Nirenberg, 2001). Conger (1999) defined leaders as individuals who establish direction for a working group of individuals. Rowden (2000) defined leadership as a behaviour of an individual when that person directs and coordinates the activities of a group toward the accomplishment of a shared goal.

The study of leadership has been an important and central part of the literature on management and organizational behaviour for several decades. In fact, "no

other role in organisations has received more interest than that of the leader” (Schwandt & Marquardt, 2000; P. 177). The early examination of leadership behaviours focused on separation of those behaviours into relations-oriented and task-oriented categories (Brown, 2003).

Bass (1990) identified three styles of leadership: transactional, transformational and laissez-faire leadership. Transactional leaders identify and clarify job tasks for their subordinates and communicate how successful execution of those tasks will lead to receipt of desirable rewards (Bass, 1990). Transactional leaders focus on short-term physical and security needs of subordinates. Transactional leaders determine and define goals for their subordinates. This determines the quality of an organization’s leadership. Therefore, it is logical to assume that leadership behaviour would have a significant relationship with the development of organizational commitment. Research evidence suggests a positive direct relationship between leadership behaviours and organizational commitment. For example, transformational leadership is generally associated with desired organizational outcomes such as willingness of the followers to expend extra effort which indicates some degree of commitment (Bass, 1985; Yammarino & Bass, 1990). Contingent reward behaviours which represent transactional leadership have been found to be associated with performance and work attitudes of followers although at a lower level than transformational leadership behaviour (Bass, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1990). In a recent study transformational and transactional leadership have been found to predict unit performance (Bass, Avolio, Jung & Berson, 2003).

Positive relationship between leadership behaviours and organizational commitment was found in some non-western populations. For example, high positive correlation was found between leadership behaviours and employees’ organizational commitment in Singapore (Chiok, 2001; Koh, Steers & Terborg, 1995). Oredein (2006) also reported high positive correlations between transformational leadership style and teachers’ institutional commitment in Nigeria. In a recent study, Laka-Mathebula (2004) found significant relationship between leadership styles and organizational commitment within an academic environment (institutions of higher learning) in South Africa. In the light of the reviewed studies, it can be argued that leadership style is an under-researched, though logical, predictor of organizational commitment in educational institutions in Nigeria. In view of this and the assertion that transformational and transactional leadership styles can arouse subordinates’ commitment (Bass, 1985) there is need to examine further the nature of the linkage between leadership styles

(transformational and transactional forms) and organizational commitment. It is hoped that the findings from this study could be useful to teachers, counsellors, personnel psychologists, principals and school administrators.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

1. Transformational leadership style will significantly predict organizational commitment of secondary school teachers.
2. Transactional leadership style will significantly predict organizational commitment of secondary school teachers.
3. Laissez faire leadership style will significantly predict organizational commitment of secondary school teachers.

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design in order to explore the relationship between leadership styles and organizational commitment.

Participants

Four hundred and twenty secondary school teachers (males = 200 (47.62%), females = 220 (52.38%) randomly selected from five states in Southwest Nigeria constituted the sample. Of the 500 questionnaires distributed, 80 were incompletely filled and were discarded and not used for analysis while 420 were used in the data analysis. Their ages range from 21 to 55 years with the average age as 36.45 (SD = 9.52). Educational qualifications of the participants ranged from Nigeria Certificate in Education, (NCE) to University degree as follows: NCE (110, 26.20%), B.A. Ed./B.Sc. Ed/ B.Ed. (210, 50%), B.A./B.Sc. plus PDGE (60, 14.28%) and M.Ed. (40, 9.52%). Participants varied in teaching experience which ranged from 2 to 26 years.

Instruments

Organizational Commitment

A modified version of the Mowday, Steers and Porter's (1979) 15-item organizational commitment scale (OCQ) was used to measure participants' level

of organizational commitment. A five-point Likert response format of strongly agree = 5, Strongly disagree = 1 was used with higher score representing higher commitment to the organization. For this study, some modifications such as changing "this organization" to "this school" were made in the OCQ. Cronbach's coefficient alpa of .88 was reported by Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979). For this study, a Cronbach's coefficient alpha of .85 was obtained.

Leadership Styles

Leadership style was measured by means of the modified version of the 36-item Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ Form 5x) developed by Bass and Avolio (1995) as contained in McShane and Von Glinow (2000). For this study, the modified version of MLQ has 21 items: transformational leadership (8 items), transactional (8 items) and laissez faire (5 items). The MLQ adopted a 5-point Likert type scale ranging from strongly agree = 5 to strongly disagree = 1. The participants rated their leaders (principals) on this five point likert scale. For this study, Cronbach's alpha for transformational leadership was 0.90, transactional leadership was 0.92, and laissez faire leadership style was 0.73. Bass et al (1995) reported reliabilities for total items and for each leadership factor scale that ranged from 0.74 to 0.94.

The demographic and biographical information of the respondents involving age, sex, educational qualifications, teaching experience, and job rank or position, were obtained as a section of the organizational commitment scale.

Procedure

The two research instruments OCQ and the leadership questionnaire were administered to the teachers in the secondary schools that participated in the study. The researcher and six research assistants comprising 3 undergraduates and 3 postgraduates administered the questionnaires after obtaining permission from the teachers and the authorities of the schools. They explained the purpose of the study, which was given as an academic research exercise designed to find out the participants' feelings about their commitment to the school and their perception about the school principal's leadership style.

Data Analysis

Control variables - based on the results on Table 1, age, sex, education, teaching experience (tenure), and job status or rank were treated as covariates to reduce

error variance (Cohen & Cohen, 1983) . To assess the relationship between leadership styles and organizational commitment of the teachers, hierarchical multiple regressions were performed.

This was made up of 2 steps. The first involved entering the control variables (age, sex, education, tenure, and job rank) and the second step involved entering the three leadership style variables (transformational, transactional and laissez faire styles).

Results

Descriptive statistics of the variables in the study are shown in Table 1. An examination of the Table 1 reveals that transformational leadership ($r = .40, P < .05$), transactional leadership ($r = .32, P < .05$) had positive relationships with organizational commitment while laissez faire leadership ($r = .12, P > .05$), age ($r = .14, P > .05$), gender ($r = .04, P > .05$), education ($r = .11, P > .05$), and tenure ($r = .18, P > .05$) had relationships with organizational commitment respectively.

Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations and Intercorrelation matrix of all variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 Organizational Commitment	1							
2 Transformational Leadership	.40*	1						
3 Transactional Leadership	.32*	.31*	1					
4 Laissez Faire Leadership	.12	.13	.15	1				
5 Age	.14	.08	.10	.07	1			
6 Gender	.04	.14	.11	.13	.04	1		
7 Education	.11	.12	.04	.06	.20*	.03	1	
8 Tenure	.18	.09	.13	.15	.21*	.07	.05	1
Mean	43.80	18.70	18.50	10.20	36.45	1.50	2.60	8.50
S.D.	4.21	4.60	4.72	3.00	9.52	.52	3.00	4.30

Note: N = 420, S.D. = Standard Deviation, * P < 0.05

Table 2: Hierarchical Regression Analysis for the Prediction of Organizational Commitment from Leadership Styles and Demographic Factors

Variable	Step 1				Step 2			
	b	SEE	B	t	b	SEB	B	t
Age	.20	.27	.17	.63	.30	.51	.21	.41
Gender	.37	.59	.21	.35	.20	.28	.32	1.14
Tenure	.12	.40	.15	.37	.15	.52	.17	.33
Education	.17	.38	.42	1.10	.23	.30	.44	1.46
Transformational Leadership					.25	.40	2.10	5.25*
Transactional leadership					.12	.30	1.06	3.53*
Laissez Faire Leadership					.14	.50	.63	1.26
R ²		.18				.56		
DR ²		.18				.38		
F		2.20				20.25*		
df		4,415				3,412		

Note: N = 420, * P < .05 (2-tailed test)

Results of the hierarchical multiple regression analysis (Table 2) showed that the overall model is significant ($R^2 = .56$, $F_{3,412} = 20.25$, $P < .05$). The results on Table 2 indicated that none of the demographic variables (age, gender, education and tenure) entered in step 1 accounted for a large proportion of the total variance in organizational commitment ($R^2 = .18$, $F_{(4,415)} = 2.20$, $P > .05$).

Furthermore, addition of leadership styles (transformational, transactional and laissez faire forms) in step 2, made significant contribution to the prediction of organizational commitment ($R^2 = .56$, $F_{(3,412)} = 20.25$, $P < .05$). A careful examination of the beta weights and t-values in Table 2 revealed that transformational leadership (Beta = 2.10, $t = 5.25$, $P < .05$) and transactional leadership (Beta = 1.06, $t = 3.53$, $P < .05$) accounted for significant variance in organizational commitment. These results therefore confirm hypotheses 1 and 2. However, laissez faire leadership (Beta = .63, $t = 1.26$, $P > .05$) did not account for any significant variance in organizational commitment. Thus, hypothesis 3 was not supported.

Discussion

The present study was designed to examine the relationship of leadership styles with organizational commitment of secondary school teachers. Results from the study showed that there were significant relationships between organizational commitment and transformational and transactional leadership styles. The results of multiple regression analysis reveal that transformational leadership made the highest contribution to the variance in organizational commitment, and this was followed by transactional leadership style. This result is consistent with the work of previous researchers who found significant correlations between organizational and transactional leadership styles (Bass, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1990; Bass, Avolio, Jung & Berson, 2003; Bycio, Hachett & Allen, 1995; Chiok, 2001; Koh, Steers & Terborg, 1995; Laka-Mathebula, 2004; Oredein, 2006). These patterns of results suggest that increase in transformational and transactional leadership styles is associated with increase in organizational commitment of the teachers.

The results also show that *laissez faire* (non-leadership style) had no significant relationship with organizational commitment. This finding is in support of previous researchers who found no significant relationship between *laissez faire* leadership style and organizational commitment and other work outcomes (Bass, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1990; Brown, 2003). Since *laissez faire* leadership amounts to no leadership style, it has no significant influence on the organizational commitment of the teachers.

A possible explanation for these findings could be that the principals of the schools involved in this study must have used the three components of transformational leadership style (leader charisma, individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation in transforming the teachers' motivation and improve their performance beyond their initial expectations. The teachers must have been motivated to transcend their own self-interests and expend energy on behalf of their organization. Similarly, the principals might have used contingent reward, feedback and focused on the teachers' physical and security needs.

Secondly, the patterns of results obtained in this study are consistent with the implications of the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and the norm of reciprocity. The social exchange theory suggest that individuals will give back commensurately with what they perceived they have received (or failed to have received) from the party in the relationship. When the teachers perceived that their welfare is not catered for in terms of fulfilling the psychological contract

by the employer, they may react negatively by reducing their commitment to the organization so as to keep a balanced exchange. The more the teachers perceive that their principals are being dictatorial or do not care about their welfare, the more likely they may be to conclude that the organization is not treating them fairly. Consequently, the teachers may reciprocate by showing negative attitudes (e.g. reduced organizational commitment). Conversely, if the teachers perceive that their principals take their welfare into consideration then they will likely develop more positive attitude toward the organization (e.g. increasing their organizational commitment).

Implications

The present findings have theoretical and practical implications. Findings from this study have demonstrated the importance of leadership styles (transformational and transactional forms) in developing organizational commitment of secondary school teachers. Given the fact that leadership styles (transformational and transactional forms) are implicated in this study, practical steps taken to encourage the school principals to adopt the transformational and transactional leadership approaches will be in the right direction. In this regard, counselling and organizational/personnel psychologists need to design intervention strategies for training principals to develop transformational and transactional leadership styles .

Organizations that require their employees to develop organizational commitment should provide a supportive work environment which creates a mutually beneficial environment. Organizations should demonstrate commitment to their employees by providing comprehensive training, sharing information, and provide for the development and growth of the employees within the organization. The organizations need to demonstrate concern for employee welfare and ensure equitable rewards. They need to exhibit open and accurate communication that will convince the employee that the organization cares and values him/her as a partner.

This study is not without some limitations. One is the use of self-report measures in data collection might which contaminate the results. It would be appropriate for future studies to complement these measurements with interview techniques. Another limitation is that this study is cross-sectional in nature and as such it is not possible to make a cause-and-effect conclusion with the variables investigated. A longitudinal study is suggested for future research.

In conclusion, this study adds to a growing body of evidence that shows that the measurement of transformational and transactional leadership can be used to predict organizational commitment among Nigerian teachers.

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