



Distributive Justice and Employee Commitment of Mobile Telecommunication Companies in Port Harcourt

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between distributive justice and employee commitment in mobile telecommunication in Port Harcourt. A cross sectional survey research design was adopted. The population of the study comprised of 270 (Two Hundred and Seventy) employees of the 5 selected mobile telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt. A sample size of 161 was determined using the Taro Yamane sample size formula. The Cronbach Alpha reliability was used in assessing the reliability of the instrument adopted. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation with the aid of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 23.0. The test on the hypotheses showed that there is a significant relationship between distributive justice and measures of employee commitment in mobile telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt. The study recommends that management of telecommunication companies should adopt procedures that will eliminate potentials for gross injustices, as well as having a basic set of Human Resource (HR) policies in place that are intended to promote fairness, such as standardized salary scales and development programmes.

Keywords: Distributive Justice, Employee commitment, Affective Commitment Normative Commitment.

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, employee commitment has been a major task of management. Most organizations in the countries are experiencing high rate of employee turnover, rising cost of replacing employee and lose of social capital. Lack of commitment has been manifested by employee absenteeism lateness to work, job dissatisfaction and negative work attributes in organization. Organizations value commitment among their employees because it is typically assumed to reduce withdrawal behaviour, such as lateness, absenteeism and turnover. Hence, there is no doubt that these values appear to have potentially serious consequences for overall organizational performance. The study of employee commitment is important as observed by Lo (2009) who noted that employees with sense of employee commitment are less likely to engage in withdrawal behaviour and more willing to accept change. Hence, there is no doubt that these values appear to have potentially serious consequences for a core committed individuals who are the source of organizational life.

Allen & Meyer (1997) observed that workers who become less committed to an organization, will route their commitment in other directions. It is against this background, it becomes imperative to develop the right type and level of employee commitment, so as to ensure that the better employees are retained. Similarly, Akintayo (2010) posit that employees who develop a high level of employee commitment tend to be highly satisfied and are fulfilled by their jobs. A number of literature has affirmed that most organizations now have realized that the performance of their workers plays a vital role in determining the success of the organization (Zheng, 2010; Ajila and Awonusi, 2004). As such, it is important for employers and managers alike to know how to get the best of their workers. One of the antecedent determinants of workers' performance is believed to be employee commitment (Ali, 2010; Ajila and Awonusi, 2004). As such, it is important for employers and managers alike to know how to get the best of their workers. Employee commitment has become one of the most popular work attitudes studied by practitioners and researchers.

Akintayo (2010) and Tumwesigye (2010) noted that one of the reasons why commitment has attracted research attention is that organization depend on committed employees to create and maintain competitive advantage and achieve superior performance. Commitment employees

who are highly motivated to contribute their time and energy to the pursuit of organizational goals are increasingly acknowledged to be the primary asset available to an organization (Hunjra, 2010). They provide the intellectual capital that, for many organizations, has become their most critical asset (Hunjra, 2010). Furthermore, employees who share a commitment to the organization and their collective wellbeing are more suitable to generate the social capital that facilitates organizational learning. Meyer & Allen (1997) conceptualized employee commitment (organizational commitment) in three dimensions namely affective, continuance and normative commitments.

Justice perceptions can influence employee attitudes and behaviour for good or ill, in turn having a positive or negative impact on individual, group and the entire organization's performance and success (Baldwin, 2006). Empirical evidence supports the notion that an employee's perception of organizational justice affects their attitude toward the organization (Konovsky, 2000). If the perception of organizational justice is positive, individuals tend to be more satisfied and committed to their job (McFarlin & Sweeney, 1992).

Owing to the importance attached to employee commitment, several empirical studies have been conducted around the globe on this subject they have sought to examine the relationship between organizational justice and employee in different countries. For example, a study by Gulluce, Ozer, and Erkilic, (2015) to examine the relationship between organizational commitment and organizational justice perceptions of employees working in private healthcare institutions in Van province found that distributive justice has a statistically significant correlation with commitment of the healthcare employees. This study concluded that the most important ways to increase the commitment of employees is for the executives to be fair to their employees. For this reason, it is possible to increase their commitment through the development of their justice perceptions towards the management (Gulluce, *et. al.* 2015).

Also Akanbi and Ofoegbu (2013) examined the role of organizational justice on organizational commitment in a food and beverage firm in Nigeria. The findings from the study showed that there was a significant relationship between distributive justice and organizational commitment. Based on the findings from this study, it was recommended that organizations should embrace

justice in all their practices with the employees to bring about committed employees (Akanbi & Ofoegbu, 2013). It is however becoming obvious that the commitment level of employees in telecommunication companies is quite low, due to the fact that they are prone to change of jobs. In spite of extant literature in the concept of employee commitment, the service industry in our case telecommunication has received relatively little attention from researchers. It is against this background and to fill in this gap that this research sought to establish the relationship that exist between distributive justice and employee commitment of mobile telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt.

The study was also guided by the following research questions:

- i. What is the relationship between distributive justice and affective commitment of employees in the mobile telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt?
- ii. What is the relationship between distributive justice and normative commitment of employees in the mobile telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt?
- iii. What is the relationship between distributive justice and continuance commitment of employees in the mobile telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt?

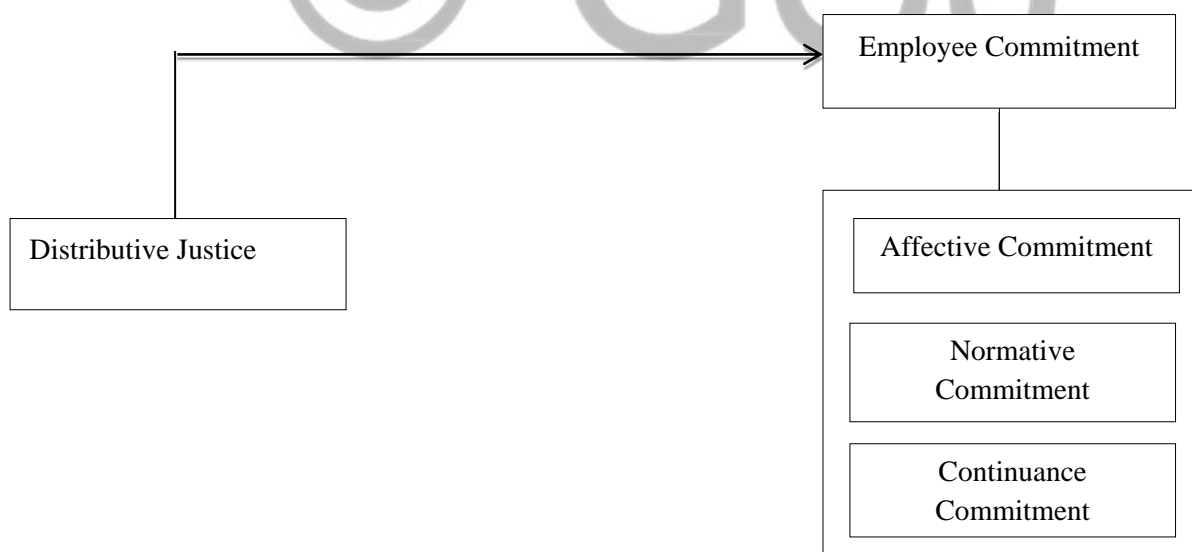


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of organizational justice and employee commitment.

Source: Conceptualized by the researcher, (2019) based on review of related literature on Employee commitment (Allen and Meyer, 1997)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation

Adams Equity Theory

Adams (1965) Equity Theory: According to Adams (1965) individuals compare the effort they spent and the result they obtained with the effort others in the same workplace spent and the result they obtained. This situation is important for the organizational justice perception of a person who is a member of an organization. According to Guerrero, Andersen and Afifi (2007) Equity theory acknowledges that subtle and variable individual factors affect each person's assessment and perception of their relationship with their relational partners. This theory proposes that a person's motivation is based on what he or she considers being fair when compared to others (Redmond, 2010). As noted by Gogia (2010) when applied to the workplace, Equity Theory focuses on an employee's work-compensation relationship or exchange relationship as well as employee's attempt to minimize any sense of unfairness that might result. Equity theory as developed by Adams (1965), considers motivation as the result of a comparison of a worker's perceived outcomes and inputs to the outcomes and inputs of a referent other (Vinchur & Koppes, 2011).

In an organizational context, outcomes may refer to monetary compensation, benefits, flexible work arrangements, salary, career opportunities, psychological rewards like feedback and support from colleagues or supervisor (Pepermans & Jegers, 2012). Inputs may include the employee's time, expertise, qualifications, experience, intangible personal qualities such as drive and ambition, interpersonal skills, effort and commitment (Pepermans & Jegers, 2012). Because Equity Theory deals with social relationships and fairness/unfairness, it is also known as The Social Comparisons Theory or Inequity Theory (Gogia, 2010).

Distributive Justice

According to Greenberg and Baron (2008) distributive justice refers to the form of organizational justice that focuses on people's beliefs that they have received fair amounts of valued work-related outcomes for instance pay, recognition etc. Yavus (2010) sees distributive justice is a

perception of justice that encompasses the perceptions of the employees regarding fair distribution of resources among the members of the organization. Colquitt, Greenberg and Zapata-Phelan (2005) posit that employees are likely to compare the fairness of their outcomes with those of similar employees based on their level of inputs within the organization to determine their perceptions of fairness. An employee will feel that distributive justice exists if resources are distributed equitably across employees within his or her organization relative to their inputs (Mishra, & Lee Grubb, 2015). The fundamental principle in distributive justice is that individuals should think that they get a share from the distributed sources fairly (Ozdevecioglu, 2003).

A study by Gulluce, Ozer, and Erkilic (2015) to examine the relationship between organizational commitment and organizational justice perceptions of employees working in private healthcare institutions in Van province found that distributive justice has a statistically significant correlation with commitment of the healthcare employees. This study concluded that the most important ways to increase the commitment of employees is executives being fair to them. For this reason, it is possible to increase their commitment through the development of their justice perceptions towards the management (Gulluce, *et. al.* 2015).

In a study conducted by Ang, Van Dyne and Begley (2003) in Singapore on two workers groups regarding their feeling about distributive justice, foreign workers were not paid fairly according to their work so they showed higher levels of distributive injustice and their productivity reduced because they received less and as a result they produced less. This study showed that people were keenly sensitive to the fair and just distribution of resources and rewards. Employees who perceived that they were treated fairly by the organization would try to maintain a long term relationship with the organization (Kim, 2009). This would eventually modify the behavior of the employees including creating more commitment towards that particular organization.

Employee Commitment

Employee commitment is an important aspect in human resource management literature. It refers to the state in which employees sense loyalty with their respective organization and align themselves with organizational goals and objectives (Lambert, Hogan, & Griffin, 2007). The success of an organization depends on the commitment of employees toward the organization.

Herman and Armanu (2013) argue that commitment towards an organization is more than just a formal membership but rather it encompasses the attitude to the organization and a willingness to pursue all things for the sake of the organization. Employee commitment helps managers in programming, improving job performances and in decreasing frequency of absenteeism from duty (Somayyeh, Mohsen, & Zahed, 2013). On the other hand, having a committed staff provides a background for improvement and expansion of the organization, while the personnel with little or no commitment to the organization remain indifferent towards the goals and overall success of the organization (Somayyeh, Mohsen, & Zahed, 2013).

Measures of Employee Commitment

Affective Commitment

Affective commitment is defined as the emotional attachment, identification, and involvement that an employee has with his or her organization (Aydin, 2011). It is the positive emotional attachment that employees feel for the organization because they see their goals and values to be congruent with those of the organization. Meyer and Allen (1997), note that employees retain membership out of choice and this is their commitment to the organization. Employees, who are affectively committed, strongly identify with the goals of the organization and desire to remain a part of the organization. These employees commit to the organization because they want to (Aydin, 2011). The concept of affective commitment is linked to the idea that strongly committed persons identify with, are involved in, and enjoy membership in an organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Normative Commitment

Normative commitment is the commitment that people believe they have to the organization or their feeling of obligation to their workplace. It refers to the employee's feeling of duty, loyalty or obligation to the organization (Wasti, 2003). These feelings may derive from many sources. For example, the organization may have invested resources in training an employee who then feels a 'moral' obligation to put forth effort on the job and stay with the organization to 'repay the debt.' It may also reflect an internalized norm, developed before the person joins the organization through family or other socialization processes, that one should be loyal to one's organization

(Aydin, 2011). In normative commitment an individual is willing to stay within an organization and contribute to an organization to correspond with a group norm (Dixit & Bhati, 2012).

Distributive Justice and Employee Commitment

Cemal (2014) in a study of the effect of organizational justice on organizational commitment in primary education institutions in Turkey found that teacher's perception of distributive justice had a positive and significant effect on their organizational commitment. Fields (2000) also found that distributive justice had a major impact on employee's intention to remain in an organization. If people felt that their work assignments and rewards were fair, they would show more commitment to their work. Greenberg and Baron (2008) note that organization officials should be very careful to adhere with distributive justice practices and ensure that good performance of employees are fairly rewarded. Akanbi and Ofoegbu (2013) examined the role of organizational justice on organizational commitment in a food and beverage firm in Nigeria. The findings from the study showed that there was a significant relationship between distributive justice and organizational commitment. Based on the findings from this study, it was recommended that organizations should embrace justice in all their practices with the employees to bring about committed employees (Akanbi & Ofoegbu, 2013).

The following null hypotheses were formulated for the study:

- H₀₁:** There is no significant relationship between distributive justice and affective commitment of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt.
- H₀₂:** There is no significant relationship between distributive justice and normative commitment of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt.
- H₀₃:** There is no significant relationship between distributive justice and continuance commitment of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt.

METHODOLOGY

A cross sectional survey research design was adopted. The population of the study comprised of 270 (Two Hundred and Seventy) employees of the 5 selected mobile telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt. A sample size of 161 was determined using the Taro Yamane sample size formula. The Cronbach Alpha reliability was used in assessing the reliability of the

instrument adopted. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation with the aid of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 23.0.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Table 1: Correlation matrix for distributive justice and employee commitment

| | | | Distributive Justice | Affective Commitment | Continuance Commitment | Normative Commitment |
|----------------|------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Spearman's rho | Distributive Justice | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | .895** | .445** | .531** |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | | N | 131 | 131 | 131 | 131 |
| | Affective Commitment | Correlation Coefficient | .895** | 1.000 | .952** | .853** |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | . | .000 | .000 |
| | | N | 131 | 131 | 131 | 131 |
| | Continuance Commitment | Correlation Coefficient | .445** | .552** | 1.000 | .530** |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | . | .000 |
| | | N | 131 | 131 | 131 | 131 |
| | Normative Commitment | Correlation Coefficient | .531** | .553** | .530** | 1.000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | . |
| | | N | 131 | 131 | 131 | 131 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 illustrates the test for the three previously postulated bivariate hypothetical statements. The results show that for

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between Distributive Justice and Affective Commitment of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt.

The correlation coefficient (r) shows that there is a significant and positive relationship between Distributive Justice and Affective Commitment. The rho value 0.895 indicates this relationship and it is significant at $p\ 0.000 < 0.05$. The correlation coefficient represents a very strong

correlation between the variables. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between distributive justice and affective commitment of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between Distributive Justice and Continuance Commitment of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt.

The correlation coefficient (r) shows that there is a significant and positive relationship between Distributive Justice and Continuance Commitment. The *rho* value 0.445 indicates this relationship and it is significant at $p < 0.000 < 0.05$. The correlation coefficient represents a moderate correlation between the variables. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between distributive justice and continuance commitment of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between Distributive Justice and Normative Commitment of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt.

The correlation coefficient (r) shows that there is a significant and positive relationship between Distributive Justice and Normative Commitment. The *rho* value 0.531 indicates this relationship and it is significant at $p < 0.000 < 0.05$. The correlation coefficient represents a moderate correlation between the variables. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between distributive justice and normative commitment of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The tests of hypotheses revealed that there is a significant relationship between distributive justice and employee commitment of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt. These hypotheses were tested using the Spearman Rank Order correlation technique. This finding agrees with previous findings of Cemal (2014) in a study of the effect of organizational justice on organizational commitment in primary education institutions in Turkey found that teacher's perception of distributive justice had a positive and significant effect on their organizational commitment. Fields (2000) also found that distributive justice had a major impact on employee's

intention to remain in an organization. If people felt that their work assignments and rewards were fair, they would show more commitment to their work. Greenberg and Baron (2008) note that organization officials should be very careful to adhere with distributive justice practices and ensure that good performance of employees are fairly rewarded.

Furthermore, the current finding concurs with Akanbi and Ofoegbu (2013) who examined the role of organizational justice on organizational commitment in a food and beverage firm in Nigeria. The findings from the study showed that there was a significant relationship between distributive justice and organizational commitment. Based on the findings from this study, it was recommended that organizations should embrace justice in all their practices with the employees to bring about committed employees (Akanbi & Ofoegbu, 2013).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Adoption of effective human resource management (HRM) practices in many organizations is often low in the list of management priority because these organizations discourages investment in human resource capacities and staff retention measures due to the nature of their industry, funding constraints and subsequent short term employment practices. This in turn leads to negative justice perceptions and commitment. This study therefore concludes that distributive justice significantly influences employee commitment.

The study made the following recommendations:

- i. Management of telecommunication companies should adopt procedures that will eliminate potentials for gross injustices, as well as having a basic set of Human Resource (HR) polices in place that are intended to promote fairness, such as standardized salary scales and development programmes.
- ii. Management of telecommunication companies should create enabling environment for employees to make contribution in decision making in the organization, this will help the employee to develop a better perception of organizational justice.

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