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BUILDING A CULTURE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR FOR IMPROVED PRODUCTIVITY IN EMERGING ECONOMIES

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ABSTRACT

This paper points out the role played by individuals whose behaviour range from the minimalists, who contribute the least possible to maintain membership to others who go the extra mile engaging discretionally in extra-role behaviours advantageous to organizations. It examines the antecedents of employee citizenship behaviour, linking it to organizational performance. It highlights the various links between organizational citizenship and psychological capital resources; progressive human resources practices and leadership dispositions of managers. The paper recommends that improved employee engagement will clarify to employees managerial expectations of such behaviours. Equipped with this insight, managers should assess organizational citizenship behaviour before embarking on organizational change intervention and subtly design strategies for maximizing such positive role behaviours. This will help induce a culture of high performance, especially in emerging economies like Nigeria where there is a compelling urgency for improved economic growth and productivity.

INTRODUCTION

Organizations can be viewed as dynamic complex systems of adaptations and change: two terms that are often used interchangeably

which contain multiple parts that interact with one another and the environment (Morrel and Ramanujan, 1999). They are defined as collections of people joining together in some formal association in order to achieve group or individual objectives. At least one set of objectives for any organization will relate to the production and output of specified goods and services to individuals, groups and other organizations (Dawson, 1992).

Many writers have characterized today's business environment as 'hyper-competitive' (D'Aveni, 1994 and Volberda, 1996), 'high-velocity' (Brown and Eisenhardt, 1997) or shaped by 'jolts' (Meyer *et al.*, 1990). In an emerging economy such as Nigeria's, the environmental features have been exacerbated by a sudden opening of the markets to globalization and free competition. In these circumstances, rapid adaptive organizational process are essential to a firm's survival and success. From a social science point of view, organizational adaptation is the ability of an organization to change itself or the way in which it behaves in order to survive in the face of external changes which were not predicted in any precise way when the organization was designed (Tomlinson, 1976). This definition confirms March's assertion that adaptation is essential to survival: Those companies that do not adapt 'seem destined to expire' (March, 1995).

In his review of management research and practice, Aktouf (1992) proposed that unless management scholars and practitioners change their work paradigm from the traditional unitary functionalist perspective to one that is pluralistic, humanistic and caring, then little progress will be made in terms of altering work place cultures and improving the well-being of employees generally. Kanungo (1992) and other organizational researchers such as Winter *et al.* (1997) advance this radical humanist viewpoint by arguing the motivational, moral and ethical justifications for managers adopting empowerment and humanistic practices at work.

This paper begins with an attempt to explain what organizational citizenship behaviour (*OCB*) is, citing examples of such tendencies in the workplace. The paper examines past evidence of organizational citizenship behaviours, giving its benefits to both the individuals and managers alike. It also examines the links between psychological capital and positive citizenship; links between progressive human resources practices such as employee involvement, being cooperative and helpful with colleagues such as

mentoring and team work. The paper shall explain what role positive leadership can play in enhancing citizenship behaviour among organizational employees. Finally, the paper concludes with suggestions that can enhance organizational citizenship behaviour among organizational employees in the Nigeria enhancement.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Organizations comprise of individuals whose behaviours range from the minimalists, who contribute the least possible to maintain membership, to others who go the extra mile, discretionarily engaging in extra-role behaviours advantageous to the organization. These 'extra' work related behaviours which are beyond those prescribed by job descriptions and measured by formal evaluations are termed organizational citizenship behaviours or *OCB* (Bateman and Organ, 1983). Because *OCBs* are extra and beyond the requirements that are specified in advance for a particular job, they cannot be enforced nor can their absence be formally penalized (Van-Dyne *et al*, 1995). Cooperation with peers, personal initiatives and performing extra duties without complaint are examples of organizational citizenship behaviours. Other examples are punctuality, helping others, volunteering (Organ, 1988), innovation and using time efficiently, (Smith, Organ and Near, 1983), not wasting resources sharing ideas and representing the organizations favourably (Van-Dyne *et al*, 1994). These are among the spontaneous behaviours described by Katz and Kahn (1978) as instrumental for effective organizational functioning. In contrast to *OCB*, management practices that reinforce an instrumental unitarist view of employees and their contributions do 'cripple' the employees by disabling them. This condition results in two forms of worker estrangement (alienation): estrangement from the product (where employees lack a sense of ownership and control over the product and its quality); and estrangement from the act of work (where employees experience work as totally separate from the rest of their existence. When these work conditions occur, employees become incapable of exhibiting citizenship behaviours and thus experience a sense of work alienation in the workplace (Mottaz, 1981). Over time work alienation is institutionalized in the minds of employees in a continuing sequence of operant conditioning. Work alienation therefore occurs when employees perceive that the work environment is personally detrimental to their needs, values and sense of organizational well-being (Kanungo, 1979, 1982). Consequently

employees learn not to ask questions, answer back or question management authority. Ultimately, these attitudes and behaviours result in increased organizational rigidity and inefficiency as organizational members experience job dissatisfaction and low levels of organizational commitment. The next effect is that both individual employees and organizational performance suffer.

Igwe (2008) laments that one of the major problems why manufacturing organizations in the South Eastern Nigeria were not performing well was the lackadaisical way these organizations treat their employees, expecting more quality and quantity of work output and loyalty without commensurate efforts to improve the intrinsic hygiene factors of the work environment. The economic condition in Nigeria and indeed other developing countries characterized by frequent changes in monetary and fiscal policies have made the ground more fertile for these organizations to start putting in place management practices that encourage employees to imbibe positive organizational citizenship behaviours (*OCBs*) in the work place.

Empowerment and participation represent important methods that organizations can use to enhance employee motivation especially in an unsteady economic environment powered by cut-throat competition. Empowerment is the process of enabling workers to set their own work goals, make decisions and solve problems within their sphere of responsibility and authority (Griffin, 2002). On the other hand, participation is the process of giving employees a voice in making decisions about their own work. Thus empowerment is a somewhat broader concept that promotes participation in a wide variety of areas including but not limited to work itself, work context and work environment (Glew *et al*, 1995). Porter *et al* (1974), defined commitment as the relative strength of the individual's identification with, and involvement in a particular organization. An alternative, although closely related definition of commitment emphasizes the importance of behaviour in creating commitment. As Salancik (1977) puts it commitment is a state of being in which an individual becomes bound by his actions to beliefs that sustain his activities and his own involvement. It consists of three factors: (1) a strong desire to remain a member of the organization; (2) a strong belief in and acceptance of the values and goals of the organizations; and (3) a readiness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization.

Three features of behaviour are important in binding individuals to their acts: the visibility of the act, the extent to which

the outcomes are irrevocable, and the degree to which the person undertakes the action voluntarily (Armstrong, 2005). Commitment therefore from the above expository can be increased and harnessed to obtain support for organizational ends and interest through such ploys as participation in decision making about actions.

To manage people effectively, it is necessary to understand the factors that affect how people behave at work. This means taking into account the fundamental characteristics of people as manifested by individual differences, as affected by people's abilities, intelligence, personality, background and culture, gender and race; attitudes as exemplified by causes and manifestations, influences on behaviour, depicted by personality and attitudes; orientation, that is, the approaches people adopt to work; and roles as exhibited by the parts people play in carrying out their work.

ANTECEDENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOURS

After Bateman and Organ introduced the original concept of *OCB* in 1983, the literature turned first to unveiling the manifestations of citizenship behaviour in organizations and to link the construct to performance. For instance, studies by Podsakoff and Ahearne (1996), Karambayya (1990), Turnipseed (2002), Turnipseed and Murkison, (2002) and Walz and Niehoff (1996, 2000) investigated *OCB* dimensions with regard to organizational performance. The main conclusion of these studies was that citizenship behaviours are positive for organizations and that they simultaneously benefit employees and managers. The impact of *OCB*, according to Organ (1988), is that they promote the effective functioning of the organization by facilitating adaptability, resource-transformations and innovativeness.

Managers particularly value citizenship behaviours that lubricate the social machinery of the organization. For instance creating a work environment conducive to cooperation may reduce the time a manager spends on conflict management, thus freeing up time for long-range planning and improving chances for organizational success. Given that *OCB* is positive for organizations, managers should attempt to increase their frequency and intensity. To optimize the constructive impact of interactions, effective managers must identify links between various *OCB* dimensions and performance. Equipped with this insight, managers can accurately

access *OCB* prior to organization development intervention and design effective strategies for maximizing citizenship behaviours that positively impact performance.

The argument for a link between citizenship type behaviours and performance has been more logical and conceptual than empirical (Borman and Motowidlo, 1993). Results of the few empirical studies vary depending on the sample and the specific characteristics of the observations and have not produced consistent support for the *OCB* - performance link. As Podsakoff *et al* (1993) suggest, *OCBs* may influence managerial evaluations only because they positively affect managers and the organization. Thus managers rate employees who display these behaviours higher than employees who do not. Moreover, if a manager believes that *OCB* is linked to performance and he/she observes an employee reportedly exhibiting good citizenship, the manager's evaluation of that employee, influenced by the presumption of implicit performance, tends to reflect his/her inference that the employee is a top performer.

Relevant researches (Staw *et al*, 1994; Wright and Staw, 1999) have shown that employees who report more frequent levels of positive emotions tended to be more socially integrated in the workplace, thus likely leading to higher engagement, participation and citizenship than those who reported fewer positive emotions. In terms of work attitudes, Fredrickson's (2001) Broaden and Build Theory of positive emotions predicts that positive emotions broaden people's momentary through-action repertoires, widening that array of the thoughts and actions that come to mind. In other words, those experiencing, positive emotions may engage in fewer deviant behaviours and more positive citizenship behaviours with regard to organizational performance outcome (Fredrickson, 2003).

EMPLOYEE BEHAVIOUR

Employee behaviour includes levels of absenteeism and rate of turnover, errors and near misses and employee performance. Recent research and theories distinguish between task performances and contextual performance (Borman and Motowrdlo 1993). Task performance includes behaviours focused on the lose technical activities involved in a job, while contextual performance refers to discretionary activities outside core job performance such as participating in voluntary committees, cooperating with and helping co-workers or those in other departments, exerting effort over and

above the basic job requirements and promoting the department or organization. In short, contextual performance refers to those largely invisible aspects of work behaviours that do not constitute core job performance but that contribute to the performance of the organization and creates the glue that binds the organizational community together. These are the characteristics that organizational citizenship exhibit and are acknowledged as going extra mile (Turnipseed and Rassuli (2005).

The Links Between Psychological Capital and Positive Citizenship Behaviour

Besides the role of emotions, attitudes and behaviours central to emergence of positive organizational outcome, is the necessity of psychological capital. This psychological capital is based on the emerging field of positive organizational behaviour (Luthans and Youssef, 2007). Like psychology, positive organizational behaviour makes no claim to discovering the importance of positivity in the work place but rather is simply calling for a focus on relatively unique positive, state-like constructs that have impact on performance (Luthans, 2002). Positive organizational behaviour is defined as the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed and effectively managed for performance improvement (Luthans, 2002; Nelson and Cooper, 2007).

Although a number of positive constructs have been researched (Cameron *et al*, 2003), so far the four elements that have been identified to best meet the criteria of the definition of positive organizational behaviour are hope, efficacy, optimism and resilience. When combined, these four have been conceptually and empirically demonstrated to represent a second-order core factor called psychological capital. Conceptually, Synder *et al* (1991) define hope as a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (agency) goal-directed and emerging pathways (planning to meet goals). People who are high in hope possess the uncanny ability to generate multiple pathways to accomplishing their goals. This psychological resource continuously provides hope that the goal will be accomplished. Again, those with high hope frame tasks in such a way that keeps them highly motivated to attain success in the task at hand. Synder (2002) notes that agency thinking in hope takes in special significance when

people encounter impediments in workplace. Therefore, both agency and pathways thinking are necessary and complementing components of hope. Sustaining hope during times of crises and change seems imperative for the well-being of employees and a necessary ingredient of positive organizational citizenship behaviour.

A second capacity of psychological capital is efficacy. Drawn from the theory and research of Bandura (1997) applied to workplace, efficacy can be defined as the employee's conviction or confidence about his or her abilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources or course of action needed to successfully execute a specific task within a given context (Stajkovic and Luthans 1998). In relationship to hope efficacy can be interpreted as the conviction and belief in one's ability to generate multiple pathways, take actions toward the goal and ultimately be successful in goal attainment. Efficacy has shown very strong relationship with performance and is generated from generally recognized sources that are all relevant to positive organizational behaviour. Bandura (1997) has conceptually and empirically demonstrated that task mastery or successfully accomplishing a task is a primary source of efficacy. Employees that are highly efficacious are characterized by tenacious pursuit and persistent efforts toward accomplishment and are driven by beliefs in their own successes. In other words, efficacy seems vitally important to effective organizational behavior because employees are often required to take on new responsibilities and skills. Simply focusing time on early task mastery experiences, role modeling and greater social support can move employees toward high levels of efficacy in the changing workplace environment.

Another criteria meeting positive resource of psychological capital is optimism. Carver and Scheier (2002) note that optimists are people who expect good things to happen to them; pessimists are people who expect bad things to happen to them. This statement represents the expectancy framework used to understand the influential role of optimism in one's success in working for an organization. Therefore, the optimistic employee can continue to move forward with positive expectations regardless of past problems or setbacks. The fourth psychological capital is resilience. Given the turbulent socioeconomic and downsizing occasioned by the global economic downturn facing most of today's organizations and employees, Luthans (2002) defines resilience as a positive psychological capacity to 'bounce back from adversity, uncertainty,

conflict, failure or even positive change, progress and increased responsibility'. At the core of this capacity is the bouncing back (and beyond) from setbacks and positively coping and adapting to significant changes in organizations. Master and Reed (2002) assert that resilience is a class of phenomenon characterized by patterns of positive adaptation in the context of significant adversity or risk. Thus, resilient employees are those who have the ability to positively adapt and thrive in very challenging circumstances. The aforementioned indicates that employees high in the four components making up psychological capital could have a variety of positive psychological resources to draw from to cope with the challenges of organization environment and exhibit better citizenship behaviours than others.

Links between Progressive HRM practices and Organization Citizenship Behaviours

Support for the links between people management and improved performance has been established from a series of surveys in the US conducted in the early and mid 1990s (Huselid, 1995). These surveys covering around 4000 firms, indicated a relationship between the use of High Performance Work System (*HPWS*) and the financial performance of the firms, such that firms that adapted a significantly greater number of *HPWS* practices, achieved 24 percent higher shareholder equity and 25 percent higher accounting profits. A High Performance Work System (*HPWS*) is defined as a specific combination of human resource practices, work structures and processes that maximize employee knowledge, skill, commitment and flexibility (Sherman *et al*, 2002). It is composed of many interrelated parts that complement one another to achieve organization goal. In the UK, studies within the manufacturing sector (Patterson *et al*, 1997) proved this assertion. Analysis of the 1998 workplace Employee Relations Survey (Guest *et al*, 2000) and work on the impact of the psychological contract provide support for such a link. *HRM* practices are shaped by an organization's strategic initiatives and these practices are designed to generate effective task performance which in turn promotes better strategy implementation and ultimately organizational performance through good citizenship behaviour.

Studies have shown that progressive *HRM* practices can also enhance contextual performance in the form of citizenship

behaviours, for instance, being cooperative and helpful with colleagues; and practicing good team working (Tsui *et al*, 1992), and those attitudes closely linked to citizenship behaviour, such as job satisfaction, partially mediate the relationship between progressive *HRM* and organizational competitive challenges (productivity, performance and profitability) (Vandenberg *et al*, 1999).

Again, employee involvement is another form of citizenship behaviour in organizations. The main theoretical approach to employee involvement in the workplace has been based on a Human Relations Model suggesting that participation in decision-making leads to high levels of employee satisfaction, positive behaviour which in turn, leads to increased productivity (Michie and West, 2004). The more recent Human Resources Perspective proposes that this is the result of more comprehensive skills utilization. Effective employee citizenship participation has been found to take place when employees have the competence and motivation to contribute and are given an opportunity to do so (Cotton, 1996, Heller *et al*, 1998). Cotton (1996) has reviewed the evidence for the effectiveness of employee involvement schemes (quality of work life, quality circles, job-enrichment, gain sharing, representative participation and self-directed work teams).

Recent researches emphasize the need for a high degree of mutual trust about each other's motives between managers and employees if citizenship behaviour is to be successful. However, the research in this area is not yet sophisticated and clear messages are hard to discern (Michie and West, 2004).

Links between Leadership and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

Research evidence shows that organization leaders can have a considerable effect on an organization's performance via individual performance. Borrilli *et al*, (2002) for instance, found a clear relationship between lack of supervisory support, conflict over leadership and lack of clear leadership, and low employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment, poor team working and psychological distress, all of which led to less effective organizational management. Leadership research suggests that performance management, trust and respect are at the heart of good leader-follower relations and that it is the latter orientation which, over time is most effective in achieving good performance (Alimo-Metcalte, 1999;

Yukl 1998). Research specifically on leadership in teams in health service settings supports these conclusions (Edmondson, 1999; West and Wallace, 1991).

However, there is considerable variation in what constitutes effective leadership since the performance of the leaders depends on the objectives and values of those making the evaluation. As a result, leadership research has created a vast and often bewildering literature, characterized by competing theories, research results and historical shift in fashions. Nevertheless, it is possible to discern some clear themes about what constitutes effective leaders: (1) creating alignment around shared objectives and strategies to attain them; (2) increasing enthusiasm and excitement about the work and maintaining a sense of optimism and confidence about success; (3) helping people appreciate each other, and helping them to learn how to confront and resolve differences constructively; (4) helping people to co-ordinate activities, continuously improve, develop capabilities, encourage flexibility, objectively analyze processes and learn collectively about better ways to work together; (5) representing the interests of the group or organization, protecting its reputation, helping to establish trust with external stakeholders and helping to resolve conflicts between internal and external partners; and (6) creating a unique group or organizational identity (Yukl, 1999).

The traditional management function of leading subordinates has been termed transactional leadership (Bass, 1985). Transactional leaders clarify subordinates role and task requirements, initiate structure, manage by exception and provide contingent rewards to satisfy subordinates. These types of leaders excel at management functions and take pride in running things smoothly and efficiently. Because transactional leaders emphasize formalized procedures, this approach suggests a positive association between this type of leadership and centralization and formalization. Because of this, Bass and Avolio, (1990); Hater and Bass, (1988); Kanungu (1982), assert that transactional leadership accentuates feelings of alienation among employees and frustrates worker performance. On the other side of the continuum, transformational leadership involves a higher order exchange in which rewards are often intangible, but involves individualized considerations of followers' needs. Transformational leadership has the ability to inspire and motivate others to do more than they would normally do, despite obstacles and personal sacrifices - linking employees with organizational citizenship

behavioural tendencies. And as such they are charismatic (Conger and Kanungo, 1994; 1998). They create significant change in both followers and the organization (Bass and Avolio, 1994). Transformational leaders also promote intrinsic motivation and provide employees with psychological support needed to cope with complex job demands (Shamir *et al*, 1993). Finally, transformational leadership links job accomplishment to the increase in individual self-concept and thus increasing citizenship behaviour among employees.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Given that organizational citizenship behaviours are real and positive for improved organizational performance, managers should attempt to increase their frequency and intensity. This has implications for organizational communication, motivation, performance appraisal, pay and promotion. To optimize the constructive impact of organizational interventions, effective managers must identify links between the various organizational citizenship behaviours (*OCBs*) dimensions and performance and understand their employees' perceptions of organizational citizenship. The *OCB* – performance link indicates that managers should reconsider job descriptions and evaluation criteria. If actions presently considered *OCB* are contributing to performance, managers should formally connect them to job descriptions, evaluations and package reward system to increase its intensity. To achieve these, the following suggestions are made:

1. Improved employee engagement will clarify to employees managerial expectations and bring into focus which behaviours are appropriate and expected.
2. Organizational recognition of employees who are going the 'extra mile' may increase organizational citizenship behavioural tendencies.
3. Motivation should be increased for employees by managers who clearly express the organizational value of *OCB*.
4. Equipped with this insight, managers can assess organizational citizenship behaviour prior to any

organizational change/intervention and design effective strategies for maximizing citizenship behaviours that positively impact performance.

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