

Workplace Fairness and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour: Implications for Nigerian Employees

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Abstract

The average adult worker in Nigeria spends the greater part of their waking hours at work and for most of them, work does not just imply an avenue for meeting financial needs, it connotes some psychological status of self-esteem, belongingness, and acceptance within the broader work spectrum. In this context, workers desire to be treated fairly and equitably. This may have a significant influence on the extra-role behaviours that employees can display on their work, to the organisation and other workers. For organisations to enjoy the performance, productivity, and commitment of its employees, the employees' work should be properly articulated enough to the point that they desire to give their best to the organisation and even extra. This paper reviewed existing literature on the subject matter and provide a theoretical explanation on the effects of workplace fairness on individual's commitment to work, ability to undertake extra roles for their organisations and co-workers. And by extension the work outcomes that could emanate from workers being treated fairly. It also assesses the evaluation of fairness in the workplace that is, the application of justice in order to understand the factors people consider in judging fair treatment. The factors that could shape managers' behaviours in fairness application was explored and presented. This paper expatiates on the gains and importance of maintaining workplace fairness in order to improve the working situations of workplaces in Nigeria.

Keywords: Citizenship; Commitment; Extra Role Behaviour; Workplace Fairness; Work Outcomes.

Introduction

Business, organisations, corporations, and profit making organisations at all are all operating in a highly competitive world. Competition for space, profits, time, physical resources, and assets is rife, and the resources that control all the other resources that they (the organisations) possess – the human resources which organisations consider as most valuable organisations and are constantly trying their utmost best to retain the best talents and outdo their competitors. Employees on the other hand have become and continue to be aware of their rights and how they can harness to ensure that employers improve upon their sense of justice and expect them to be fair to them at all times and if not at all times, at least most of the times. It is thus in this regard that, the issue of fairness has become a prime aspect for organisations to take a deep look into it as it directly affects workers' attitudes and behaviours. In today's world of business, awareness levels and communication have reached new heights, fair treatment is something that all employees expect from their organisation, considering the time, experience, and effort they invest. If this is not given, the employees tend to seek these out in different ways in the form of absenteeism, turnover intentions, counter-productive behaviours like low morale, loafing and possible theft. In other words, they will not be involved or committed to their responsibilities which are the work outcomes of the individuals within organisations and this will have serious implications for the employees, but more importantly for the employers who have investment in them during their tenure with the organisation.

It is a known fact that employees are just not automatons fulfilling the needs of the organisation in its quest to achieving goals. Whether the employer immediately recognizes this fact or not, each employee with the organisation is there to fulfil a personal goal too, whether it is monetary or social, or both. An employee today needs to feel that he or she is receiving justice from the organisation that wants him or her to behave as if he or she is a part of the system and reciprocate accordingly (Mathur & Padmakumari, 2013). Employees most times are concerned with the fairness of the outcomes that they receive and the fairness of such outcomes should be related to how they are being treated within the organisations. Organ (1988) in his pioneering work on the subject proposed that perceptions of fairness can be related to organisational citizenship behaviour because such perceptions are instrumental in developing the levels of trust and faith needed for workers to provide the beneficial, yet discretionary, behaviours that determine citizenship. As organisations grow and move towards globalization, the importance of retention of suitably trained and experienced employees cannot be overemphasized. This is because they are the ones who will provide the organisation with the sustainable competitive advantage they seek. This thus puts tremendous pressure on the organisation to ensure that the employees

get the justice they deserve as they perceive this input of justice as equitably reasonable in their personal cases. It is the level of satisfaction employees perceive in how they are being treated that will spur them to give to the organisation the much-needed doses of suitable behaviours and even extra discretionary effort as required and appropriate. This paper therefore takes a look at the imbalance in the perceptions of fairness by employees, that the organisation is not meeting their expectations and supporting their own personal ambitions and the subsequent role such perceptions play in their abilities to engage in extra role behaviours on behalf of their organisation. This study also looks at the implications of these for the Nigerian worker.

The Concept of Fairness in Organisations

Organisational justice has captured considerable interest of scholars in recent years. It is associated with the perceptions and reactions of an individual to the presence of fairness in an organisation and captures what individuals feel or evaluates to be morally correct rather than viewing it to be something prescriptive (Cropanzano & Greenberg, 1997). Organisational justice is subjective in nature because it depends upon individual's perception and interpretation of evaluating something to be fair or not. People evaluate fairness in terms of the distribution of organisational resources like pay, performance appraisal, selection into groups and committees, promotions, awards and recognitions. Fairness is an influential factor behind various positive job outcomes, such as, turnover intentions, organisational citizenship behaviours, and commitment. Thus, the presence of organisational justice is advantageous both for the individual and the organisation (Cropanzano and Greenberg, 1997). Organisational justice refers to an employee's perception of whether an event or situation is morally right, which is defined by ethics, religion, equity, fairness or law. It is thus a subjective concept, where one is less concerned with what is just and rather more concerned with what people think or believe is just. Researchers have adopted a descriptive paradigm to study and understand why employees might view certain situations or events to be labelled just or unjust.

In today's world of business, employees have become more aware of their rights and value the employer's sense of justice and further expect them to be fair or just at all times. Thus, fairness has become a prime aspect for organisations to take a deep look into - as it directly affects workplace attitudes and behaviour (Mathur and Padmakumari, 2013). In the workplace, what people perceive to be fair is associated with their attitudes and behaviours related to work that can either lead to withdrawal behaviours or can motivate such individual to go beyond the call of duty and to demonstrate citizenship behaviour. The perception of unfairness can make people to indulge in acts of deviance targeted towards the source of such perceived unfairness, thereby resulting to less commitment and dissatisfaction that could eventually results into lower performance (Akremi, Vandenberghe and Camerman, 2010). On the other hand, the perception of being treated fairly by employees benefits the organisation in terms of efficiency, productivity, accountability, integrity, increased commitment to the organisation, increased loyalty to the intent and goals of the organisation, more solid mutual trust among employees and between employees and their managers as well as reduced interpersonal and group conflicts.

This concern for fairness is reinforced by the presence of a fairness heuristic at work in persons' cognitions regarding their relationships to organisations. People must make decisions concerning the extent to which they will constrain their own interests and identity in light of the interests and welfare of the organisation or other collectives to which they belong. Exhaustive consideration of all relevant information is impossible in the context of real-world relationships between individuals and organisations. Thus, people inevitably rely on judgmental heuristics to determine whether to entrust their interests and identity to the organisation and align their goals and behaviour with the organisation. Among the factors affecting this decision, concern for fairness appears to function preeminently. The "fairness heuristic" is sufficiently powerful as to constitute a "pivotal" cognition affecting persons' attitude and behaviour toward organisations or other collectives (van den Bos, Lind and Wilke, 2001).

Generally, people expect to be treated fairly and be appreciated. In order for an organisation to enjoy sustained loyalty from its workforce, managers and group leaders from their various organisations have to ensure that the

resources possessed by their organisation that employees value and cherish (such as salaries, bonuses, recognitions, allowances, promotion, office space and work facilities like computers, air conditioners, official cars, and befitting offices) are distributed properly and fairly. Employees are also expected to be treated with dignity and respect, and to meet the favour of organisations that treat them that way. The maintenance of organisational justice is necessary for the protection of labour rights and interests of workers and also for the protection of their moral and physical health, which is the first key to the prosperity of the organisation and the maintenance of worker's quality of life.

An organisation or the people leading the organisations will be seen to be fair if they engage in equitable behaviour towards members of their organisation without fear, favour, or prejudice. This should also be seen in the way they treat other organisations and employees from other organisations. Thus, the need for adequate attention and implementation of organisational justice is obvious, because without its presence, the implementation of other principles of social, organisational and labour welfare (such as the priority of organisational commitment, organisational values, job satisfaction, customer satisfaction and productivity of direct contact with customers) is impossible. An employee who has developed some sense of teamwork and organisational commitment faithfully fulfils his or her obligations. It is even possible to say that he or she performs his or her responsibilities on a voluntary basis, without specifying moral persuasion or coercion (Hoseinkhani, 2014). Organisational justice research, which focuses on the role of fairness as a contemplation in the organisation, has showed that justice handling has significant effects on individual worker relations, such as satisfaction and commitment (Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter and Ng, 2001).

Also, studies show that when workers perceive high level of fairness, they become more committed to their organisations. Fairness suggests to people that their membership in the organisation is valued and that the organisation respects them, thereby making commitment to the organisation a viable way of maintaining one's identity and fulfilling one's interests. Borrowing the language of Moral Theory, fair treatment indicates to people that they are being respected as ends in themselves, and not merely as means for achieving the ends set by others. Moreover, fairness judgments display primacy; once established, they are altered only with great difficulty. Fairness judgments, in short, are formed quickly, easily entrenched, and constitute a key heuristic basis on which decisions are made concerning an individual's cooperation with, and support for an organisation, as a basis that is more powerful than economic concerns (van den Bos *et al.*, 2001).

Fairness in the organisation is very important, as the management of the relationship between workers and employees must be just and honest. In distributing responsibilities within the organisation, managers should ensure balance, such that one employee is encumbered with a lot of work while another is scantily engaged. Also, employees need to do the work honestly. Justice defines the very essence of individuals' relationship with their employers. So, justice decisions determine the relationship among workers or colleagues. For this reason, the higher workers estimate the fairness in organisational decisions, the more they respect and trust their manager, the more affection they feel for him or her, and the more positive relations with their colleagues. Researchers support the idea that only then the service will be implemented with high quality and productive work that will provide an organisation a good reputation and by extension profit. Justice or fairness defines an action or determination as morally right, which may be intended according to law, ethics, conscience or equity. People are naturally attentive to the justice of events and situations in their everyday lives, across a variety of contexts (Tabibnia, Satpute and Lieberman, 2008).

Cropanzano, Bowen, and Gilliland (2007) opined that fairness in any organisation has the potential to create powerful benefits for organisations and employees alike. These include greater trust and commitment, improved job performance, more helpful citizenship behaviours, improved customer satisfaction, and diminished conflict. When employees perceive they are being treated fairly in their organisation, they show better levels of enthusiasm and dedication towards such organisation. They are able to take pride in their work and challenge themselves to give their best when they know they are treated with dignity and respect, and this in the short or long run strengthens their level of identification with and attachment to the organisation. The explanation of fairness by an individual employee is based on these perceptions which would have grown out of his or her personal experiences

at work and his or her own personality. The degree of this perception will then lead to the volume of extra role behaviour employees will be willing and able to engage in on behalf of their organisations. Following from this observation, it can be inferred that it is how much employees perceive fairness that will inform the extent of extra efforts they are willing to expend for the good, growth and continued sustenance of their workplace and how it stimulates productivity.

Why Do People Care So Much About Fairness?

Every organisation must confront the challenge of motivating its workforce. From research on fairness in organisational context (organisational justice research) it is a known fact that fairness is one of the key research findings on justice. It explains that employees are more motivated when they feel that organisational resources are allocated fairly, that organisational decisions are made in ways that are fair and that their organisation treats employees fairly. It is natural of human beings to feel they are not being cheated out of whatever belongs to them, whatever should accrue to them, or whatever they are capable or desirous of getting be it in their personal, social, material, and organisational lives. Moreover, employees who experience fairness at work are more likely to internalize the organisation's goals and values, and to develop close bonds with other organisational members. In this way, a "management-by-fairness" approach motivates employees to work collaboratively for the long term good of the organisation and its members. Such a long-term collaborative focus tends to produce ethical and healthy organisational behaviour. Furthermore, when individuals believe the organisation's decision-making processes are fair, they will likely believe that they are valued and protected by the organisation. In turn, this belief may create a sense of felt obligation to reciprocate with increased loyalty to the organisation and a greater willingness to engage in behaviour supportive of their colleagues and the entire organisation. It is thus noted that when individuals perceive procedural fairness in their environment, they are more likely to develop identification with the organisation in terms of loyalty and behaviour (Balogun, Ojedokun and Owoade, 2012).

Types of Organisational Justice

The study of fairness in organisations and its typologies has been studied by organisational researchers. Justice or fairness has its roots in multiple areas of knowledge, and that strikes anyone who has experienced disrespect. In business organisations, considerations of fairness appeal to managers, employees, and other organisational stakeholders who see fairness as a unifying value providing fundamental principles that can link together conflicting parties and create stable social structures. Summarizing the main outputs derived from the different justice perceptions, there are three striking types: *distributive*, *procedural* and *interactional justice*.

Distributive Justice is the equitable distribution of rewards and punishments between employees. Distributive justice refers to the perception of fairness about job outcomes. For instance, equity is perceived by employees when they are on a similar job, having the same experience performing jobs and, at the same time, are promoted or transferred equally. Distributive justice evaluates employees' perceptions of whether or not outcomes are equitably distributed or comparable with their inputs. Cropanzano *et al.* (2007) divided distributive justice into three forms: equity (Rewarding employees based on their contributions); equality (Providing each employee roughly the same compensation) and need (Providing a benefit based on one's personal requirements).

Procedural Justice deals with the organisation of the decision (norm control of the process and the result, the monotony, the neutralization of prejudice, the accuracy and completeness of the information, the possibility of appeal and ethics). Procedural justice refers to the fairness of the formal procedures of organisational decision making and how these are processed, such as the explanation of the procedures and the associated interpersonal treatment. Some core attributes that make procedures fair are: (1) Consistency (all employees are treated the same way); (2) Lack of Bias (no person or group is singled out for discrimination or ill-treatment); (3) Accuracy (Decisions are based on accurate information); (4) Representation of All Concerned (appropriate stakeholders have input into a decision); (5) Correction (there is an appeals process or another mechanism for fixing mistakes); (6) Ethics (Norms of professional conduct are not violated)

Interactional Justice depends on employees' reaction to the manner in which their direct supervisors carry out formal procedures. A person will be interactional in a fair way, if he or she appropriately shares information and avoids rude or cruel remarks. There are two categories of interactional justice (Colquitt *et al.*, 2001):

- (i) Interpersonal Justice: Treating an employee with dignity, courtesy, and respect.
- (ii) Informational Justice: Sharing relevant information with employees.

The first part, called *interpersonal justice*, refers to the respect and dignity with which one treats another. The second part is *informational justice* that refers to whether one is truthful and provides adequate justifications when things go badly (Cropanzano *et al.*, 2007).

Fairness Application by Managers

In the workplace, employees respond strongly to unfair treatment. Thus, in addition to their many other responsibilities, managers must ensure a just workplace in which employees are treated fairly. Doing so lead to positive employee and organisational outcomes like higher levels of job satisfaction, organisational performance and commitment, lower levels of theft, absenteeism and turnover. Prior justice literature has revealed that employee's perception of justice can impact on their job performances, workplace deviant behaviours and citizenship behaviours. Employee's perception of their managers' fairness can also be influential in forming their attitudes and behaviour. A manager's fairness is positively related to job commitment and citizenship behaviours (Coyle-Shapiro, 2002). Hence, fairness perceptions at work influence employee's attitudes and behaviours in organisations (Blader and Tyler, 2005). Employees care about being treated fairly, because fairness serves psychological needs, including control, belonging, self-esteem and meaningful existence.

As suggested by Sparr and Sonnentag (2008), fairness of specific leadership behaviours (that is, feedback delivery towards work-related outcomes) are likely to enhance our understanding of which leadership behaviours are important to employees and how they can be improved. In applying fairness in the organisation that can boost workers' motivation, managers should ensure that they:

- (i) *Create a positive environment* – Promoting a workplace atmosphere that makes all workers' feel worthwhile and important and not playing favourites with the staff; making themselves approachable for questions and concerns. A happy workplace is a productive workplace.
- (ii) *Put people on the right path* – Most workers are looking for advancement opportunities within their own workplace, working with each of them to develop a career growth plan that takes into consideration both their current skills and future goals. If workers become excited about what is down the road, they will become more engaged in their present work.
- (iii) *Educate the employees* – This should involve making provisions to improve the skills of employees by providing on-the-job training, off-the-job training, or in-house career development, by allowing them to attend workshops and seminars related to the industry and encouraging them to attend higher education classes paid for by the company. With this workers' will feel their manager is investing in them, and this will translate into an improved job performance.
- (iv) *Provide incentives* – The provision of incentive plan (individual or group) by an organisation management would improve the performance or productivity level of the organisation. Incentive plans like performance-based bonuses or cash bonuses, stock ownership plan, profit or gain sharing, and retention bonuses will assist in changing the fortunes of those involved.
- (v) *Acknowledge contributions* – Managers can make a huge difference in employee morale simply by taking the time to recognize each worker's contributions and accomplishments, whether large or small. They should honestly recognize the input of everyone to the success or otherwise of any given task or assignment.
- (vi) *Honour promises* – By honouring promises, this means following through on promises made by managers to their employees. If a manager tells an employee that he or she will be considered for a bonus if numbers of products produced improve or productivity increases, he or she should honour that word. Failure to follow through on promises will result in a loss of trust, not only that person's trust, but the trust of every other employee that is working hard and expecting similar promises.
- (vii) *Provide career coaching* – The managers can help workers to reach the next level professionally by providing on-site coaching. An employee is being encouraged to grow and learn when the management brings in

professionals to provide one-on-one counselling when needed, which helps workers learn how to overcome personal or professional obstacles on their career paths.

(viii) *Match tasks to talents* – Managers can improve employee motivation by improving employee confidence. Assign individuals with tasks they know they will enjoy or will be particularly good at. An employee who is successful at one thing will have the self-confidence to tackle other projects with renewed energy and excitement.

Organisational Citizenship Behaviour: Why Should Employees Go Extra Mile?

For an average working-class adult, work represents more than an avenue to make ends meet, to keep body and soul together, to maintain personal and family survival. It connotes an avenue that serves psychological needs of achieving status, belongingness, and esteem as well as a point of showing responsibility within the society. Hence going to work is an avenue through which an individual seeks personal development both in the short term and long term. Therefore, having a job that has the capacity to offer this is not only essential but a desirable place to work in and commit one's energy, resources and skills to. An approach that a psychologist would be pushing for in this day and age is seen as more development conscious with a humanistic focus based on clear statements about the worth of employees to the organisation and ethical matters related to the employment relationship. In this approach, employees are seen as active partners in the development and advancement of the organization rather than passive inputs and core assets especially in creativity and innovation. It also views employees as participants in a venture built on commitment, communication and collaboration. The collaborative emphasis is characterized by efforts to create and communicate a culture of partnership between the employer and employees and among employees in the workplace. An organisation practicing a soft approach to managing its human resources would be expected to stress the importance of employee commitment, self-regulation and a broad degree of self-control. The focus therefore is on individual development, lifetime training and individual freedom (Fadugba, 2008).

It is important to suggest that apart from the actual physical environment in which the job is performed, factors such as workplace fairness, communication, interpersonal relationships, job scheduling, job security, the quality and quantity of supervision or leadership and other similar factors are significant in the abilities of individuals to engage in extra role behaviour on behalf of the organisation they work for and the outcomes that occur from their work, and also the amount of effort expended into a particular occupation. The willingness of workers within an organisational setup to exert effort beyond the formal obligations dictated by their positions has long been recognized as an essential component of effective organisational performance. It is thought, if workers perceive their employers and managers to be fair in their dealings with them, then they are spurred to work efficiently and effectively and even go beyond by performing extra roles which does significantly show in the work outcomes of such individuals and by extension the organisation (Jahangir, Akbar, & Haq, 2004). The viability of an organisation is critically dependent upon the proactive behaviours of its members. The resources of people in innovation, in spontaneous cooperation, in protective and creative behaviour are thus vital to organisational survival and effectiveness.

The concept of organisational citizenship behaviour was introduced by Dennis Organ. He defined it as "discretionary behaviour that is not recognized directly and in a certain way the formal system of rewards, but which in aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organisation. Organ (1988) views organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) as the extra-role behaviour since it is the act of job performance beyond the stated job requirement. Employees go beyond the contract signed by them at the time of entering the organisation and they perform non-obligatory tasks without expecting any rewards or recognition. Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) was redefined as an employee's willingness to go above and beyond the prescribed roles that he or she has been assigned (Organ, 1990). OCB is a discretionary behaviour that is not in accordance with the established functional responsibilities and formal requirements, and it is not part of the described and reflected formal acts of workload. Organisational citizenship behaviour is performed by virtue of the employee's own personal choice and at their own initiative. Organisational citizenship behaviour exceeds its functionality, implementation, effectiveness requirements within the functional responsibilities of the requirements.

The personality foundation for these OCBs reflects the employee's predispositional traits to be cooperative, helpful, caring, and conscientious. The attitudinal foundation indicates that employees engage in OCBs in order to reciprocate the actions of their organisations. Motivational dimensions, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment clearly relate to OCBs. More important to OCBs, however, is that employees must perceive that they are being treated fairly and that the procedures and outcomes are fair. The importance of OCB in effective organisational functioning is well documented in organisational behaviour literature. When employees engage in these behaviours, it encourages cooperation and association among them in the workplace and enhances the overall productivity, organisational climate, social environment, stability and managerial productivity of the organisation. Individuals are believed to engage in OCBs to pay back or reward their organisations for equitable treatment. Consequently, OCBs are withheld when employers do not provide adequate outcomes as a consequence of unethical leader behaviour (Zellers, Tepper and Duffy, 2002). Seifert, Brockner, Bianchi and Moon (2016) noted that employees who expect their line managers to be untrustworthy are more likely to be disloyal toward the organization and exhibit lower levels of motivation, which may ultimately result in suboptimal work performance. The researchers are of the opinion that business executives must understand what motivates employees to excel in their jobs to reduce the risk of brain drain, and, ultimately, to create sustainable organizational success.

Organisational citizenship behaviour is significant in organisations due to three important trends (Borman, 2004). Firstly, citizenship performance is needed by the organisation due to increasing competition globally. Secondly, organisations that are team based are now trending which in turn raises the need for the citizenship performances and for employees to personally support their organisations in whatever way they can. Thirdly, organisational needs an extra effort from their employees as more and more organisations are now moving towards downsizing. Lastly, organisations have become more customer-oriented for which citizenship performance of employees seems vital. Organ's (1988) study on organisational citizenship behaviour determined five concepts of OCB. In any organisation, there can be these qualities in employees: altruism, courtesy, sportsmanship, conscientiousness, and civic virtue.

1. **Altruism:** This describes care about the welfare or interests of others. It describes the moral principle associated with the selfless help of others and the sacrifice of their interests for the common good or the interests of individuals. Altruism is the opposite of the word "selfishness". When an individual is altruistic within his or her organisation, he or she is seen as helping other members of the organisation in their task's accomplishment. An example might be that one employee helping his colleague without expectation of money or services in return. Thus, altruistic improve the working atmosphere and team spirit. Outside of a business context, altruism would be a case when someone who drives neighbours to work when their car has broken down or in any other problems, while not expecting any reward or money in return. In a business setting, this kind of behaviour is shown in any situation related to the work or any team projects. In a group setting there can be a volunteer to work on certain special projects; he or she may help other employees with their work or any other tasks. Altruism in the organisation improves productivity and effectiveness of work because it stimulates good relationship among workers; and it can eliminate stress, when a worker is overwhelmed without a little help.

2. **Courtesy:** This means politeness and respect toward others. By respecting each other employees create a pleasant situation in their organisational atmosphere which can help prevent problems that can emanate from their work relationship. Courtesy relates to issues outside of the workplace includes behaviours like; asking about a colleague's welfare, and the health of a neighbour's child. In the organisation, courtesy is shown in a situation where a worker is asking if a co-worker is having any trouble or problems with a certain work, and suggest help for the problem related to the colleague's work. Courtesy supports positive social relationship between employees, which develop the work atmosphere. It also can exclude potential stress that can emanate from employee who does not have courtesy to inform their co-workers about issues such as upcoming absences from work.

3. **Sportsmanship:** This shows a positive person who does not complain if something goes wrong. It is a character of a person who always keeps promises and does not cause deliberate harm to others. A person who makes sure he/she does not harm others and does not create unpleasant implications for others. Sportsmanship is shown by a

person who obeys organisational regulations and tolerating imperfect situations without complaint. Outside of the organisation, sportsmanship is most commonly associated with sports and games, for example, it might occur when a player in any team doesn't complain or argue when his or her team loses a game. In the workplace, sportsmanship is related to potential complaints about work in addition to negativity surrounding work-related surprises. For example, a worker who is undertaking a project or service, expecting it to be well received and accepted by his or her manager, but unfortunately, it is rejected, and an employee instead of complaining shows good sportsmanship by not complaining about the situation to other co-workers who may report his or her behaviour to others in the organisation. Therefore, sportsmanship involves avoiding negative behaviour that may have effect on the individual and organisational well-being.

4. Conscientiousness: Conscientiousness is dedication to the job and a desire to exceed formal requirements in aspects such as, punctuality or conservation of resources, in addition to complying with organisational rules, going beyond minimum requirements through hard work (example, working long days). Conscientiousness is a behaviour that proposes a reasonable level of self-control and discipline. In a business context, conscientiousness is noticed when an employee meets their employer's requirements such as coming to work on time or completing tasks on time.

5. Civic virtue: This suggests that employees responsibly participate in the political life of the organisation (for example, attending meetings, keeping up with changes in the organisation, taking the initiative to recommend how procedures can be improved). In addition, it is determined as a behaviour which shows how well an employee represents an organisation with which they are associated and how well that employee supports their organisation outside of an official capacity. For example, a worker's civic virtue appears on how he or she represents their business and how he or she may support that business. Civic virtue also includes a worker speaking only good sides of the organisation to others, signing up for business social events like charity walking events or fundraiser parties, and always representing the organisation to the best of their ability even when a worker is no longer working for that organisation.

Outcomes from OCB

Today's organisations witness, and will witness in the future, serious challenges, transformations, changes, pressures and demands from various sources. Nigerian organisations are not immune to these developments. A great challenge facing managers is a very dynamic and ever-changing business environment. Ultimately, these environments create pressures for the emergence of a new workplace whose systems, structures, and practices are consistent with the emerging social values and expectations (Al-Qutop and Harim, 2011). These researchers added that managers must address significant issues such as total quality management, global economy, workforce diversity and shifting population demographics, concerns for human rights in the workplace, organisational transitions, developments in information technologies, and new ways of organizing. Other significant but common issues and problems that managers need to address include; employees' feelings of isolation, disconnectedness, lack of meaningful life because the nature of work is changing as a result of increasing globalization coupled with a shift from the industrial age to the information age, knowledge society and economy (Kinjerski and Skrypnek, 2006). All of these can result in longer work hours, and increased expectations for productivity, accompanied by less job security, a lower organisational loyalty, due to downsizing, layoffs and increased work-life conflict.

The opinion in organisational justice is that, if employees believe they are treated fairly, they will be more likely to hold positive attitudes towards their work, their work outcomes, and their supervisors. Organisational justice is a key determinant of employees' OCBs. Justice theory contends that employees' work attitudes and behaviours depend on their notion of perceived justice of an organisation's outcomes, procedures and the interpersonal treatment the recipient of justice receives. Thus, it could be probably said when employees think they are being treated fairly by their supervisors and the management of their organisation and believe that the organisation values, respects and are concerned about each and every individual employee's overall well-being and that they are a pertinent organisational member, they would make a conscious effort to give back to not only their supervisor but also, the organisation in some appropriate way. This may come in different ways like; becoming less tardy or

a drop in absenteeism rates or a decrease in deviant behaviour and increasing work outcomes like commitment, trust and most importantly citizenship behaviours which are vital to building a different competitive strategy in an effective organisation. The above argument leads to the prediction that employees extend their role definitions or boundaries or job breadths when they receive fair treatment from their supervisors (Ando and Matsuda, 2010).

Cropanzano, Howes, Grandey, and Toth (1997) argue that holding a job is analogous to making an investment. Workers provide their talents and energies in the hope of earning something in return. However, an employee's decision about whether to give his or her services to an organisation wholeheartedly, go extra mile (OCB) or not depends in large part on the way employee feels about the job, pay, promotion, managers, co-workers or what is referred to as perception of organisational justice. In other words, the positive or negative perception of employees about the organisational justice may have its impact on the individual motivation to go extra mile and organisational performance. Employees engage in a social exchange with their employers when they invest high degree of effort in organisation while expecting equity in the distribution of rewards as a part of this social exchange process. Social exchange interpretations of employer-employee relationships maintain that workers trade effort and loyalty to their organisation for such tangible incentives as pay and fringe benefits and such socio-emotional benefits as esteem, approval, and caring. Essentially, the company must provide the needs of the employees in a manner that will benefit organisation's need for productivity because it provides the jobs; and the employees' need for satisfaction because they provide the labour in the social exchange (human capital).

In explaining work outcomes in the organisations for the employees, there are varieties of reasons why managers may include OCBs in their performance evaluations and reward allocation decisions. For example, managers may recognize that OCBs such as helping, civic virtue, and sportsmanship make their own jobs easier. If this is the case, managers are likely to reciprocate by providing higher performance evaluations and more organisational rewards for employees who exhibit OCBs. In addition, researchers have noted that because OCBs are somewhat more volitional than task performance, managers may use them as indicators of how motivated employees are to make the organisation effective. As a result, OCBs may serve as behavioural cues of an employee's commitment to the success of the organisation that managers incorporate in their assessments of employee job performance. Lefkowitz (2000) has argued that managers like employees who exhibit OCBs, and that this liking subsequently influences the manager's performance ratings and reward allocation decisions. Taken together, the above arguments suggest that employees who exhibit higher levels of OCB should receive higher performance evaluations and more rewards than those who exhibit lower levels of OCB. This is consistent with empirical evidence that OCB-like behaviours are positively related to both performance evaluations and reward recommendation decisions (Johnson, Erez, Kiker and Motowidlo, 2002).

It is thus expected that experienced employees who exhibit OCBs may enhance the productivity of less experienced peers by showing them the ropes and/or teaching them best practices. Similarly, employees who engage in civic virtue (or voice behaviour) may offer their manager useful suggestions that improve unit effectiveness, reduce costs, or free up the manager to spend time on more productive tasks such as strategic planning. OCBs may also enhance team spirit, morale, and cohesiveness, thereby reducing the amount of time and energy spent on team maintenance functions and enhancing the organisation's ability to attract and retain the best people. Consistent with this reasoning, studies have shown that OCBs are positively related to a variety of unit or organisational effectiveness measures, including production quantity, efficiency, profitability, and the reduction of costs. Yen and Niehoff (2004) have noted that in addition to the effects OCBs may have on internal organisational effectiveness measures, OCBs may also influence external effectiveness measures, such as customer satisfaction. More specifically, they argued that employees who exhibit altruism should encourage teamwork and cooperation among coworkers and that this enhanced cooperation should allow the group to deliver their goods or services more effectively and subsequently increase customer satisfaction. In addition, Yen and Niehoff (2004) noted that more conscientious and courteous employees should increase customer satisfaction because these employees will stay more informed and up-to-date about the products and services the company offers. Yen and Niehoff further opined that employees who exhibit civic virtue or voice behaviour by providing ideas on how to improve customer service will also increase customer satisfaction. It would be added that employees who help the team deal

effectively with conflicts (peacekeeping) and avoid making petty complaints (sportsmanship) should also help the team focus its energies on customer-service-related activities and subsequently increase customer satisfaction.

Therefore, it can be hypothesized that employees who perceive more justice from their direct supervisors will be more motivated to increase their efforts at work and will be more satisfied at their jobs. As a consequence, they will improve the services they provide and this will be reflected in better perceptions of service quality from the customers' point of view. Also, employees who perceive organisational justice will be less addicted to searching for opportunities somewhere else and will be willing to forgo their own short-term individual interests to pursue the greater interest of their group or organisation.

Analysing Fairness Using Equity Theory

The *equity theory* focuses on individuals' perceptions of how fairly they are treated in comparison to others. It was developed by Stacy Adams (1965), who found that equity exists when people consider their compensation equal to the compensation of others who perform similar work. People judge equity by comparing inputs (such as education, experience, effort, and ability) to outputs (such as pay, recognition, benefits, and promotion). When the ratio is out of balance, inequity occurs. An inequitable pay can create an impossible situation when implementing salary and incentive systems.

According to Daft (1997), Individuals will work to reduce perceived inequity by doing the following:

- i. *Change inputs*: Examples include increasing or reducing effort.
- ii. *Change outcomes*: Examples include requesting a salary increase or improved working conditions.
- iii. *Distort perceptions*: This occurs when individuals cannot change their inputs or outcomes; one example is artificially increasing the importance of awards.
- iv. *Leave the job*: Individuals might do this rather than experience what they perceive to be continued inequity.

The Equity theory states that people assign values to their inputs on a job and the outputs they receive from their job. These values are used to calculate a ratio (input to output). This ratio is then compared with the input to output ratio of a referent (someone the employee sees having similar skills, tenure, and experience). If the ratios are equitable, there is no reason for grievances. However, this is not the case if the referents ratio is smaller (their inputs are outweighed by their outputs). For example, if an employee's ratio was 10:10 and the referent's ratio was 15:15, the ratios are equitable; if, however, the employee's ratio was 10:10 and the referent's ratio was 10:15, the employee would feel under-rewarded (underpaid) for their inputs and would eventually adjust their inputs accordingly (reduce their inputs). If the employee's ratio was smaller than the referent's ratio (example 15:10 vs. 10:10), the employee may engage in additional inputs to settle the dissonance. It therefore implies that as workers have certain expectations for coming into the organisation, fair procedures of work, work organisation and scheduling, remuneration, rewards and punishments should be granted to affirm their status in the organisation, thereby strengthening their level of identification with, and attachment to, that organisation.

A Case for the Nigerian Employees and Implications

Employment in Nigerian organisations, both private and public indicates the free movement of workers from one organisation to another due to dissatisfaction with the work or tenure instability. The need therefore is for employees to make cognitive and attitudinal connections between their desires and expectations and those of the organisation prompt them to rely on a fairness heuristic in guiding their attitudes and behaviour at work. Thus, it is particularly important for organisations to handle the monetary and non-monetary concerns with their employees with fairness. A sense of fair or just treatment by an organisation will leave employees open and more committed to the organisation, while a sense of injustice is likely to trigger negative reactions to some of the organisation's policies and practices.

A full-time employee is supposed to be entitled to a living wage, good working conditions, leave allowance benefits and vacations. While it might be said that a good number of Nigerian organisations most of the time struggle to truly fulfil all its obligations, the real issue is the extent to which these are actually made available and beneficial to the employees in the workplace and the distribution of these to all involved in a way that those to

benefit from it will consider themselves having been fairly and equitably treated in such distribution and subsequent utilization.

The fairness of a firm's procedures has impact on personal outcomes (that is, job satisfaction, turnover intentions and/or actual turnover) while fairness outcome has greater impact on organisational outcomes such as organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB). The reason why procedural justice, for instance, impacts job satisfaction is that employees can enhance their outcomes by asking for a wage increase, a promotion or better benefits and working conditions. The logic behind this is that procedural justice must exist within the organisation; as such, employees must be able to influence the outcomes by participating in decision making. Hence, in such cases, the employee's job satisfaction can be enhanced and influenced by procedural justice (Nadiri and Tanova, 2009).

In the Nigerian workspace, it is assumed sometimes that people perceive and respond to decisions in ways that are consistent with their prior expectations. This is connected to the value orientations as Africans who believe that nothing goes for nothing. Workers tend to experience what is described in organisational behaviour literature as *psychological contract*. Psychological contract pioneered by Schein (1988) suggests that between employer and employee there exist an implicit contractual relationship which is derived from a series of assumptions on the part of employer and employee about the nature of their relationship.

These assumptions may not be legally enforceable but they constitute a set of reciprocal arrangements and form the basis for a series of expectations that may have a considerable degree of moral force. That is, employees have some expectations from their employers and vice-versa which are unwritten and exist only in their respective heads. Underlying this notion of a psychological contract are the assumptions about what people look for in terms of returns and satisfactions from work which can be interpreted as specifying the way in which employees should be treated. Some of the employees' expectations are: security of employment, to be treated as a human being rather than as a commodity, fair and consistent treatment, and, some influence over their day-to-day operations.

In addition, when employees trust the decision-making authorities within their organisations, this fundamentally shapes their expectations about how they will be treated in the future in terms of what the authorities are likely to do and how they will execute their decisions. The more trust employees have in their managers, the more likely the employees are to expect organizational outcomes to be favourable and the more likely they are to expect that the procedures used by authorities to plan and implement decisions will be fair. Untrusting employees who show a low level of commitment are likely to be treated less positively by their superiors, which in turn discourages the employees from being more committed. On the other hand, employees who show a high level of commitment are likely to be treated highly positively by their superiors (Seifert *et al.*, 2016). The findings from the study of Olowodunoye and Adetula (2015) on civil servants in Ondo State revealed that perceived organisational justice had a significant relationship with and significant influence on OCB. This implied that perceived organisational justice was a strong factor in determining whether an employee would exhibit OCB in a particular organisation or not. They are of the opinion that there is tendency for a particular employee not to exhibit OCB in a particular organisation, if he or she perceives that the leader or the organisation is not fair in dealing with him/her.

However, the same employee may exhibit OCB where he perceives fairness in another organisation if he/she eventually leaves the former organisation. Olowodunoye and Adetula (2015) however suggested that leaders and organisations should endeavour to look for ways to practice fairness as far as the issue of employees is concerned. Their goals should not be limited to profit making in the organisation alone, but consider the aspect of the employees when making decisions in the organisation. It is expected that organisations – whether public or private – in Nigeria should implement strategies aimed at improving affective commitment and organisational justice in their workplace. Lack or inadequate welfare packages and other incentives leads to poor worker's motivation which greatly affect their outcomes and productivity hence, there is need for employers to give staff welfare package and other incentives for the benefits of the employees, employers and the organisation (Okereke and Daniel 2010). However, in doing so, they should be seen as objective, fair, unbiased, and impartial in their decision outcomes and distribution of resources.

Noah and Steve (2012) in their study of some selected workers in Ilorin postulated that many Nigerian workers are faced with enormous economic challenges and that many of these workers considered themselves to be a privileged group for being employed against the backdrop of mass poverty in the country. If however they continue to surge on in the face of dwindling resources and tight economic terrain as we have today, their expectations of their organisation will be one that can recognize their inputs, value them as human beings rather than as commodities, afford them a high degree of job security and this will in turn translate to them going beyond the call of duty for their various organisations and tell it to whoever cares to know that their organisation is a good, in fact, the best place to work. For instance, Igbinomwanhia and Akinmayowa (2014) found out in their study that the level of OCB among private sector employees in Nigeria was found to be significantly higher than that of employees in the public sector. It is generally believed that employees within the private sector are better motivated than their government counterparts. They further added that the attitude of the Nigerian public servant to work is believed to be poor when compared to that of employees in the private sector.

The result of their study does align with the popular notion that citizens have towards government work that doing government work is not something the employee should break a sweat for; that no matter how hard or not they work, they will still get their pay. They also are faced with irregular or modulated salaries as can be seen currently in some states in Nigeria. Some states can not pay the minimum wage; some can only pay a few cadres in their civil service payroll. When workers of these public sectors enterprises are poorly motivated, it will significantly affect their commitment to their various organisations and it will make them not to engage in extra efforts on behalf of their organisations if and when the needs arise. Private sector employees in Nigeria work for organisations that face stiff competition from their rivals and heavy demand from their shareholders and investors to deliver. Therefore, because the performances of the employees are continuously appraised, and the results of such appraisals are important to the advancement of the employee as an individual and the organisation as a whole, the employee is expected to undertake beyond the ordinary, to engage in other organisational support behaviours in order to improve his or her performance ratings. The implications are that managers and indeed the organisation as a unit should focus on how employees can feel fairly treated or feel that decisions are made in fair terms and conditions. The recognition of judgments is critical and sometimes more important than how employees feel about their overall level of pay, benefits and opportunity for promotion. Managers should be open, honest and straightforward in their conversations and should avoid playing with their words at all cost.

Also, employees should be more informed about decision making procedures in the organisation as it affects them individually, within a department/unit, or the organisation as a whole. Managers should provide clear explanations, especially those that may be unpopular and uncomfortable to discuss. Employees should be given the opportunity to voice out their perspectives, and provide adequate responses to the points or issues that they raise. There should also be an effective feedback mechanism within the organisation that welcomes suggestions, opinions, advices, and even criticisms from members of the organisations on the direct impacts and influences of organisational decisions. Managers should treat everyone with dignity and should refrain from discriminating employees on any grounds. The focus of managers should be on earning status and respect from organisational members as against wielding organisational power as a case of 'showing who's the boss' (i.e. their control over valued resources). When managers focus on their status, on the respect they have (or intend to build and sustain) in the eyes of others they treat others more fairly, their members will reciprocate this with commitment, improved performance with high level of efficiency and efficacy, and more productivity for the organisation as a whole.

Conclusions

In the light of the discussions made in the paper, it can be noted that the issue of justice and the perceptions of fairness have been on for some time and have been studied by researchers for a long time, and as such has not lost its relevance in modern world community. It can be said that the organisations play a major role in the realisation of social justice in their respective endeavours. The employees' perceptions of satisfaction with the job and its constituent parts are an important indicator of fairness in the organisation. The satisfaction employees get from their job contribute to higher productivity and the achievement of plans, targets, and objectives. In addition, the

employees should be highly involved in decision making and be given the latitude to undertake their jobs without close supervision and, more importantly, be seen as partners in the wheel of the organisation's progress.

It is important for Nigerian organisations – whether public, private, non-governmental, religious, or anyone at all – to improve the perception organisational justice in their workplace. When organisations stand for what employees stand for, the employees would identify more with them, believe in their vision and mission, internalize the goals and objectives of the organisation such that organisational success is perceived as personal success and employees would consider their work in the workplace as contributing their own quota to the development of “their” company. If an organisation treats its employees well, they will feel part of the fabric rather than a passer-by in such organisation.

Recommendations

It is recommended that for the organisation to get the best from their employees, they have to be treated fairly equitably without fear, favour or prejudice as this will lead to positive organisational work outcomes. This will ensure that employees are committed to their job and organisation for a longer period, and exhibit more organisational citizenship behaviour, performing extra roles and going beyond the line of their duty to ensure the organisation succeeds at all cost and to be able to be proud of themselves that they were part of that success story as this is one of the most important output of a worker's general contribution to an organisation.

It is also recommended for the leadership of organizations that fair treatment of their employees can raise their organizational competitiveness. When employees are brought together in efficient terms, they can be a real source of competitive advantage in the sectors where they belong. An organization that treats its staff fairly will also be a reference point and a standard bearer in that sector as other organizations will look to match or surpass their excellent human resources accolades and achievements.

Finally, it is recommended that organizations should allow people to be humans, full of life, zest, potentials, capacities, capabilities and the likes as it allows them to fully express themselves. When people don't feel caged in their workplace, they feel a deep sense of connection to the workplace. This not only reflects in their work experiences, it radiates in the other facets of their life such as the quality of their family time and social relationships both on and off the job as they work in the consciousness that their organizations value them not just because of the profits they bring to the balance sheets but because they are active players in the success stories of their organizations.

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