Assessment of the Effect of Job Enrichment on Employee Commitment in Selected Private Universities in South-West Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Job enrichment and employee commitment for ages have been a difficult issue for human resource managers of organizations worldwide. Numerous researches have been carried out over the past years with the aim of resolving this problem. However, little research has been conducted to determine the effectiveness of job enrichment in private universities in Nigeria. This study therefore, evaluated the effects of job enrichment on employee commitment of non-academic staff in selected private Universities in South-West Nigeria. This study employed a cross-sectional survey design. The population of the study was 2462 non-academic staff distributed among the seven (7) approved private universities that had existed for six years in South-West Nigeria. A sample of 740 respondents was selected using multi-stage sampling technique. 618 filled questionnaires were returned but 547 was found useable. The simple regression model was used to analyse the data collected. The findings revealed that job enrichment had a statistically significant positive effect on employee commitment of non-academic staff in the selected private universities in South-West Nigeria. This findings shows that non-academic staff in the sample Universities are committed to their work as the result of the practice of job enrichment. However, the study recommended that managers and human resources managers of the surveyed Universities and other private and public universities and other organizations should pay more attention to job enrichment practices as to keep employee committed all the time.

Keywords: Job enrichment, Commitment, Skill variety, Task identity, Task significance

Introduction

In the rapid changing world and extremely competitive labour market today, it is essential for organizations to deal with tendencies such as changes in products, technology, population, worldwide competition and to serve the economy which has risen the necessity for the organizations to react quickly, lithe, compete and introduce new ideas of doing things (Magaji 2014). The old connotation of an occupation/ work which is a précised set of accountabilities and movements is debilitated since workers today cannot just restrict themselves to their assigned duties as they need to change their unceasingly altering necessities of work (Raza& Nawa 2011; Parvin and Kabir, 2011). According to Magaji (2015), Sanda, Asikia and Nanle (2015)job enrichment is involving the employees in managerial functions of the higher ranks which rises the self-actualization, self-control and self-esteem of the employees which leadsto improved commitment of the employees. Job enrichment is a source of motivation for the employees which leads to commitment (Ramilal, 2004).
Herzberg (1968) asserted that job enrichment leads to enhancement in the framework of the job which gives the employees more challenge, complete task, responsibility, opportunity for growth, and chance to contribute their ideas. The unnecessary work specialization brought by Taylor's scientific management and developing of scientific technology has been dehumanizing the job and making the employees work worthless, monotonous, boring, removing all difficulties from the job by making the employee a part of the machine culture. The employees under this situations resulted in frustration and estrangement from their work since the human capacities are not utilized fully. Also the rising disaffection of employees from their task has created a grave human relations problem. Many firms have been trying to solve this problems by applying job rotation and job enlargement design from time to time to bring diversity but this has not helped to reduce job boredom and monotony from the employees (Herzberg, Mausner, Peterson, & Capwell, 1975, Lawler & Ledford, 1992). Moreover, employee responses refer to the degree in which the workers fastens themselves to the organization and sees its achievement or failure as theirs. Several studies have been done over the years to figure out the best ways that will upsurge employees commitment to their work and organization because of its importance. (Porter, Mow day and Steers, 1982). Also all the researchers are of the same opinion that organizations reliant so much on the employee responses in terms of employee's commitment. (Neyshabor and Rashidi 2013).

People management, of course, is the most significant facet of the organizational procedures. This originated from the credit that the employees of any organization and the organization its self are one and the same. And to ensure the attainment of the organizational objectives, the organization must make a conducive working condition of commitment and collaboration for its workers through the organizational guiding principles that enables employee commitment. (Parvin and Kabir, 2011).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Job Enrichment

Job enrichment according to Hackman & Oldham (1976), Raza and Nawaz (2011) is redesigning of jobs in a way that increases the opportunities for the worker to experience feelings of responsibility, achievement, growth, and recognition. It is a qualitative change to a job that increases the extent of autonomy, feedback, and significance of the job, allowing workers to have better control and feedback in their work setting. An addition in job related tasks with a view to increase employee control and responsibility is called job enrichment (Raza and Nawaz, 2011). Yasdani, Yaghoubi, Giri (2011), defines job enrichment as changing job content in order to make tasks challenging and to increase productivity.

Jain, Jabeen, Mishara, and Gupta (2011); Yang and Lee, (2009); Jayawardana and O'Donnell (2009); Jenaibi, (2010) in their studies confirmed that job enrichment satisfies employees' psychological and social needs, and sense of belongingness to the company. Mohr and Zoghi (2006) and Koonzt and Weirich (1988) asserted that job enrichment is an attempt to build into jobs a sense of challenge, achievement and variety, giving workers more freedom in deciding about such things as work methods, sequence and pace of the acceptance or rejection of materials, encouraging participation and interaction between workers, giving feelings of personal responsibility for their task, combination to the finish products, feedback on job performance before their supervisors get it and workers involving workers in any change in the organization.

An enriched job offers more autonomy and freedom in executing the related responsibility and adds variety and challenge to an employee's daily routine. And besides the pecuniary remuneration associated to work, an enriched job renders self-fulfillment, actualization and contentment of meaningful job (Govender &Parumasur, 2010; Hackman&Oldham, 1976). Lawler (2003) found that an enriched job has been attributed with certain critical characteristics. His research identifies three psychological conditions for a job to be considered as enriched – Experience of meaningfulness, the experience of responsibility for outcomes and feedback or knowledge of results. Yasdani, Yaghoubi and Giri (2011) asserted that job enrichment provides employee empowerment, and in turn leads to autonomy, in which such employee will manifest greater responsibility, engagement on work, satisfaction, commitment and performance and gives them a feeling or sense of belongingness (Saleem, Shaheen & Saleem, 2012; Chung & Ross, 2013).
Job enrichment according to Latham and Balder (1975), Latham and Yuki (1975), and Raja (1974), increases the motivational level and performance of the employees in the work place and makes more possible the achievement of the organisational goals. The motivating characteristics of job enrichment include – participation, autonomy and responsibility – appeal to employees who strive for the satisfaction of higher-order needs such as self-control, self-respect and self-actualization (Chung & Ross, 1977).

Job enrichment is a job-design strategy for enhancing job content by building into it more motivating potential (Lunenburg, 2011). It is an attempt to motivate employees by giving them the opportunity to use their abilities (Pillai, Mashood, Amoodi, & Husain, 2012; Razag & Nawaz, 2011; Mondy, Noe & Premeaux, 1999). Mohr and Zoghi (2006) and Cappelli and Rogovsky (1994) asserted that their fundamental supposition is that Taylorist tasks do not meet the social and mental wants of workers. That job enrichment encounters these wants of the employees and rises the driving promise of work, which concurrently rises together employee commitment and satisfaction (Robbins, Judge, Millett, & Waters-March, 2008; Razag & Nawaz, 2011, Thomas, Buboltz, & Winkelspecht, 2004).

Job enrichment is an act or process of including employees in decision – making of the organization (Dost and Khan, 2012). Job enrichment encourages employees to study, progress and introduce new ideas in carrying out their tasks which helps to improve the confidence and employee commitment. (Hackman and Lawler, 1971; Lawler, 1973; Hackman and Oldham, 1976). Job enrichment likewise upsurges the morale (-self-esteem, actualization and control) of the employees. (Vroom, 1964; Swinth, 1971). According to Herzberg five principles should be followed when implementing job enrichment which are: Increase Job Demands, increase the worker's accountability, providing work scheduling freedom, providing feedback and providing new learning experiences (Mondy, Noe, & Premeaux, 1999).

Newstrom (2011); Lunenburg, (2011); Zare, Jajarmizadeh and Abbasi, (2010); Thomas, Buboltz, and Winkelspecht (2004) asserted that a job must have all the five dimensions to be fully enriched:

Skill variety: The extent to which the job requires a variety of different activities in carrying out the work, involving the use of a number of different skills and talents of the worker (Newstrom, 2011, Bartol & Martin, 1998).

Task Identity: is the extent to which a job requires completion of a “whole” and identifiable piece of work. Doing a job from beginning to end with a visible outcome. (Robbins et al., 2008; Jacko, 2004; Glick, Jenkins, & Gupta, 1986)

Task Significance: is the amount to which the job has a substantial impact on the lives of other people, whether those people are within or outside organization. (Robbins et al., 2008; Jacko 2004 Glick, Jenkins, & Gupta, 1986)

Autonomy: The level to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence, and discretion to the individual in scheduling the work and in determining the procedures to be used in carrying it out. (Robbins, et al 2008, Jacko 2004 Glick, Jenkins, & Gupta, 1986).

Job feedback: The extent to which the job make available information about the effectiveness of the employee performance which can be optimistic (positive) or adverse (negative). (Robbins, et al., 2008; Jacko 2004; Glick, Jenkins, & Gupta, 1986; Lunenburg, 2011).

2.1.2 Employee Commitment

A number of research efforts over the past years, have been devoted to understanding the nature, antecedents, and importance of employee commitment. Employee commitment has been widely researched by numerous authors and stayed correlated to different variables in the area of human resource management. (Broke, 1988; Allen & Meyer, 1990; Colarelli, 1990; Vandenberg & Scarpello, 1994; Cohen, 1999; Monday, Steers & Porter, 1999; Gout & Singh, 2002; Riveros & Tsai, 2011). Modway, Steers & Porter (1979) (Riveros and Tsai 2011). Obi-Nwosu et al, 2013, Khalid & Irshad, 2010). According to Eslami and Gharakhani (2012); Sullivan & Arthur, (2006); Eslami and Gharakhani (2012), employee commitment is the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organisation. Allen and Meyer (1999) Allen and Meyer (1996) sees employee commitment as a mental connection among workers and their organization that makes them not to think of leaving the organization on their own. Oyewobi, Suleiman and Muhammad-Jamil (2012); Newstrom (2011); and Robbins et al.
(2008) proposed three components or dimensions of organizational commitment: affective, normative and continuance. Meyer and Allen (1991) confirmed that affective, normative and continuance commitment can be experienced simultaneously to varying degrees. (Riveros & Tsai, 2011; Zeinabadi, 2010). Newstrom (2011). (Ketchand and Strawser, 2001), Bateman and Strasser (1984) defined employee commitment as the degree to which an employee identifies with the organisation and wants to continue to actively participate and willingness to remain with the firm and belief in the mission and goals of the firm (Ketchand and Strawser, 2001). Cooper-Hakim and Viswesvaran, (2005); Cohen(2003); Lee, Allen, Meyer, and Rhee (2001); Herscovitch and Meyer (2002) defined employee commitment as the degree to which an employee recognized the objectives and value of the organization and is keen to assist in its development. That is the extent to which employees attached themselves to an organization and perceives the achievements or problems as theirs (Dost & Khan, 2012; Bem & Allen 1974; Abelson 1976; Carton & Mischel 1979; Schewpker 2001; Robbins et al, 2008; Daft & Marcic 2007; Kinicki & Williams, 2009).

2.2 Theoretical framework
There are many theoretical foundations on job enrichment and employee commitment, but this paper is anchored on humanistic theories of motivation from Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory and Deci and Ryan’s self-determination theory. Humanistic theory sees behaviour as determined by learned habits, people as rational beings, free to make their own choices/decisions about how to live their lives and to be motivated to maximize freedom and also to achieve personal growth and to interpret their experiences (Huitt 2006, Rubin and McNeil 1981, Scholastics 2011, Asendorf, VanAkan, 2003). Huitt (2001), examined humanistic theory in five objectives to education in work place as to promote autonomy, develop responsibility, challenging task, develop creativity and curiosity and expressing interest in artistic endeavours (Aanstoos, Serlin, & Greening, 2000). Humanistic theory affirms a person’s self-needs. That the main property of humanistic theory is the personal goals/needs of the employees. Similarly job enrichment characteristics theory gives the workers the opportunity to do challenging task, offers more autonomy and freedom in executing the related responsibility and adds variety and challenge to an employee’s daily routine, an enriched job renders self-fulfillment, actualization and contentment of meaningful job, which leads to three psychological conditions: experience of meaningfulness, the experience of responsibility for outcomes and feedback or knowledge of results which results to change in behaviour such as employee satisfaction, involvement, motivation, commitment and performance. (Grant and Shin, 2011, Lawler 2003). The theory provides a set of implementing principles for enriching jobs in an organization setting which proposed a model of five core job characteristics-skill variety, task significance, task identity, autonomy, feedback that affects commitment (Oldham & Hackman, 2010; Parker & Ohly, 2008, Hackman & Lawler, 1971).

2.3 Empirical Review
Job enrichment and employee commitment.
A study conducted by Doest et al (2012) revealed that job enrichment has moderate effect on employee commitment in an organization. Salami, 2008; Olugbile, 1996; Alarape and Akinlabi, (2000) Sneed and Herman (1990) found job characteristics to be positively related with organizational commitment. Obi-Nwosu, Joe-Akuune and Oguegbe (2013) conducted a research on job characteristics as predictors of organizational commitment among private sector workers in Anambra State. The findings showed that only two dimensions of job characteristics namely task significance and task identity have positive effect on employee commitment although the residual three dimensions: skill variety, autonomy and job feed back are not. Also Gokham (2006) study on effect of job characteristics on employee commitment revealed that task identity and autonomy are positively associated with employee commitment. Neyshabor and Rashidi (2013) also examined the relationship between job enrichment and employee commitment. The result showed that job enrichment has a significant positive influence on employee commitment. The study strongly asserts that skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback remain significant topics required to be well-thought-out by administrators, so as to attain competitive edge through workers. In essence, all previous studies on job enrichment and
employee commitment revealed that job enrichment is a predictor of employee commitment.

2.3 Conceptual Model

Established from the literature review, job enrichment is directly related to employee commitment. Consequently, the model for this study propositions that, the objective of job enrichment is to improve employee commitment. The model shows independent variable - job enrichment and dependent variable - employee commitment and their sub-variables.

![Image](image_url)

Source: Developed for the study

3.0 Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted to evaluate the effect of job enrichment on employee commitment so as to establish the degree of relationship between the hypothesized variables. The use of descriptive research design was considered because it allowed for the collection of quantitative data which were analyzed quantitatively using descriptive and inferential statistics. The population of this study comprised of twenty one (21) out of fifty (50) approved private universities in South-West, Nigeria as at the time of this research in 2013.

The data gathering instrument used in this study was structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered to selected non-teaching staff of Babcock, Covenant, Bells, Ajayi Crowther, Lead City, Bowen and Joseph Ayo Babalola Universities, all in South-West Nigeria. The questionnaire was administered between 10th and 24th of October, 2013. The questionnaire contained two sections: one on job enrichment and second on employees' commitment respectively. The questions for job enrichment were adopted from Hackman-Oldham model of job diagnostic survey (JDS) which was used by Orphen (1979) and employees commitment items from Raza and Nawaz (2011); Dost and Zia-ur-Rehman (2012); Oladele, Subair, and Sebina (2010); Oyewobe, Suleiman and Mahammad-Jamil (2012) and Parvin and Kabir (2011). The questions adopted were modified to suit the purpose of this study. The six point rating scale was used in the questionnaire so as to avoid the problem of central tendency and to gain more effective screening power (Sin and Tse, 2002; Osuagwu, 2006). The study adopted a six-point rating scale to obtain data from the respondents. The scores were coded as strongly agree =6, agree= 5, partially agree=4, partially disagree=3, disagree =2, and strongly disagree=1.

The study used Cronbach's Alpha reliability test to evaluate the reliability of the questionnaire for the study and validity was established through suitable statistical means. The analysis was done using SPSS. The benchmark for reliability Cronbach's Alpha score is .70 as recommended by Nunnally (1978), thus all above the minimal 0.70; therefore, the overall reliability of the whole scale is guaranteed (Nunnally, 1978). Cronbach's Alpha Reliability co-efficient for all the construct items in the study were ascertained via the outcome of the pilot study. Table 3.1 reveals that the Cronbach's Alpha values: job enrichment = 0.794 and employees commitment = 0.770. Therefore based on the Alpha values it can be decided that the framed questionnaires are more reliable with each other and the questionnaire survey can be conducted by using the questionnaire.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Job Enrichment</td>
<td>0.794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Employees commitment</td>
<td>0.770</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey, 2013

The statistical analysis carried out in the study by using MS-Excel and SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) Software 21 version for windows. The statistical technique like correlation, regression, and ANOVA was used for the analysis. Analyzed and interpreted data have been presented in the form of tables. A self-structured questionnaire assessing the job enrichment and employees commitment measures were distributed to a random sample of 740 respondents. A total of N = 547 questionnaire were returned representing a response rate of 73.91.

4.1 Hypothesis Testing and Results

The table below presents the result of hypothesis testing.
4.1: Correlation (Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) of job enrichment and employee commitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Enrichment</td>
<td>547</td>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Commitment</td>
<td>547</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Researcher's Field Survey from SPSS output, 2013

The study used Pearson Product Moment correlation to test the hypothesis. The analysis statistically showed that there is a significant positive relationship between job enrichment and employee commitment among non-academic staff in the surveyed universities ($r = 0.66, p<0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis (Ho) which states that job enrichment does not have a significant relationship with employee of non-academic staff in selected private universities in South-West Nigeria, is rejected.

The table shows the Summary of Linear Regression/Analysis of Variance on the effect of Job enrichment on commitment of non-academic in selected private universities in South-West Nigeria. ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>125.681</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>125.681</td>
<td>430.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>159.291</td>
<td>545.292</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>284.972</td>
<td>546</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R = 0.664
R Square = 0.441

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Commitment
b. Predictors: (Constant), Job Enrichment
Source: Researcher’s Field Survey from SPSS output, 2013

Further evidence from table above showed that job enrichment significantly influences employee commitment ($F_{1,545} = 430.006, p<0.05$). Also, 44.1% of variance in employee commitment is explained by job enrichment. Which showed the degree of the influence of job enrichment on employee commitment and answered the question – to what extent is the relationship between job enrichment and employee commitment of non-academic staff of the surveyed private universities.

Discussion and Implication of findings

This empirical research was carried out to investigate the effect of job enrichment on employee commitment of non-academic staff in selected private universities in South-West Nigeria, even though statistical test were applied to test the hypothesis. At a significant level of 0.05, it transpired that job enrichment has positive significant effect on employee commitment in the seven surveyed private universities. The finding of this research is in agreement with the finding of Doest et al (2012) that there is positive relationship between job enrichment and employee commitment. That job enrichment is a predictor of employee commitment, that the more their jobs are enriched, the higher their level of commitment to the organization. Similarly, the studies of Mottaz (1988); Oliver, Baker, Demerouti, De (2005); (Akuoko, Dwumahand and Ansong, (2012), Raza and Nawaz (2011); Neyshabor, Rashidi (2013) are in agreement with the findings of this study that job enrichment is strongly correlated with job commitment and a strong predictor of job commitment (Cable & Judge, 1994; Chiu & Chen, 2005)

Also the findings of this study is in line with the studies of Obi-Nwosu, Joe-Akuune, Oguegbe (2013), Tannebaum, (1993) whereby the findings showed that job enrichment is interrelated with employee commitment (Salami, 2008; Olugbile, 1996; Alarape & Akinlabi, 2000; (Cable & Judge, 1994; Chiu & Chen, 2005) Similarly the findings of this is in consonance with the studies conducted by Colarelli et al. (1987); Obi-Nwosu, H., Joe-Akuune, C.O Oguegbe, 2013); Allen, et al. (2004); Mathieu and Zajac, (1990) which revealed that job enrichment and employee commitment havea robust positive association. However, human resource managers should encourage the job enrichment design strategy so as to gain an edge through their employees.

This study is conducted with the aim to evaluate the effect of job enrichment on employee commitment of non-academic in selected private universities South-West, Nigeria. The findings of this study revealed that Job enrichment has significant effect on employee commitment, of non-academic staff in selected private universities in South-West Nigeria. This implies that job enrichment is being practiced in the seven selected private universities in South-West Nigeria namely: Covenant, Bells, Babcock, Lead City, Ajayi Crowther, Bowen and Joseph Ayo Babalalo. This implies that the dimensions of job enrichment which are skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback from work done are properly used. That the employees in selected private universities are allowed to use
variety of skills and talents which makes the work more challenging to the employees because of the skills involved, relieve monotony that results from repetitive activity; and gives employees a greater sense of competence; task identity practices help the employees to do their work from the beginning to the end visibly, also task significant helps the non-academic staff to know the importance /impact of their jobs to others; the non-academic staff have freedom to make decision in the work they do that affects them, they have freedom to do their job and they get feedback from the work they do and would be able to assess their performance themselves with less or no supervision, which have influence their commitment. However job enrichment design is a continuous process, therefore human resource manager should at no point relent on redesigning the job of employees by enriching their job.

The findings of the study further implied that the non-academic staff in the surveyed universities are committed to their organizations/jobs because the organization they work with presently deserve their loyalty, they have a sense of obligation to the people in their organization, they enjoy the feeling of accomplishment they get from their present jobs, the level of autonomy they have in their organization and they enjoy the feeling of accomplishment they get from their present jobs.

5.1. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study was carried out in order to ascertain the effect of job enrichment on employee commitment of non-academic staff in selected private universities in South-West Nigeria. The findings showed that job enrichment is a strong predictor of commitment. It is therefore concluded that job enrichment is being practice in the seven selected private universities in South-West Nigeria. This study has made obtainable empirical evidence to support theoretical models that prescribed a relationship between job enrichment and employee commitment. It is obvious from the review of existing literature and empirical results of this study that job enrichment is an important tool for managements to arm their employees with in today's dynamic world and highly competitive labour market, therefore human resource managers of these seven selected private universities and others should make sure that job enrichment design is correctly carried out.

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