

Social Support and Work Environment as Predictors of Job Commitment of State Polytechnics' Workers in Ogun State

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Abstract

The level of job commitment among employees, the intricate combination of the work environmental components and the perceived social support experienced by employees have gained prominence in attempts to improve productivity. This study examined the predictive influence of social support and work environment on the job commitment among staff of state polytechnics in Ogun State. A total of 300 state polytechnic employees (161 males; 123 female) were selected randomly using systematic sampling techniques. Instrument used was tagged Social Support, Work Environment and Commitment Scale (SSWECS). Two research questions were raised and data collected was analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression Analysis at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the study revealed that social support and work environment jointly correlate job commitment. The study also shows that social support ($\beta = 0.482, p < 0.05$) had potent relative influence on workers' commitment, and work environment has positive and significant relationship with workers' commitment. It is recommended that government, employers of labour and organisations should adopt policies and practices to gain commitment of their employees, provide appropriately conducive work environment and offer adequate support to their workers with a view to improving their work life quality and hence their commitment to the job and the organisation.

Keywords: *Social Support, Work Environment, Job Commitment.*

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Background to the Study

In Nigeria as well as in other developing countries, low productivity remains a current phenomenon owing to the physical and psychological problem created by the need to see how these problem can be solved, which in turn will lead to higher productivity of workers. The success of any organisation is therefore measured by the degree of its productivity which is usually dependent on the attitude and morale of the workers in form of their level of commitment. Organizations that change employee attitudes towards their work and the organization will have employees who are more satisfied. This not only enhance the production of tangible results for the organization in the form of increased productivity, but also decreased turnover and associated recruitment costs and higher sales volumes.

Employee's productivity remains a primary element for success in most organisations, including those in government, knowing what factors influence productivity is a prerequisite to improving performance (Haenisch, 2012). Over the years, researchers have found that productivity is affected by relatively few influencers, and workers are generally aware of what those influencers are (Armstrong, 2006; Clawson & Newburg, 2005; Hankin, 2004; Newstrom & Bittel, 2002; Williams, 2003). Past research has shown that low productivity is recorded in almost all public sector organisations in Nigeria (Mbogu, 2001; Ezulike, 2001; Iheriohanma, 2006). Employers adopt different strategies to empower employees and earn their commitment to assigned tasks and responsibilities in the workplace. This makes organisations to focus on creating meaningful, challenging, and interesting work and assured commitment of the workers. (Park & Rainey, 2007).

Job commitment is an extremely important topic for organizations to understand the level to which an employee engages in his or her work (job involvement), commits to and believes in the organizational goal and purpose (organizational commitment), desires to work (work ethic), and commits to a specific career or profession can all have an impact on an organization. In today's economy, where organizations are expected to do more with less resources (i.e., people and money), it is extremely important for organizations to retain their productive employees. Employees who are engaged in their work and committed to their organizations give companies crucial competitive advantages- including higher productivity and lower employee turnover.

Most workers in the Nigerian polytechnics spend one-third of their waking hours at work. Hence, the institutions serve as small communities where the employees interact and where social, physical and environmental contexts may be altered to promote healthy life styles (Tamers, 2012). Several studies have proposed that social support at the work organisation may be linked to the uptake of a greater number of risk behaviour and poor work attitudes exhibited by workers. Social support has therefore attracted researchers in predicting the commitment of employees to their employers.

The general concept of social support is defined in a multitude of fashions including social integration, interconnectedness, interpersonal support and social interaction among others. While social support definitions often share a core set of orientations, mostly with respect to the population of interest and received support (Williams, 2005), Glanz (2002) defines social

support as support that is always intended (by the sender) to be helpful-thus distinguishing it from intentional negative interactions-and is consciously provided by the sender to influence the thoughts and behaviours of the receiver.

Social support is the perception and actuality that one is cared for, has assistance available from other people, and that one is part of a supportive social network. These supportive resources can be emotional (e.g. nurturance), tangible (e.g., financial assistance), informational (e.g., advice), or companionship (e.g., sense of belonging). Social support can be measured as the perception that one has assistances available, the actual received assistances, or the degree to which a person is integrated in a social network. Support can come from many sources, such as family, friends, organisations, co-workers, etc. Social support has been linked to many benefits for both physical and mental health (Tamers, 2012). Growing research suggest that positive social support derived through friends, co-workers is associated with an improvement in healthy behaviours adoption and maintenance. Waston (2000) reported that employees who receive high social support are often more willing to stay with the organisation than their counterparts. This is because social support helps employees to realise their socio-emotional needs (affiliation, esteem, approval), and signals the availability of aids when needed (Waston, 2000). The foregoing buttress Gottlieb (2000) that social support is the process of integration in relationships which improves coping, esteem, belonging and competence through actual or perceived exchanges of physical or psychosocial resources.

Another factor that predicts workers' commitment and productivity is the work environment. The quality and quantity of work generated by employees are influenced by the office environment (Keeling & Kallaus, 1996). Quibble (1996) points out that poor environmental conditions can cause inefficiency in works and also reduce job satisfaction, which in turn will impact on the financial well-being of the organisation. The environment is man's immediate surrounding which he manipulates for his existence. Wrongful manipulation introduces hazards that make the environment unsafe and impede the productivity rate of worker. Therefore, the workplace entails an environment in which the worker performs his work (Chapins, 1995) while an effective work place is an environment where result can be achieved as expected by management (Mike, 2010; Shikdar, 2002).

Physical environment affect how employees in an organisation interact, perform tasks, and are led. Physical environment as an aspect of the work environment have directly affected the human sense and subtly changed interpersonal interactions and thus productivity. This is so because the characteristics of a room or a place of meeting for a group have consequences regarding productivity and satisfaction level. The work place environment is the most critical factor in keeping an employee satisfied in today's changing business world. Workers are living in a growing economy and have almost limitless job opportunities. This combination of factors has created an environment where business needs its employee more than the employee need the business (Smith, 2011).

It is not just a twist of fate that new programs addressing lifestyle changes, work life balance, health and fitness previously that were not considered key benefits are now primary considerations of employees, and common practices among the most admired companies.

Working environment according to Akintayo (2006) refers to the immediate task and national environment where an organisation draws its inputs, processes it and returns the output in the form of products or services for public consumption. The task and national environments include the supplier, customer, stakeholders, social-cultural, economic, technological, managerial and legal environment.

With technological development, innovative communication methods, virtual reality; e-market improvement and alternative work patterns, workplace continues to change rapidly (Challenger, 2000). To accommodate these rapid changes while maintaining or improving outcomes, organisations have increasingly turned to some version of environment such as open office space (Terricone & Luca, 2002). This type of work environment supports new styles of working and flexible workplaces which offers interpersonal access and ease of communication compared to fully enclosed private offices. This change to open plan office has increased employee's productivity compared to closed office spaces (Becker, 2002). Improved work environment will enhance employee productivity, for example, standard health facilities will project the life of the workers. In case of any hazard on the job they have some assurances of some income. This assured income tends to minimize any inhibitory fears of the workers devoting themselves fully to their work.

Most people spend fifty percent of their lives within indoor environment, which greatly influence their mental status, actions, abilities and performance (Sundstrom, 1994). Better outcomes and increased productivity is assumed to be the result of better work place environment, better physical environment of office will boost the employees and ultimately improve their productivity (Carnevale, 1992; Clement-Croome, 1997). This study therefore looks into the combined and relative influence of organisational social support and work environment on the job commitment of workers in the state polytechnics in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Central to the growth and achievement of organizational objectives is the human resource. Employees are the ones who play the major roles and make significant contribution to the organisation and are indispensable in achieving the organization's vision and goals. The demand to improve productivity has created a workplace environment of intense competition and increased stress for many. Paradoxically, these conditions often stymie organizational efforts to become efficient and effective.

Employees view actions of supervisors of an organization as representative actions of the organization itself which affects the feeling of employees on how organization take care of them. Many employers do not train supervisors on the necessity of support or on techniques to provide assistance.

Workplace environment and its related issues are significantly neglected. It is evident that there is less importance to office design and assisting facilities and it is not available to the employees. The situation is that they cannot even complain about them. These circumstances are affecting the performance of the employees greatly, in the form of delay in work completion, frustration, effect on personal growth. The management and workers of

enterprises are less considerate of work environment as having great influence on productivity of workers resulting from worker's negative attitude to work while the worker's view of low productivity may stem from poor pay system, absence of fringe benefits, inappropriate leadership style, wrong job location, unfavourable organizational change.

Due to increasingly competitive business environment, committed workforce has now become matter of survival for every organization; under conditions of rapid change committed employees give the competitive edge to these firms. It is in the light of this, that this study investigate the predictive influence of social support and organization's work environment on the job commitment of workers with emphasis on staff of state polytechnics in Ogun State, Nigerian.

Empirical Review

Social Support

Social support is a supportive or helpful social interactions or exchanges of resources between people in both formal and informal relationships. It refers to the degree to which employees perceived that co-worker offer them support, encouragement and concern (O'D'riscoll & Cooper, 2002; Way & Macneil, 2006). Researchers have indicated that when co-worker or supervisor is supportive of subordinates, this treatment often lead to favourable outcomes for the employee and the organisation such as reduced stress, turnover intention and increase commitment, increase productivity and enhanced performance (Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2003; Eisenberger, Stinglahamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski & Rhoades, 2002; Lee, 2004; Balogun & Olowodunoye, 2012). Fisher (1985) found that social support has a direct effects on work-related outcomes like work performance. Tharenou, (1993) investigated support received from supervisors and found in a longitudinal study that such support reduced the level of uncertified absence. Supervisors' consideration towards their subordinates was also shown by Zaccaro, Craig & Quinn (1991) to be negatively associated with absenteeism.

In a study of workplace relationship, Schat & Kelloway, (2003) concluded that organisational support enhance workplace relationships and improved job satisfaction of employees while Eisenberger et al, (1986) and Harris et al, (2007) submitted that organisational support is a strong predictor of job satisfaction and Job satisfaction can improve productivity, quality of job output, and co-worker support. Tepper, Duffy, Henle and Lambert (2006) discovered that victims of abusive supervision always adopt behaviours that are not beneficial to the organisation or its employee. These actions can have deleterious consequences one of which is how the victim is treated by their co-workers. Baruch-Feldman, Brondolo, Ben-Dayana & Schwartz (2002) in their study affirms that immediate supervisor support was related to job satisfaction and productivity in 211 traffic enforcement agents.

Maguire (1991) and Monat & Lazarus (1991) found that social support, which is usually thought of as positive factor, may intervene between a stressful event and the stress reaction by attenuating or preventing a stressful appraisal of the situation, thus increasing the person's ability to respond appropriately to the situation such as difficult work task and thereby ensure effective performance and commitment to the organisation.

However, perceived social support protects against the effects of such negative stress (Dahlem, Zimet, & Walker, 1991) and has been shown to predict positive health outcomes better than received social support (Uchino, 2009).

Ronsseau and Aubél (2010) in a study of workers social relationships found that supervisors and co-worker social support have an additive effect on affective commitment and ambient conditions moderate the relationship between supervisor support and affective commitment.

Work Environment

The need to provide a safe work environment for employees has had a long history in human resources management (Tiawo, 2010). In Beer, (1994) model of human resources management, acknowledged that work systems cannot only affect commitment, competence, cost effectiveness and congruence but also have long term consequences for workers' well being, there is also evidence to indicate that work systems designs may have effect on physical health, mental health and longevity of life itself. Conducive work environment ensures the well being of employees which invariably will enable them exert themselves to their roles with all vigour that may translate to higher productivity (Akinyele, 2007).

Huges (2007) in a survey reported that nine out of ten workers believed that a workspace quality affects the attitude of employees and increases their productivity. Chandraseker (2011) also confirms that unsafe and unhealthy workplace environment in terms of poor ventilation; inappropriate lighting, excessive noise etc. affect worker productivity and health. Hameed & Amjad (2009) in a survey of 31 bank branches on office design revealed that factors such as furniture, noise, lighting, temperature and spatial arrangements showed that comfortable and ergonomic office design motivates the employees and increased their performance substantially. A study by Barber (2001) attempted to ascertain what employees consider to be most significant aspects affecting their own productivity. This survey found that aspect regarding technology, storage space, quiet space, climate control, personalising the workspace and its visual appeal were the most important factors.

Ajala (2012) analysed the influence of work place environment on workers welfare and productivity in government parastatals in Ondo state, Nigeria. The result showed that workplace features and good communication network at workplace have effect on worker's welfare, morale and productivity. Employee satisfaction has been found to be influenced by the work environment (Leaman, Lorsch and Ossama (1994); Lan et al; (2009); Lan et al (2010) investigated the impact of three different indoor temperatures 17°C, 21°C and 28°C) on productivity. They found that employees felt slightly uncomfortable in both the coolest and warmest of these climates, that they were less motivated and that they experienced their workload as more onerous, with a consequent decline in productivity. These results supports that a temperature higher than 25°C adversely affects productivity.

Brill and Weideman, (2001) concluded that the trend toward more open work environments have a measurably adverse effect on office workers, such that the investment in individual private offices could be shown to pay off in terms of increasing workers' productivity. Many

studies have shown that there exists a strong relationship between physical environment and the level of commitment demonstrated by employees. (Ilozor, love and Treloar, 2002; Nenonen 2004; Weiss, 1999; Wise, Darling-Hammond & Berry, 1987; McGuire, D. & McLaren, 2007).

Wayne, Shore & Liden (1997) observed that employees who feel supported in the workplace have higher levels of employee commitment and working conditions as reported by Wise, Darling-Hammond, & Berry, (1987) has shown to affect employee commitment and intention to stay with the organisation.

Job Commitment

The concept of job commitment encompasses a broad range of job related attitudes that consist of work ethic, organizational commitment, job involvement and commitment to an individual's career/profession (the pennsylvania state university, 2011). Aaqmorrow (1983, 1993) identified work itself, career, job, organization and union as five forms of work commitment. Lee, Carswell & Allen (2000) feel that the understanding of the construct of occupational commitment is very importance for several reasons: (a) people's jobs are major focus' of their lives, (b) the possible link to keeping one's job or relationship with the organization, (c) possible relationships to work performance and (d) the understanding of how people develop, make sense of, and integrate their work related commitment.

In general, commitment is defined as the psychological attachment of workers to their workplaces (Becker, Billings, Eveleth, & Gilbert 1996; Allen & Meyer, 1990; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). In fact, few empirical studies have examined a public sector employee's commitment and its relationship to productivity variables, such as extra-role behavior, desire to remain, absenteeism, and willingness to support productivity improvement strategies. Studies by Jawal and Baba (1995); Jenkins (1995) revealed a negative relationship between turnover intentions and organisational commitment. According to Konovsky & Cropanzano (1991); Meyer (1998) uncovered a positive relationship between commitment and job performance. Employees who are committed to their respective organisation are more likely not only to remain with the organisation but are also likely to exert more efforts on behalf of the organisation and work towards its success and therefore are also likely to exhibit better performance than the uncommitted employees. Employees with high level of commitment provide a secure and stable workforce (Steer, 1977) and thus providing competitive advantage to the organisation.

Chen, Sliverthron & Hung, (2006) studied the relationship of organisational commitment, communication and job performance; the findings indicated that there is positive relationship between organisational communication, organisational commitment and job performance. Jackofsky (1984), found out that low commitment is leading to high rate of turnover, whereas higher the level of job satisfaction through job security entails high level of organisational commitment which further leads to improved employees job performance (Yousuf, 1998). Suliman and Lles (2000) found a positive association between continue organisation commitment and job performance. Furthermore, Qaisar; Rehman and Suffyan, (2012) in their study of performance of police officers in Pakistan, found that the three components of organisational commitment have significant and positive relationship with

employee performance. The result of the Wayne, Shore & Liden, (1997) study also indicates that a supportive work-culture can reduce employee stress levels and increase employee commitment (Birnbaum, 1998).

There are studies claiming that there is a negative correlation between educational status and organizational commitment and job involvement (Angle & Perry, 1981; Sommer et al 1996). In addition, as a result of a study they conducted, Mathieu & Zajac (1990) have pointed that there is no strong correlation between educational status and organizational commitment and job involvement.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research. The study was carried out in Ogun State Nigeria and the population of this study comprises of all staff of state owned polytechnics in Ogun state Nigerian. A sample of (300) three hundred participant were selected randomly from the four state polytechnics and the selection covered both teaching and non-teaching personnel of the institutions. Systematic sampling technique was used to select the sample. The sample used consists of both male and female participant of which 161 (56.7%) male and 123 (43.3%) female. However, the proportion of the male in the study turned out to be higher than the female.

For the purpose of the study, the following research questions were raised:

1. Is there any combined influence of social support, work environment and) on job commitment workers?
2. What is the relative contribution of each of the independent variables (social support, work environment and job commitment) on worker productivity?

The research instrument used for this study was structured questionnaire that made use of existing structured scales with appropriate properties. The questionnaire consisted of four sections; Section A is biographic information of the respondent, section B is Perceived organisation support (POS) developed by Eisenberger, Huntinson & Sowa (1986). The scale has 17 items with reliability co-efficiency (Cronbach's alpha) of 0.97. Section C is Work Environment Scale adopted from Work Environment Questionnaire developed by CERES Innovations in (2003). Section D is the job commitment scale and the study adapted from the organisational commitment scale developed by Allen and Meyer (1993) to measures the three component of organisational commitment. Allen and Meyer (1993) reported the reliability coefficient alpha of .87 affective, .75 continuances and .79 normative. Out of the 300 questionnaire administered, 283 were completed and retrieved.

Results

Data collected were analyzed using simple percentage, Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression at 0.05 level of significant.

Table 1: Regression of the Joint Contributions of social support and work environment to the prediction of job commitment

Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.578 ^a	.334	.327	3.04636

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1303.986	3	434.662	46.837	.000 ^b
	Residual	2598.493	280	9.280		
	Total	3902.479	283			

Table 1 shows that the combine influence of social support and work environment on workers' job commitment was significant ($f(3/280) = 46.837$; $R = .578$, adj. R square = .334, $P < 0.05$). This implies that about 32.7% of the variation in workers' commitment was accounted for by the independent variables. The remaining 68.3% could be due to other factors that are not considered in the study.

Table 2: Estimates of Relative Contribution of Social Support and Work environment to the prediction of Workers' Job Commitment

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	23.142	1.836		12.606	.000
	social support	.025	.023	.066	1.088	.278
	Workenvironment	.038	.034	.076	1.128	.260
	job commitment	.160	.025	.482	6.392	.000

The result in the table 4.2 above showed the relative contribution of each of the independent variables on dependent variable. job commitment made the highest contribution to workers' productivity of the participants ($\beta = 0.482$, $t = 6.392$, $P < 0.05$), followed by work environment ($\beta = 0.76$, $t = 1.128$, $P > 0.05$) and social support ($\beta = 0.66$, $t = 1.088$, $P > 0.05$.) hence, job commitment is significant, while social support and work environment are not.

Table 3: Correlation matrix showing the relationship between each of the independent variables and dependent variable

Variables	mean	Std. deviation	Social support	Work environment
Social Support	66.5528	9.88875	1	
Work Environment	70.5070	7.39759	.427 ⁻	1
Job Commitment	39.1831	3.71345	.383 ^{**}	.435 ^{**}

**** sig. at 0.01 level.**

The above table revealed that there was a positive relationship between: workers' commitment and social support ($r = .383$, $P < 0.05$) and job commitment and work environment ($r = .435$, $P < 0.05$). This indicates that social support and work organisational environment are found to be positively correlated with workers' job commitment.

Discussion of Results

The results of the study show that there were composite effects of the independent variables to the prediction of the dependent variable. The two factors combined accounted for 32.7% (Adj. R square = 32.7) variances in the prediction of commitment.

a) The independent variables (social support, work environment and job commitment) were found to have positive and significant relationship with workers' productivity.

Discussion

The result on table 4.1 above showed that, there was a significant combine contribution of Social support and work environment in the prediction of job commitment of the workers. This suggests that the two factors accounted for 32.7% (adjusted R square = .334) of total variance of commitment, through the linear combination of the two independent variables. The ANOVA results from the regression analysis shows that there was a significant effect of the independent variables with an $f(3/280) = 46.837$ $P < 0.05$. the implication of this would be that when put together, these variables jointly predicts employees commitment. This findings is in line with (Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2003; Lee, 2004; Balogun & Olowodunoye, 2012) that when co-worker or supervisor is supportive of subordinates, this treatment often lead to favourable outcomes for the employee and the organisation such as reduced stress, turnover intention and increase commitment, increase productivity and enhanced performance. The result also confirms Stinglahamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski & Rhoades, (2002) that employees' who receive social support such as love, respect, aid at work, information and money from colleagues or supervisor are more dedicated and committed to their work and are less inclined to leave the organisation than employees who perceive low social support on their job. The finding corroborates Akintayo (2002); Holland (2000); Collins (2003); Williams (2003) and Allport (2002) who reported that conducive work environment attenuated with good condition of services, opportunity for training and development, provision of adequate retirement benefits and interpersonal relations had significantly influenced workers' commitment. This result is also in line with Becker (1981), Humphries (2005), Dilani (2004), Milton, Glencross & Walters (2000).

On research question two, which state, what is the relative contribution of each of social support and work environment on job commitment? Results have shown that the relative influence of the two independent variables on the dependent variable. The extent to which each variables influence the prediction of workers' commitment is also shown on table 2 above. The result shows that social support and work environment have varying influence on the commitment of workers. This finding is consistent with Konousky & (ropanzano, (1999); and also tie in within that of previous studies: Elsenberger, fasolo & Davis Lamastro (1990) who concluded that employee who feel supported in workplace have been found to have higher level of employee commitment and are more likely to have higher levels of performance. This is also in tandem with Wayne, Shore and Hiden (1997) that a supportive work-culture can reduce employee street levels and increase employee commitment.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the result of the study, in an appropriate work environment where workers experience organisational and social support and are committed to their job, productivity will increase significantly and also concluded that the creation an environment in which employee have opportunities to discuss their progress and growth leads to positive emotions that can build intellectual resources at work, Friendships at work also appear to be vital and a key differential between successful and less successful work group.

Furthermore, the study concludes that the type of work environment in which employee operate determines the way in which such enterprises prosper as the quality of the employee's work environment impacts on their level of motivation, commitment and loyalty to their employer. Job commitment involves more than just company loyalty. It entails employees' intrinsically wanting to defend against criticism both internal and external.

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