



ASSESSING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS PREDICTING WORKERS' OUTPUT AMONG LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES IN OYO STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated job security, communication skills, interpersonal relationship and emotional intelligence as correlates of workers' output among local government employees in Oyo State. The research adopted descriptive design of an expose facto type. The research instruments used includes Workers' output scale, Emotional intelligence scale, Communication Skills Scale, Job Security and Interpersonal Relationship Assessment Scale, and were used to generate data from randomly selected two hundred and fifty (250) local government employees. The collected data were subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression Analysis. Results showed a statistical significant relationship between workers' output and each of the independent variables. The predictors jointly accounted for 19.1% variation in workers' output. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that periodic training on good interpersonal relationship, communication skills and emotional intelligence that will facilitate the attainment of organizational goals could be organized for all cadres of employees; organization are encouraged to train and develop their staff to the fullest advantage in order to enhance their effectiveness.

INTRODUCTION

In 21st Century, Organisational Psychologists (Perrin & Fulginiti 2005; Zwick, 2009) have directed increasing attention to the issue of workers' output and productivity (Leung, 2009; & Perrin & Fulginiti 2005; Zwick, 2009). These concerns reflect a growing interest in finding ways to make work more meaningful and satisfying to the workers. This rest on the belief that the organizational goals of high productivity and harmonious industrial relations are best achieved when the higher level needs of the human elements (workers) are satisfied.

Job security is a topic where the balance of benefits and costs are still relatively unknown. For example, employees with high job security may invest more in their companies out of loyalty or because they view their jobs as long term commitments. On the other hand, workers may take advantage of their job security and do as little work as possible. Job security can also be costly to the firm since dismissal of employees requires more time, effort, and compensation. Job security is something that can vary greatly depending on the economic climate. In times of economic growth, jobs are generally stable. However, in periods of recession, firms can easily dismiss employees to cut costs.

No job is safe in the contemporary society (Zwick, 2009). Workers are no more satisfied with their job. Some do not consider their job safe. Their commitment is low, just because they do not know what would happen next. This has posed more questions than answers. Certainly, some employees who lack requisite communication skills, acceptable interpersonal relationship, emotional intelligence and ability to think clearly and make good decisions would be at a disadvantage, also those who lack the skill to anticipate other peoples' reactions are also unable to recognize what they are doing wrong. The more incompetent people are at dealing and communicating with other people, the smarter they believe themselves to be (Dunning & Kruger, 2000).

Despite the widely acclaimed importance of communication to family relationships found in the writings of theoreticians and researchers (Leung, 2009; & Perrin & Fulginiti 2005; Zwick, 2009) alike, research into the nature of workplace communication presents some challenging difficulties.



One of the main difficulties is the complexity of organizational communication which presents a wide variety of aspects upon which researchers might focus.

Organizational management requires certain managerial skills for effectiveness and efficiency in resource utilization for results. In work organization across the world, workers' output, productivity, improved performance and competitive advantage had become issues of concern among the stakeholders. It has been argued invariably that job security and other correlates tend to foster effective utilization of organizational resources. However, it can be immediately ascertained whether workers' training programmes have a direct positive influence on job security, increased productivity and improved workers' performance among workers (Omole, 2003; Onimode, 2000; Olagunju, 2000)

Emotional intelligence is another variable that determines workers' output construct of this research work. People are motivated by the extent to which they are connected emotionally to their work. Emotionally intelligent individuals are "optimistic", a trait that enables them to focus on the resolution, rather than the reasoning. The work in any given organization imposes difficulties that may result in feelings of frustration. Thus, emotionally intelligent individuals would know not to hold organization responsible for every feeling of frustration. Thus, emotional intelligence is expected to augment a higher level of affective commitment to the organization and diminish the level of continuance commitment. The individual who develops accuracy in his or her own emotional perceptions and responses is also creating an increasingly reliable tool for judging the "hidden" factors in a situation. Developing emotional intelligence can certainly make it possible to develop warmer and more positive friendships with co-workers, but the benefits are equally important for work success. Emotional intelligence has a positive effect on work group cohesion, congruence between self and supervisor appraisals and individual employee performance and can prevent emotional, ethical and job conflicts from interfering with job satisfaction (Abraham, 1999).

Emotional intelligence includes both personal and social competence. In the personal realm, a person with emotional intelligence is self-aware, able to accurately assess his or her own strengths and limits and act in a self-confident way. This is a person who can control his or her emotions and keep destructive emotions in check. The social aspect of emotional intelligence involves an ability to accurately perceive and interpret the emotions of others, leading to an ability to develop healthy relationships. In both the personal and social realms, the emotionally intelligent person uses this information to guide his or her thinking and actions (Abraham, 1999).

For firms to maximize efficiency, it is important to know what institutions motivate workers to work hard. Job security is a topic where the balance of benefits and costs are still relatively unknown. For example, employees with high job security may invest more in their companies out of loyalty or because they view their jobs as long term commitments. On the other hand, workers may take advantage of their job security and do as little work as possible. Job security can also be costly to the firm since dismissal of employees requires more time, effort, and compensation. Job security is something that can vary greatly depending on the economic climate. In times of economic growth, jobs are generally stable.

Interpersonal relationship and Communication diversity are no doubt a fact of business life. No matter how skilled, prepared, motivated and responsible the individuals involved in a group, personality differences will always exist. Those differences lead to different ways of being skilled, prepared, motivated and responsible. Personality "difference" is not the same as personality



conflict, but differences can lead to misunderstanding and even conflict. Sometimes people think it is impolite to talk about differences honestly. (Your mother probably taught you not to point at kids who were “different.”) In other situations, people just don’t have the vocabulary to talk about differences productively. (You never learned any other way to describe “weird” people.) Either way, differences can get in the way of group work. If they can’t be discussed productively, they can easily turn into conflict. Everyone has the capacity to use a full range of behaviors, but over a lifetime of habit, practice and feedback, you will have learned to rely most of the time on a more limited set of behaviors. The best communicators in a work setting are not those with a particular style. Instead, they are the people who take the time to learn the preferences of others and to take each other’s strengths in a balance of diverse approaches. From the foregoing, this study sought to examine predicting variables like interpersonal relationship, job security, communication skills and emotional intelligence as correlates of workers’ output in some selected local governments in Oyo state, Nigeria.

Literature review

Job Security and Workers’ Output

Most empirical findings (Leung, 2009; Zwick, 2009) suggest that job security decreases employee effort. Ichino and Riphahn (2005) use data from 545 men and 313 women white collared workers and show that the number of days of absence per week increases significantly once employment protection is granted. One explanation of this can indeed be that job security results in more shirking. However, Ichino and Riphahn suggest two alternatives as well. One theory is that absenteeism increases over the first months because the worker has to learn what is acceptable in the firm. If work results in disutility, the worker will gradually learn how to work as little as possible.

Another explanation is that in earlier months, the workers ability is unobservable and his individual output is the gauge that a supervisor uses to learn about the workers ability. This would also lead to a pattern of high effort in early months that declines with tenure. Similarly, Engellandt and Riphahn (2004) that workers with temporary contracts provide more effort than permanent employees. One main result is that the probability of a temporary worker working unpaid overtime exceeds that of the permanent worker by 60%.¹

Communication Skills and Workers’ Output

Empirical evidence exists to establish that communication skills are useful in problem recognition and framing among decision makers (Jacobs, 2006). In the same vein, Tansky, 2001 reported that employees often implement solutions to problems that may or may not exist or that are of an unclear nature using communication skills. In some instances, decision makers cannot even articulate what it is they are, or were, trying accomplish by engaging in some action. In line with Johnson (2003) observation that problem analysis is one of the greatest deficiencies decision makers commonly display, Meyer & Herscovitch (2001) identified inadequate problem recognition and analysis as a variable distinguishing effective decision-making groups from ineffective decision-making groups. This finding was consistent with one in earlier research by Meyer and Smith (2001).

Bauer et al, (2007) cited a great deal of laboratory evidence suggesting that framing can determine how conservative or risky individuals or groups are apt to be in making certain kinds of choices and, in the process, act counter to their best interests. Matters framed in terms of losses, for instance, can lead to unduly risky decisions, whereas ones framed in terms of gains often result in excessively conservative choices. Apparently, we are frequently willing to



take considerable risks to avoid losses but are reluctant to taken chances if that means foregoing a sure gain, as in the case of one's accepting a firm job offer even when there is a high likelihood that a much better opportunity is in the offing.

Interpersonal Relationship and Workers' Output

The relationship between work outcome and interpersonal relationship has been compared to that between resource stock and resource flow in organisations, in that social capital can be regarded as an accumulated asset, while interpersonal skill is one of the key factors that determine the value of this asset (Baron and Markman, 2000). Entrepreneurs who possess high levels of interpersonal skill have advantages in a range of areas, such as obtaining funding, attracting quality employees, maintaining good relationships with co-founders of the business, and producing better results from customers and suppliers (Barret, 2006). Not surprisingly, therefore, workers with good interpersonal relationship skills have been shown to be upwardly mobile and more likely to receive pay raises and gain promotions (Beebe, Beebe & Redmond, 2002). Likewise, in health care, the importance for professionals of having a 'good interpersonal relationship' has long been realised.

Similarly, Rider and Keefer (2006) as well as Tallman (2007) have shown that high levels of practitioner interpersonal skill are positively correlated with increases in the quality of care and effective health outcomes, while ineffective skills are associated with decreased patient satisfaction and increased medication errors and malpractice claims. These findings are corroborated in the field of nursing, where effective interpersonal communication has been shown to be related to improved health outcomes, such as greater patient satisfaction and quality of life (Laschiger, Finegan, Shamian & Casier, 2000). Similar findings recur across professions. Thus, in teaching, interpersonal relationship and skills have been shown to be critical for optimum classroom performance (Laschiger, Finegan, Shamian & Casier, 2000).

Emotional Intelligence and Workers' Output

Koman & Wolff in some research between 81 teams in military organizations investigated the relation between emotional intelligence of group leaders and the amount of organizational intelligence in group level. In this research, also, the effect of group emotional intelligence on the group functionality was investigated. In fact, in this survey the group emotional intelligence is considered as interfering variable. The results of this research showed that the group emotional intelligence has completely positive relation with the leader emotional intelligence and also there is some positive relation between group emotional intelligence and functionality (Meyer, 1997). In some study, Tett & Burnett (2003) investigated the short-time and long-time training on the amount of emotional intelligence. The results in his study showed that the long-time training plan (in this study, 13 weeks) could improve the emotional intelligence, significantly (Tett & Burnett, 2003).

A growing research literature suggests that EI may play a far more important role in career success and job performance than general intelligence (cognitive ability). A recent meta-analysis of 69 independent studies explored the predictive validity of emotional intelligence with diverse job performance outcomes (Viswesvaran, 2001). Results suggested diverse measures of EI correlated with job performance and with general mental ability.

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between the independent variables and workers' output
2. There is no significant joint effect of the independent variables on the workers' output



3. There is no significant relative effect of each of the independent variables on workers' output

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive design. Since the variables under investigation have already occurred or being present in the participants prior to the study. The main thrust of the study is to examine job security, communication skills, interpersonal relationship and emotional intelligence as correlates of workers' output.

Population

The population for this study comprised of employees from Atiba local government Area of Oyo state.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The researchers randomly selected 250 participants from Atiba Local Government area in Oyo State. The technique adopted for selection of the sample was stratified random sampling. A representation of employees of Local government in Oyo was done in stages. The first stage identified the selection of unit or department in the study area. The next stage, the researcher sought opinion for participation in the study.

Instrumentations

The research instrument that was used for this study was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was used for the collection of data which was centered on the subject matter from respondents who in this case are local government employees. The entire questionnaire was divided into six sections labeled sections A, B, C, D, E and F.

Section B: Workers' Output Scale

Workers' output scale was adapted and was developed by Antikainen & Antti Lönnqvist, (2007). The instrument consists of 30 items. Examples of items from the scale are: "My work includes tasks, in which I cannot exploit previous experiences or my competences", "I am not rewarded enough for the work I do". A five point Likert scale was used to measure ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. It is used to measure employee's commitment to the Local Government. The initial reliability coefficient of the original scale was 0.86. This was gotten through a pilot study on 37 employees with high response rate. The researcher carried out a pilot study on 40 employees, the reliability analysis reported the internal consistency of the items and inter-item correlation. The reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) established by the researcher was 0.82. This was observed through a pilot study on 50 respondents.

Section C Emotional intelligence scale

The Emotional Intelligence scale was developed by Schutte et al (1998) and was used as a measure for emotional intelligence in this study. The scale comprises of 33 items structured in a 5-point response format ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Samples of items on the scale are: "I know when to speak about my personal problems to others", "By looking at the facial expressions"; "I recognize the emotions people are experiencing". Schulte et'al reported internal consistency ($\alpha=0.90$) and test-retest reliability ($r= 0.78$) for the scale when administered



to adults. Furthermore, the instrument demonstrated predictive and discriminant validity (Schutte et.al., 1998). The scale was also pilot tested by the researcher and the reliability coefficient value obtained from this scale was 0.84.

Section D: Communication skills Questionnaire

Communication skills questionnaire was developed by the researcher. It was used to measure employee's communication skills in local government. This instrument consists of 11 items and all items were rated on a five point likert scale, namely 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=undecided, 4=agree, 5=strongly disagree. A sample item is "I am not afraid to ask question when I do not understand something". The scale was pilot tested and subjected to reliability analysis, the Cronbach Alpha was 0.81 This depicts a high internal consistency in accordance with the rule of thumb.

Section E: Job Security Assessment Scale (JOSAS)

The job security scale was developed by the researcher. The instrument consists of 11 items which are expected to measure employees' opinion about the security or insecurity of their job. Samples of items from the scale are "There are uncertainties surrounding my present job", "This organization's promotion policies are fair to both men and women". Each question is scored on a five likert scale ranging from 1(strongly disagree) to 5(strongly agree).The reliability coefficient value obtained from the scale was 0.76

Section F: Interpersonal Relationship Assessment Scale (IRAS)

The interpersonal relationship scale was developed by the researcher and was designed to measure employee's interpersonal relationship in the local government and consists of 11 items, samples are "I am very committed to maintaining relationship in my workplace", "I feel like being encouraging and supportive to this person when he/she is unhappy". A five point scale was employed ranging from 1(strongly disagree) to 5(strongly agree). Scores on the 11 items were average to yield a summary, score reflecting interpersonal relationship. The internal consistency for the interpersonal relationship questionnaire was 0.79

Method of Data Analysis

The data were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and multiple linear regression to test the statement of hypotheses stated earlier at 0.05 significant level of significance.



RESULTS

There is no significant relationship between the independent variables and workers’ output

Table 1: Mean, Standard Deviation and Inter Correlation Matrix of the Independent and Dependent Variables.

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	1	2	3	4	5
Workers output	22.19	8.26	1.000				
Emotional intelligence	26.62	10.08	.410**	1.000			
Job security	26.21	12.81	.248**	.032*	1.000		
Interpersonal relationship	23.51	7.05	.166**	.502*	-.028	1.000	
Communication skills	31.49	14.52	-.213**	-.145*	-.183*	-.006	1.000

In table 1 above, the inter-correlation matrix of the independent variables (emotional intelligence, job security, interpersonal relationship and communication skills) and dependent variable (workers’ output) scores are computed. From the table, workers’ output is positively correlated with emotional intelligence ($r=.410$, $P<0.05$), job security ($r=.248$, $P<0.05$), and interpersonal relationship ($r=.166$, $P<0.05$). However workers’ output has negative relationship with communication skills ($r= -.213$, $P<0.05$).

Research question 2

There is no significant joint effect of the independent variables on the workers’ output?

Table 2 Multiple regression showing the joint contributions of the independent variables to the prediction of workers’ output

Model R = .452 ^a R Square = .204 Adjusted R Square = .191 Std. Error of the Estimate = 7.431						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3446.189	4	861.547	15.601	.000 ^a
	Residual	13419.279	243	55.223		
	Total	16865.468	247			

Table 2 above revealed the combine contribution of the independent variables in the prediction of workers’ output. $F(4/247) = 15.601$, $P < 0.05$). The result yielded a coefficient of multiple regression R of 0.452 and R square = 0.204 which implies that the five independent variables jointly accounted for 19.1% ($Adj. R^2 = 0.191$) of the variation in workers’ output.

Research question 3

There is no significant relative effect of each of the independent variables on workers' output?

Table 3. Multiple regression showing the relative contributions of each of the independent variables to the prediction of workers' output

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	15.371	2.281		6.740	.000
	Emotional intelligence	.301	.058	.367	5.195	.000
	Job security	.073	.040	.113	1.836	.068
	Interpersonal relationship	-.026	.079	-.022	-.326	.745
	Communication skills	-.079	.033	-.139	-2.376	.018

Table 3 above revealed the relative contributions of the four independent variables to the prediction of workers' output. The result showed that the potent factors in the prediction of workers' output are emotional intelligence ($\beta = 0.367$, $t = 5.195$ $P < 0.05$), communication skills ($\beta = -0.139$, $t = -2.376$ $P < 0.05$), the table further showed that job security ($\beta = 0.113$, $t = 1.836$ $P > 0.05$) and Interpersonal relationship ($\beta = -0.022$, $t = -0.326$ $P > 0.05$) were found not to predict workers' output

DISCUSSION

Research Hypothesis one

The first research hypothesis was stated to test for statistical relationship between the independent variables and workers' output. It was found that a statistical and positive relationship exist between workers' output and each of job security, interpersonal relationship, communication skills, and emotional intelligence. The implication of this is workers' output is being influenced by emotional intelligence, job security, interpersonal relationship and communication skills. A worker who is emotionally intelligent, who is more secured and has good interpersonal relationship and communication skill would produce better output than others who lack these variables. This finding shows that organizations could have to ensure an emotionally intelligent workplace, provide conducive ground for proper communication that could enhance output and create an organisational outlook that would ensure job security. The result of the present study corroborate that of Meyer, Salovey & Caruso, (2007); Brunnetto & Farr-Wharton, (2004) who found that emotional intelligence and proper communication skills are positively correlated with job performance and productivity. In the same vein, Smith (2009) Tensteps, (2001) also found a significant relationship between interpersonal relationship and workers' output and productivity.

Similarly, communication skills was found to have significant relationship with worker' output. It has been established in literature that proper communication in the workplace enhances efficiency and effectiveness of workers and organization. The result of the present study is in line with that of Manion (2004) who also found a positive relationship between communication skills and workers; output. Regarding the relationship between job security and workers' output, the



corroborating study was that of Leung (2009) who found that job security had negative relationship with turnover intention and positive relationship with worker's output. In this study a significant positive relationship was found between each of the independent variables and workers' output

Research Hypothesis two

The second research hypothesis was posited to examine the joint contributions of independent variables to the prediction of workers' output. It was found that the four independent variables jointly predict and contributed largely to the predictions of workers' output. The predictor accounted for 19.1% variation in the prediction of workers' output. The remaining percentage could be explained with respect to some extraneous factors that were not considered in this study. The reason could be that workers' output is being informed by a conglomeration of factors resident in both the employees and the organization. This result is in line with Ramsey, Scholaris, Harley, (2000) who found that high performance workers in the organization can be explained with factors like teamwork, work climate, emotional intelligence, pattern of communication and group interpersonal relationship. In the same vein, Murphy (1989) ascertained that a set of behaviour which is individual interpersonal relationship, job security, proper communication skills and emotional intelligence that are relevant to the goals of organisation or organizational unit in which a person works remain a primary concern for improving workers' performance. The result of the present study is in line with that of Pierce & Gardner (2004) who also found positive contribution of the independent variables to the predictions of workers' performance.

Research Hypothesis three

The purpose of this research hypothesis was to examine the relative contributions of each of the independent variables to the prediction of workers' output in an organisation. There was significant relative contribution of each of emotional intelligence, communication skills were potent predictors of worker' output. The duo of job security and Interpersonal relationship were not potent predictors on workers' output. An emotionally intelligent workplace where communication is properly done, the two could be great ingredients for workers' output. Job security and interpersonal relationship were positively correlated with workers' output, but were not potent predictors of worker' output. Leung (2009) in their own view maintained that job security contributed to the prediction of workers' output in an organization that workers' with temporary contracts provide more than permanent employees. One main result is that the probability of temporary worker working unpaid overtime exceed that of the permanent worker by 60%. Barrett (2006) supported the notion that interpersonal relationship contributed to the prediction of workers output when entrepreneurs who possess high level of interpersonal relationship skill have advantages in a range of areas, such as obtaining funding, attracting quality employees and maintaining good relationship within the organization. The result of the present study is in line with that of Viswesvanran (2001) who also found a predictive validity of emotional intelligence with diverse job performance outcome. In the same vein, Davies, Stankov & Robert (1998) maintained that emotional intelligence is related to the life event and helps the people to understand and predict the different daily aspect which supported that emotional intelligence relative contributed to the prediction of workers' output in an organization.

Conclusion

The relationship between emotional intelligence, job security, interpersonal relationship and communication skills has been established in this study. The importance of emotional intelligence in the organisation cannot be overstressed. Employees' patterns of communication and the mechanisms of their interpersonal relationship should be the watchword of organisations. All these factors have been given credence in the study of organisational behaviour. Job security



and interpersonal relationship cannot lead to efficiency if the role of communication and emotion are overlooked. The combination of these four variables can have far reaching effects on organisations and the employees.

Recommendations

Emotional intelligence and proper communication patterns have been identified by various scholars to be very crucial to an organization and its effectiveness. In the light of the above, organizations are therefore encouraged to train and develop their staff to the fullest advantage in order to enhance their effectiveness.

Communication in the organisation should have clear specifications, every tom, dick and harry must be able to understand the message of organisation. There must be clear-cut processes through which bosses communicate to the employees, employees communicate within themselves.

Human Resource Managers should try to create an enabling environment for the employees so as to feel secured regarding the prospects of their job.

Periodic Training on good interpersonal relationship that is capable of facilitating the attainment of organisational goals could be organized for all cadres of employees. As training reduces the work of the manager in terms of close supervision it also improves the drive, initiative and quality of work of the employees thus assist them to be more committed to achieving the goals and objectives of the organization and this has the tendency of enhancing effectiveness among workers within the organization.

However, for any organization to succeed, training and re-training of all staff in form of workshops, conferences and seminars should be vigorously pursued and made compulsory. Organisations should also employ various motivational strategies so as to ensure efficiency and productivity among employees. Organisations should strive to create an emotionally intelligent workplace.

Human Resource Managers should engage, meaningfully, workers in some decision making processes in the organisation.

Suggestion for Further Research

Further research should be carried out using larger samples that will cover wider area should be carried out. This is to ensure research into the perception of organizational characteristics should also examine other correlates of workers' output and other variables. Second, it is important to carry out this study using other tiers of government (State and Federal) so as to ascertain the predictors of workers' output and productivity among government employees at all level. This research can be become more conceptualized if it is carried out using other public and government's institutions and parastatals.

Implications of the Findings

The implication of this to the organisation depicts that when workers understand the dynamism in the emotional emissions of their colleagues, communicate properly with the organisation and within themselves, have meaningful interpersonal relationship and feel secured with the prospects of their job, employees tend to give their best for the organisation.

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