



**ORGANIZATIONAL TRUST AND WORKPLACE HARMONY: EVIDENCE FROM WHITE DIAMOND SALT LIMITED
AND NATIONAL SALT COMPANY OF NIGERIA, PORT HARCOURT**

Tambari, J. C.

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Tambari, J. C.

Department of Management, Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Port Harcourt [UNIPORT], Choba, Rivers State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The issue of workplace harmony has been a central factor with regard to organizational performance, member cooperation and success. This study examined the relationship between organizational trust and workplace harmony in fast moving consumer goods companies in Port Harcourt. The study adopted the cross sectional survey design and data was collected from a sample of 225 participants drawn from White Diamond Salt Ltd and National Salt Company of Nigeria in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation with the aid of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. The findings supported significant associations between the dimensions of organizational trust namely; concern for employees and openness; and the criterion variable, workplace harmony measures, namely; compatibility and cooperation. In conclusion the study proposed an open management system that is central to employees' welfare as this would enhance work compatibility and cooperation.

Keywords: *Compatibility, concern for employees, cooperation, openness, organizational trust, workplace harmony.*

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INTRODUCTION

Organizational trust is a discrete but concretizing process with behaviours of individuals in an organizational structure in a feeling of accuracy, belief, commitment and sincerity to each other (Arsla, 2009). For “organizational trust, employees take a great leap of faith for the present and future state of their organization” (p. 13) and convey their job surrounded by these perspectives. “In turn, this trust helps in increasing job satisfaction, productivity and performance” (Akdere, Gider & Top, 2012: 17). Organizational trust likewise is a corporation's eagerness, in view of its culture and correspondence practices in relationship and exchanges, to be approximately vulnerable, in light of the conviction that another individual, group or corporation is competent, transparent, concerned, trustworthy, and related to shared objectives, standards and qualities (Zalabak & Ellis, 2003).

The absolute most significant elements that might be instrumental in carrying accomplishment to organizations under today's competitive conditions are the assets the organizations have and the utilization of these assets in a proficient way. One of these assets, the human resources, is the most significant capital and contribution for the organizations. Workers that are satisfied with what they do, trust the workplace as far as confiding in the administration, trust their companions and trust in the corporation are increasingly proficient in taking the corporation to its points and targets. For organizations with continually developing situations where vulnerability and hazard are high, the trust the workers have towards the corporation turns out to be considerably more important as this would shield them from questioning their administration during the hours of vulnerability (Yildirim *et al.*, 2012). Trust is a part of a wide range of connections and it is an idea that keeps individuals together and instigates the feeling of fulfillment (Ulker, 2008). Trust speaks to that uplifting desire for an individual from other

individuals around them since it is a concept which is considered by everybody at all phases of life both from their very own and from different purposes of perspectives and at its most enveloping depiction that relies upon trustworthiness and trustfulness (Citir and Kavi, 2010). Driscoll (1978) demonstrates that trust is a key variable in assessing singular conduct while Schoorman, Mayer, and Davis (2007), depicts trust as readiness to "take a risk and proceed to show that the degree of trust is an indication of the amount of risk required to be taken" (p. 45).

From multiple points of view, Emerson's statement catches the quintessence and elements of trust in relationships. Trust is broadly viewed as fundamental, if not adequate, condition for a fruitful relationship (Fletcher, Simpson, and Thomas, 2006). Significant questions remain, be that as it may, about trust is so basic and what should be possible to create trust in relationships. Emerson's statement suggests the significance of relationship treatment and the standard of correspondence as the main impetus for trust building. Without a doubt, the significance of "treating others greatly" is an adage, yet shockingly little is thought about what this really involves. That is, what type of treatment is promptly converted into trust. Trust is predominantly the “social lubricant that promotes cooperation between group members, sustains social order and permits beneficial long-term exchanges that otherwise might not occur” (Simpson, 2007:8). The challenges of modern day business are the increased awareness on the part of employees about their rights and privileges. Izidor (2015) asserts that the rise in this awareness has become a pain in the neck of growing management to such concerns that it attempts to diminish the glory of capitalistic mindedness that once bestride the pathway to managing the colossus.

Workplace harmony in most organization seems to be affected by this development that the frequency of management – employee's conflict is fast-rising among organization. These types of conflict prevent

the existence of workplace harmony which reflects a state of organizational instability (Sayles and Strauss, 2009). The workplace context had for decades been embattled in the demands for increased concern on issue that relate to employer – employee relationships which is a form of motivation (Akinwade, 2011). Workplace harmony thus covers the area of responsibilities, employment policy, collective bargaining, communication and consultation (Odia & Omofonmwan, 2007). Workplace harmony enhances labour productivity and in turn improves performance in our banking sector, achieving economic growth, and enhancing living standard and quality of life. It creates a peaceful working environment conducive to tolerance, dialogue and other alternative means of resolving industrial or labour dispute in Nigeria such as negotiation, mediation, arbitration, conciliation and utilization. This creates a high level of employee satisfaction. Workplace harmony refers to a friendly and cooperation agreement on working relationship between employers and employees for their mutual benefit (Otobo, 2005; Osad and Osas, 2013).

Fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) in Nigeria is in the state of hyper competition due to proliferation of brands in various categories. Today, there are many

fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies and products. FMCG is an important segment of the retail sector of the Nigeria economy. However, studies available indicate that their performance has not been impressive. Rapid changes in technology, shortened product life cycles, increased competitions owing to reduced barriers to international trade and globalization (Olmac, 1985) have all contributed to the need for the companies to have distinctive capabilities or core-competence, which when successfully applied to the companies’ markets become competitive advantages (kay, 1983). Many a time, most organizations do not achieve the level of marketing performance that will yield rents for them, hence some organizations experience sub-optimal or even out-right poor marketing performance. These high levels of competition has resulted in an increased degree of responsibilities for the employees in FMCG companies, and as such, may lead to display of varying behaviours in relation to their organizational demands. However, this paper examined the influence of organizational trust on workplace harmony, using two fast moving consumer goods companies, White Diamond Salt Ltd. and National Salt Company of Nigeria both in Port Harcourt as hypothesized and conceptualized below;

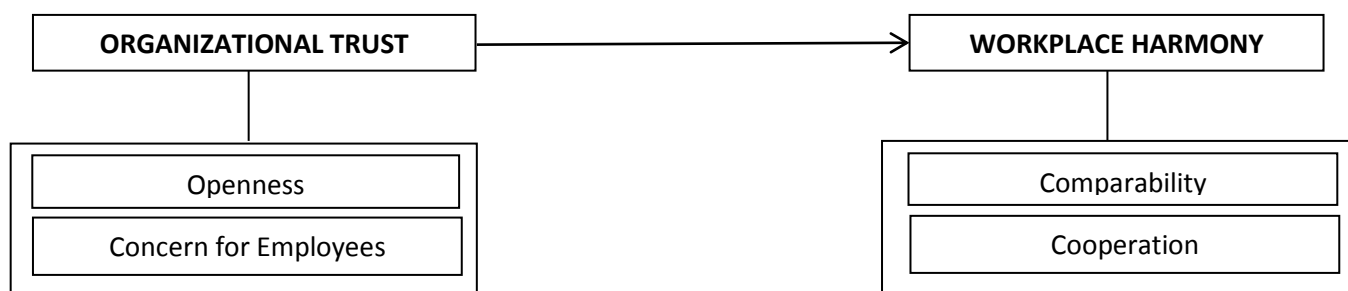


Figure 1: Conceptual framework for the relationship between organizational trust and workplace harmony

Source: Research Desk

Research Hypotheses

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between openness and compatibility in FMCG companies in Port Harcourt.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between openness and cooperation in FMCG companies in Port Harcourt.

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between concern for employees and compatibility in FMCG companies in Port Harcourt.

Ho₄: There is no significant relationship between concern for employees and cooperation in FMCG companies in Port Harcourt.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Organizational Trust

Organizational trust refers to "the positive expectations individuals have about the competence, reliability and benevolence of organizational members, as well as the institutional trust within the organization" (Ellonen et al., 2008). Definition of organizational trust particularly touches on the expectation or belief that organization (colleague, leader, and institution) will act predictably and not be entirely in their own interests (Chen et al., 2015). Research on trust has identified both the interpersonal and impersonal types of organizational trust (Ellonen et al., 2008). The interpersonal trust could be divided into two dimensions. First, lateral trust refers to "trusting" relationship with co-workers. While second, vertical trust concern to "trusting" relationship between employees and leaders (Ellonen et al., 2008; Nikolaou et al., 2011). The other type of organizational trust is the institutional trust which could be characterized as "the trust of its members in the organization's vision and strategy, its technological and commercial competence, its fair processes and structures, as well as its human resources policies" (Ellonen et al., 2008; Nikolaou et al., 2011). Organizational trust gives a positive emotional exchange between an organization and its employees (Chen et al., 2015).

Organizational Concern for Employees

Concern for employees and stakeholders was about interchanges and human asset the executives rehearses (Shockley-Zalabak et al., 2010). Concern was about given workers voice and following up on their needs and concern (Shockley-Zalabak et al.,

2010). An eagerness to impart normally, tune in and follow up on representatives thought was significant for the concern measurement of trust (Shockley-Zalabak et al., 2010). Workers expected to accept that their manager and the executives were worried about their own prosperity (Shockley-Zalabak et al., 2010). Craig and Silverstone (2010), found that representatives who accepted that their bosses thought about their prosperity were multiple times bound to be exceptionally occupied with their work. Human asset approaches and practices ought to mirror the prosperity and worry for workers. Such arrangements and practices incorporate wellbeing, work-life parity, remuneration and advantages, preparing and profession advancement (Shockley-Zalabak et al., 2010). Bergeiel, Nguyen, Clenney and Taylor (2009), saw that notwithstanding the high monetary expenses of turnover, social structures were upset and duty was diminished for the rest of the workers. Concern for workers, a component of organizational trust, was found to identify with administrator support. A worker's fit was related with the representative's solace with the association (Bergeiel, Nguyen, Clennery, and Taylor, 2009). The better the fit, the more the representative related to the association. Organizational justice, a human asset practice, was likewise a significant supporter of the component of concern. The capacity of representatives to voice their worries securely and feel that the authoritative procedures were reasonable may add to bring down degrees of terrorizing (Wells and Peachey, 2011).

Organizational Openness

As indicated by Shockley-Zalabak et al., (2010), the element of openness was identified with open interchanges about worker and authoritative issues, useful clash, and association of representatives in work related choices. The executives that gave data about occupation execution, kept confidences, shared major authoritative choices and methodology, and imparted the effect to the worker showed practices

of transparency (Shockley-Zalabak et al., 2010). Shockley-Zalabak et al., (2010), found that over 80% of studied associations related low in respectable administration correspondences. The executives must be clear about desires and expectations identifying with work execution, client effect and business when all is said in done (Shockley-Zalabak et al., 2010). As per Whittington and Galpin (2010), numerous pioneers focused on making a picture and shutting themselves off, as opposed to opening themselves up to other people. Distrust was the consequence of this conduct and eventually negatively affected the association (Whittington and Galpin, 2010). To construct trust, a pioneer was seen as being legitimate (Whittington and Galpin, 2010). Openness permitted the pioneer the chance to face the hole among planned and saw correspondence (Whittington and Galpin, 2010).

The Concept of Workplace Harmony

Workplace harmony refers to a friendly and cooperative agreement on working relationship between employers and employees for their mutual benefit (Otobo, 2005; Osad and Osas, 2013). Puttapalli and Vuran (2012:23) "workplace harmony is concerned with the relationship between management and employees with respect to the terms and conditions of employment and the work place". In effect, it is a situation where employees and management cooperate willingly in pursuit of the organization's aims and objectives. "Healthy organization is expected to generate complete harmony in working relationships, loyalty and common commitment to the goals and objectives of the organization" (p. 25). Drucker (1998:47) posited "that any business enterprise must build a true team and weld individual effort into a common effort". "Each member of the enterprise contributes something different but they must all contribute towards a common organizational goal" (p. 28). Laden (2012), is of the opinion that maintaining harmonious relationship in organizations require conditions that

promote an aura of friendliness and cooperation between employers and employees. This type of work environment further promotes mutual benefits which some organizational experts have referred to as a win-win situation. According to Puttapalli and Vuran (2012:35), "organizational harmony emerges when relationship between management and employees rests on the principle of respect for the terms and conditions of employment and the general well-being of the workplace". "It is possible to aggregate some key indicators that promote workplace harmony in organization" (p. 35). "These are employment policy underpinning terms and conditions of work, collective bargaining, communication and industrial democracy" (p. 36). Furthermore, "no matter how this is viewed, workplace harmony enhances labour productivity and in turn improves performance in organizations, achieving economic growth and enhancing living standards and quality of life" (p. 36).

Cooperation

"Cooperation is defined as the direct interaction between at least two equal parties who voluntarily engage in shared decision-making as they work toward a common goal"(Cook & Friend, 1991:45). Also, cooperation has been "defined as a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more workers to achieve a common goal" (Mattessich, Murray-Close, & Monsey, 2001:38). Cooperative work practices are ones that support the act of working together on a joint project or purpose between typically associated and non-associated groups to increase organizational achievement. This can be both rewarding and challenging especially for workers (Ainscow, 2006). Cooperation has been argued to present challenges as well as rewards (Hibbert & Huxham, 2010). The work of cooperation is complicated and can in different situations give different results. It is important to look to tradition, structures and processes when defining cooperative relationships (Hibbert & Huxham, 2010). In addition, cooperative goals become complex when addressing

the congruence and diversity of cooperative groups (Vangen & Huxham, 2011). This complexity has the opportunity to bring synergetic gains to the cooperative organizations and parties, but is also contingent on understanding cooperation as a continuum and not as a static event.

Compatibility

Two historical definitions of compatibility include the one by Festinger (1950:34), who defines “compatibility as the resultant of all the forces acting on members to remain in the group” and the one by Gross and Martin (1952:91), “who refer to it as the resistance of the group to disruptive forces”. “These two definitions highlight why such inconsistency exists as the two definitions are do different to each other” (p. 25). Contemporary researchers have offered other brief definitions. “Compatibility has been defined in the recent literature as the ‘stick-togetherness’ of the group” (Guzzo & Dickson, 1996:38; Salisbury, Parent, & Chin, 2008:45); “the desire of group members to stay together as a group” (Banki, 2010:21); “how individual members of a team relate and work together as a unit” (Aoyagi, Cox, & McGuire, 2008:51).

METHODOLOGY

This study was based on a sample size of 225 workers from White Diamond Salt Ltd and National Salt

Openness and Compatibility

Table 1: Correlations between openness and compatibility

			Openness	Compatibility
Spearman's rho	Openness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.780**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.002
		N	225	225
	Compatibility	Correlation Coefficient	.780**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.
		N	225	225

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Research Data, 2019

Company of Nigeria in Port Harcourt. The paper adapted the survey research design, and the random sampling technique was used. Each of the understudied 2 companies was sent a pre-designed questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of questions measuring openness, concern for employees, compatibility and cooperation on a 5-point Likert scale, showing the level of perceptions with the content of each item. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the spearman rank order correlation with the aid of the statistical package for the social sciences.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Test of hypotheses were carried out using the Spearman’s rank correlation at a 95% confidence interval. We have based on the statistic of Spearman’s rank correlation to carry out the analysis. The level of significance 0.05 is adopted as a criterion for the probability of accepting the null hypothesis in ($p > 0.05$) or rejecting the null hypothesis in ($p < 0.05$). The essence is to analyze how one dimension relates to another measure. There was analysis of all the dimensions (openness and concern for employees) with each of the measures (compatibility and cooperation) respectively.

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between openness and compatibility in FMCG companies in Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

The above table showed a positive and significant relationship between openness and compatibility with a rho value of 0.780.

This indicated that there is a 78.0% explanation of the relationship between both variables, while 22.0% are

explained by other variables not considered in this relationship. However, this statement is true as the level of significance of 0.002 is less than 0.05, therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and its alternative form accepted. This states that there is significant relationship between openness and compatibility in FMCG companies in Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

Openness and Cooperation

Table 2: Correlations for procedural and concern for employees

			Openness	Cooperation
Spearman's rho	Openness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.824**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	225	225
	Cooperation	Correlation Coefficient	.824**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	225	225

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Research Data, 2019

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between openness and cooperation in FMCG companies in Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

The above table showed a positive and significant relationship between openness and cooperation with a rho value of 0.824.

This indicated that 82.4% explanation of the relationship between both variables, while 17.6%

were explained by other variables not considered in this relationship. However, this statement is true as the level of significance of 0.000 was lesser than 0.05, therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, and its alternative form accepted. This states that there is significant relationship between openness and cooperation in FMCG companies in Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

Concern for Employees and Compatibility

Table 3: Correlations for concern for employees and compatibility

			Concern_Em	Compatibility
Spearman's rho	Concern Em	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.747**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	225	225
	Compatibility	Correlation Coefficient	.747**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	225	225

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Research Data, 2019.

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between concern for employees and compatibility in FMCG companies in Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

The above table showed a positive and significant relationship between concern for employees and compatibility with a rho value of 0.747. This indicated that there is a 74.7% explanation of the relationship between both variables, while 25.3% were explained

by other variables not considered in this relationship. However, this statement is true as the level of significance of 0.000 was lesser than 0.05, therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, and its alternative form accepted. This states that there is significant relationship between concern for employees and compatibility in FMCG companies in Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

Concern for Employees and Cooperation

Table 4: Correlations for concern for employees and cooperation

Correlations			Concern_Em	Cooperation
Spearman's rho	Concern_Em	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.733**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.003
		N	225	225
	Cooperation	Correlation Coefficient	.733**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.
		N	225	225

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Research Data, 2019

Ho₄: There is no significant relationship between concern for employees and cooperation in FMCG companies in Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

The above table showed a positive and significant relationship between concern for employees and cooperation with a rho value of 0.733. This indicated that there was a 73.3% explanation of the relationship between both variables, while 26.7% are explained by other variables not considered in this relationship. However, this statement is true as the level of significance of 0.003 was lesser than 0.05, therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, and its alternative form accepted. This states that there is significant relationship between concern for employees and cooperation in FMCG companies in Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

and workplace harmony in fast moving consumer goods companies in Port Harcourt. This finding was in line with the views of Chen *et al.* (2015) that organizational trust gives a positive emotional exchange between an organization and its employees. Shockley-Zalabak et al., (2010), found that over 80% of studied associations related low in respectable administration correspondences.

The executives must be clear about desires and expectations identifying with work execution, client effect and business when all is said in done (Shockley-Zalabak et al., 2010). As per Whittington and Galpin (2010), numerous pioneers focused on making a picture and shutting themselves off, as opposed to opening themselves up to other people. Distrust was the consequence of this conduct and eventually negatively affected the association (Whittington and Galpin, 2010).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The test of hypotheses revealed that there is a significant relationship between organizational trust

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study aimed to demonstrate the role of organizational trust and workplace harmony in the organization. For this, we had a fourfold purpose; we tested and confirmed the four hypotheses, namely: the positive effect of openness on compatibility (H1); the positive effect of openness on cooperation (H2), the positive influence of concern for employees on compatibility (H3), and the positive influence of concern for employees on cooperation (H4). The four hypotheses of the study were confirmed, that is, the

results suggested a highly significant and positive influence of organizational trust on workplace harmony. Therefore, from the proposed conceptualization tested, we concluded that organizational trust positively and significantly influences workplace harmony in FMCG companies in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. In conclusion the study proposed an open management system that is central to employees' welfare as this would enhance work compatibility and cooperation.

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