ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT AND JOB MOBILITY IN TELECOMMUNICATION COMPANIES IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to ascertain the relationship between organizational support and job mobility in telecommunication companies in Rivers State. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey in its investigation of the variables. Primary data was generated through self-administered questionnaire. The population for the study was 231 employees of four (4) registered GSM Mobile Telecommunication Commission in Rivers State. The entire population was used as census hence sapling was not adopted. 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's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 23.0. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance. The study findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between organizational support and job mobility in telecommunication companies in Rivers State. The study recommended that employees assistance programs should be implemented by management of telecommunication companies as part of organizational support aim at reducing employees work and other related stress, this would go a long way in making employees to be continually committed to their job and organization.

Keywords: Organizational Support, Job Mobility, Telecommunication Companies

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INTRODUCTION

It is not just important for employees to work faithfully and independently at their place of work but they also need to be committed to the organisation if both parties want to survive in the competitive market. John and Elyse (2010) found that employees have to think on their feet and work like they were working for their own companies even if they work in teams. They have to prove that they are worthy if they want to be part of a successful organisation which provides opportunity for growth and development for its employees and for their employment to be secured. Committed employees play a major role in the organisations business and its competitiveness making them the greatest assets an organisation can have. Hurter (2008) argues that high levels of commitment lead to improvements in the organisation, through performances cost effectiveness participation of employees. Committed employees enhance an organisation because they feel like part of a team; they have a sense of belonging in the organisation, therefore enjoy their jobs. Organisational support is said to influence employees" participation, commitment of employees to the organisation and the levels of turnover

Organisational support has been defined by Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison and Sowa (1986) as "employees in an organisation from global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organisation values their contributions and cares about their well-being". Organisational support is also defined as "how much the organisation values employees" contribution and cares about them" Allen, Armstrong, Reid and Riemenschneider (2008). Organisational support increases the employees" duty to assist the organisation to reach its goals with the skills they are equipped with and this performance is rewarded by the organisation. A behavioral outcome of organisational support includes increase of employees" performance and decreases behaviours such as absenteeism and employee turnover.

Organisational support and how this support is perceived by the employee has an important role on whether the employee will trust and show commitment to their organisation. Characteristics of the supportive organisation are focused on different aspects of the organisation and the employees. According to Ozdevecioglu (2003), a supportive organisation focuses on encouraging employees" creativity, working conditions, communication with the organisation, justice and praising employees. In addition, as Seluk (2003) pointed out, supportive organisation also focuses on acknowledging the employee, valuing and caring about the employee, creating an honest environment, and volunteering and consistency in organisational policies and activities. Characteristics of supportive organisations can be summarized as, supporting employees creativity and encouraging them in this regard, valuing employees, giving rewards to employees, trying to have positive communication within the organisation, being fair, building trust in the organisation, doing organisational jobs and activities willingly, being consistent about organisational policies and activities. This study therefore examined the relationship between organizational support and job mobility in telecommunication companies in Rivers State. Furthermore, this study was also be guided by the following research questions:

- What is the relationship between organizational support and voluntary job mobility in telecommunication companies in Rivers State?

- What is the relationship between organizational support and involuntary job mobility in telecommunication companies in Rivers State?

Figure 1: Conceptual framework for the relationship between organizational support and job mobility

Source: Author's Desk Research, 2019

LITERATURE REVIEW

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

The underpinning theory that best explain the subject of this study is the one by Frederick Herzberg in 1959. The theory popularly known as Herzberg's two-factor theory or motivation hygiene theory grew out of a research aimed at determining the factors that influence satisfaction on the job. Herzberg (1959) as cited in Baridam (2001) studied 200 engineers and accountants in nine companies in Pittsburgh and concluded that in reality, two distinct types of motivational factors and thus two different continuums exist. One class referred to as hygiene factors make up a continuum ranging from dissatisfaction to no dissatisfaction, items in this group relate to the environment and are external to the job, they include: pay, job security, company policies and status, working conditions, fringe benefits and interpersonal relations. Herzberg indicates that these factors if absent in the work place, lead to high level of dissatisfaction, if present, they create a state of 'zero dissatisfaction' or no dissatisfaction. By themselves, hygiene factors do not motivate individuals to better performance.

The second class of factors of needs referred to as motivators make up a continuum leading from no job satisfaction to satisfaction. The items in this group are job content factors. They include: challenge job, recognition for accomplishment, opportunities for growth and advancement, feeling of achievement,

increased responsibility and the job itself, it is these factors in Herzberg's opinion that serve to motivate employees to greater performance. Herzberg's frame work infers a clear differentiation between motivators and hygiene factors and recommends that managerial action should be focused on job content for the effective motivation of employees.

The relevance of the Herzberg two-factor theory to the subject of this study is informed by the fact that employee training and development, pay and benefits and organizational support among others motivates employee not only to greater commitment to their organization, but also to greater performance. Thus failure by management to provide these motivating factors will not only demotivate employees and result in lack of commitment, but also result in job mobility in which employees will seek for alternative employment in other organizations. Thus resulting in loss of manpower and skill to the organizations which correlate negatively with the realization of set objectives.

Organizational Support

Examples of bad supervision according to Taylor (2002), are supervisors who: fails to respond to grievances, act autocratically, abuse their positions, show undue favoritism to some staff, fails to appreciate their subordinate's efforts, are very self-centered and fails to deliver on their promises. Six golden rules offered by Taylor (2002) for effective supervision are: 1) give praise where praise is due; 2)

avoid the perception of favoritism; 3) talk to every team member regularly; 4) act when there are perceived problem; 5) give people as much autonomy as possibly can; and 6) involve people in decision-making. Frog-marching (escorting people out of the work place immediately alter resignation) and related practices says Taylor (2002), is a practice that is absolutely out of the question. This practice serves only to make those who remain behind negative about how people are treated. If the resigned employee wanted to gain trade secret, they would have done so prior to resignation.

Work-life balance programs cover a variety of interventions, and include such practices as dependent care leave, childcare subsidies, eldercare programs, counselling and referral, and flexible working hours (Withers, 2011). As the list suggests, the concept of "work-life balance" recognizes that employees have important family and extraprofessional obligations that compete with their professional commitments; benefits that may be grouped under this concept therefore allow people to strike a more meaningful and potentially less stressful balance between obligations at the workplace and obligations at home. The concept of "work-life balance" is an area of growing interest. Duxbury & Higgins (2009) note that the 1990s saw an intensification of work-life conflicts for many Canadian workers. Jobs, they note, "have become more stressful and less satisfying, and employees generally exhibit less commitment to their employers and higher absence rates from work' They add that high levels of role overload and work to family interference play a significant role in frustrating recruitment and retention in Canadian companies. The fast track has lost much of its luster in recent years Harris and Brannick (2009), reflecting a common perception that we are witnessing a change in culture in the way people are choosing to Live their lives, and organize their careers accordingly. In a survey of 448 employees reported by Dibble (1999),

flexibility in hours was the third most frequently mentioned reason why employees remain with their current employer. A survey of 1,862 employees in the U.S., cited in Ashby and Pell (2011), reported that most workers wanted a job with flexible hours and that allowed them to take care of personal concerns, while a substantial number cited similar reasons for their preference for working at home. Similarly, Business (2001) reports that the amount of salary and number of work hours workers say they are willing to give up to achieve a work/life balance has doubled.

Whether or not we are in the midst of a cultural shift, many employers have begun to respond to such demands by implementing "work-life balance" initiatives in their workplace, and have done so out of a conviction that providing such benefits can substantially enhance productivity, revenues, and employee retention and commitment (Withers, 2011). In a survey of 300 small businesses in Canada, the Centre for Families, Work and Well-Being (2000) asked 'what are the work-life strategies that make small companies successful in concurrently meeting their business objectives and being a good place for employees to work?" The survey found that: Over 80% of companies offer at least one flexible work arrangement for employees, and flextime is the most common arrangement, 83% provide time off to care for sick family members, 80% provide extended health care benefits and 70% offer time off for "eldercare. Such arrangements hardly require a detailed explanation It is worth noting, however, that some of these practices particularly those related to "time off" and flexibility for addressing particular needs - need not be a part of some formal benefits program.

Concept of Job Mobility

The construct job mobility has been used in multiple ways by multiple authors to include everything from changing jobs to changing organizations to changing occupations. By subsuming so many kinds of changes within one construct, important differences (e.g.

individuals' motivation to change, ability to change, and adjustment to change) often get overlooked. Job change refers to any substantial changes in work responsibilities, hierarchical levels, or titles within an organization. It includes internal promotions, transfers, and demotions (Nwachukwu, 2009).There is significant research to support the fact that effective career/talent management has positive effects for both the employee and the organization (De Vos, Dewettinck & Buyens, 2008). The traditional notion of career is being contested and new approaches to career development are being proposed in the literature. These include the 'boundaryless career' (Arthur, 2004) 'psychological contract' (Argyris, 1960) should be replaced with a new contract that allows employees to generate their own career options and opportunities. Accordingly, activities which link the employee to the organization in a 'relational contract' via internal mobility opportunities are said to have significant organizational as well as individual benefit. As such, job mobility opportunities have been used as a vehicle for talent management and development since identified in the I980s as an innovative approach to retaining and developing stall (Bagdadli & Paoletti, 2006). Job mobility, internal mobility or intra-organizational mobility is defined as when an employee is transferred from one position to another within an organization be it interdepartmental or intra-organizational, as opposed to inter-organizational mobility which refers to when an employee leaves the organization for another employer. Other terms used for such arrangements seen in the literature include: Job rotations, secondments, temporary role / job transfers and cross training.

Against the backdrop described, internal mobility is becoming an increasingly important human resource management strategy, and allows employees to learn about themselves, develop new skills and extend their organizational networks Such intra -

organizational movement concretizes the notion of careers as lifelong learning and validates the idea that an individual's career aspirations may not be associated only with vertical moves and promotions Buyens, (2008) but with gaining new and different experience and knowledge laterally. Intra-organizational mobility has also been proposed as an alternative to the traditional linear employment structures which are based on stability, hierarchy and clearly defined conditions for job progression Arthur (2008). While inter, intra and extra-organizational job mobility seem to be different phenomena, they also have a number of commonalities. All situations involve adaption of the individual to new environments which may or may not have similarities to their current role and working environment. Employees perceive intra-organizational mobility as a means of improving skills and knowledge and future job improvement. However, while evidence suggests that today's employee changes his/her job at least seven times in the course of a career (Arthur 2008).

According to Krausz and Tans (2003), little is reported about organizational internal mobility and frequency of job rotations. The investigation of this literature review study revealed a number of [factors as important background for making informed decisions concerning work force mobility. Schein (1998) cited in Vardi (2005) identify that effective career management has to take into account both the needs of the individual and the organization. These authors argued that the kind of mobility and the circumstances under which implementation takes place can significantly influence employees' work attitude, perception and willingness to accept mobility opportunities (Higgins 2009).

Understanding the Reasons for Job Mobility
Sometimes organizations are faced with unavoidable job mobility problems this occurs when employees retire or move for non-job-related reasons. Schuler (2006) argue that job mobility due to the upcoming retirement of Baby Boomers is expected to have

major implications for future recruiting activities. Furthermore, he also state that not all job mobility is bad. Research suggests that too little job mobility can actually harm the organization's performance. Sometimes organizations encourage employees to leave. The objective may be to shrink the size of the workforce, or simply to help unproductive employees realize that they may be better off finding alternative employment. But the big share of job mobility that is caused by dissatisfied employees is not desirable, and may be avoidable by implementing employee retention strategies. Schuler and Jackson (2006) suggest that in order to reduce job mobility, an organisation should diagnose the reasons that good talent voluntarily decides to look elsewhere for employment.

Voluntary Job Mobility

Voluntary job mobility is individual movement across the membership boundary of a social system which is initiated by the individual (Akintayo, 2007). The term "quit" is probably the most frequent label for voluntary turnover "Quit" and "resignations" are generally used interchangeably (Onimode, 2009). Unfolding theory of voluntary job mobility indicates that individuals choose one of four psychological and behavioral paths when they are considering leaving their employment. The first path is associated with a psychological shock. The shock may be job related or personal, but causes individuals to assess their compatibility with their job situation (Lee 2009). If an incompatible position occurs, the individual thinks of leaving the organization. The second path, known as a script, is a pre-existing plan of action that the individual uses based on experiences. The third path of the unfolding theory is the job search itself in which the individual seeks employment and evaluates the alternative. The fourth path of the theory centers on the individuals' self-image that may be in conflict with organizational culture. The significance of the unfolding model is that it provides organizational leaders a greater understanding of why employees

quit. The unfolding model thus acts as a prediction model that provides employers with a mechanism to preempt turnover by addressing its cause before it occurs (Morrell 2011). Researchers in the economic school target the use of wage incentives as a means of affecting employee Job mobility, which is a key component of wage efficiency theory. Grossberg, (2004) noted that a relationship exists between wage increases and corresponding changes in job mobility. According to Grossberg, when wage increases occur, quit rates decrease as workers calculate the net value of current wages compared with anticipated wages from a new job. Compensatory factors contribute to a decision to quit a job, adding complexity to the issue of reducing job mobility. According to Kim's (2009) findings indicated increases in wages had an impact on worker tenure, but the market adjusts, mitigating the advantage of increased wages. Powell, Montgomery, and Cosgrove (2004) noted that workers who received higher wages were less likely to quit their jobs.

Relationship between Organizational Support and Job Mobility

Duxbury & Higgins (2009) note that the 1990s saw an intensification of work-life conflicts for many Canadian workers. Jobs, they note, "have become more stressful and less satisfying, and employees generally exhibit less commitment to their employers and higher absence rates from work. There are various ways in which organizations can be of support to employees. The relations between the employee and the organisation they work for highlights that if the employees are treated fairly the organisation achieves its goals (Levinson, 1965). The organisation serves as an important source of socio-emotional resources for employees, these include salaries and benefits and respect from the organisation. Employees who become aware of the organisations recognition of their efforts are more likely to reciprocate in various forms, such as increasing their performance levels to reach set goals, but will also be

more committed to the organisation. Employees with high organisational support feel the need to respond favourably to the organisation in the form of good job attitudes and organisational behaviours and also support organisational goals (Loi, Hang-Yue and Foley, 2006).

The relationship between organisational support and organisational commitment is commonly explained by reciprocity and social exchange. According to Eisenberger *et. al.,* (1986) social exchange theory argues if employees perceive that the organisation is committed to their well being and progress in the organisation, then the employee will be committed to their employer as well. Employees who are committed to their organisation on the affective level feel obligated to help the organisation reach its targets through their contributions such as greater efforts at work (Eisenberger, *et. al,* 1986). Organisational support is increased if the needs of the employee are met by the organisation, these needs include approval and a sense of membership in the organisation which can be attained by giving employees a chance to contribute in the decision making process (Eisenberger, et. al, 1986; Fuller, Barnett, Hester & Relyea, 2003).

The relationship between commitment and organisational support can be explained accordingly, when an employee in a certain organisation is treated fairly or is rewarded appropriately. This leads to the employee feeling the need to return the favour through increased job performance and good attitudes at the work place. An employee who recognizes that the organisation they work for cares for their wellbeing will show loyalty and decide to remain at the organisation. This shows that there is a positive relationship between organisational support and normative commitment. There is a negative relationship between continuance commitment and organisational support according to a study by Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002). Employees who remain with an organisation because they need to do

so for lack of better alternatives do so because of the third level of commitment know as continuance commitment (Meyer and Allen, 1997). Shore and Tetrick (1991) suggest that organisational support reduces any sentiment that an employee may have towards the organisation of feeling trapped that may develop when the cost of leaving the organisation is too high.

From the foregoing point of view, the study hereby hypothesized that:

H_{01}:   There is no significant relationship between organizational support and voluntary job mobility.

H_{02}:   There is no significant relationship between organizational support and involuntary job mobility.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey in its investigation of the variables. Primary data was generated through self-administered questionnaire. The population for the study was 231 employees of four (4) registered GSM Mobile Telecommunication Commission in Rivers State. The sample size of 155 was determined using calculated using the Taro Yamane's formula for sample size determination. 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's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 23.0. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Bivariate Analysis

Our confidence interval was set at the 0.05 (two tailed) level of significance to test the statistical significance of the data in this study.

Test of Hypotheses One (H$_{01}$)

There is no significant relationship between Organizational Support and Voluntary job mobility.

Table 1: Correlation Result for Organizational Support and Voluntary job mobility

			Organizational Support	Voluntary job mobility
Spearman's (rho)	**Organizational Support**	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.812**
		Sign. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	168	168
	Voluntary job mobility	Correlation Coefficient	.812	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	168	168

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

Source: SPSS 21.0 Data Output, 2019

The results shown in table 1 above, with *rho* value of 0.812, means that a positive, very strong and significant relationship exist between Organizational Support and Voluntary job mobility . This association is also significant at p = 0.000 < 0.05 significance level. This means that the previously stated null hypothesis (i.e. HO$_1$) is hereby rejected and this implies that there is a positive, very strong and significant relationship between Organizational Support and Voluntary job mobility in telecommunication companies in Rivers State.

Test of Hypotheses Two (Ho$_2$)

H$_{02}$: There is no significant relationship between organizational support and involuntary job mobility.

Table 2: Correlation Result for Organizational Support and Involuntary job mobility

			Organizational Support	Involuntary job mobility.
Spearman's (rho)	**Organizational Support**	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.549
		Sign. (2-tailed)	.	.001
		N	168	168
	Involuntary job mobility	Correlation Coefficient	.549	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.
		N	168	168

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

Source: SPSS 21.0 Data Output, 2019

The results shown in table 2 above, with *rho* value of 0.549, meant that there is a positive, moderate and significant relationship between organizational support and involuntary job mobility. This association was also significant at p = 0.001 < 0.05 significance level. This meant that the previously stated null hypothesis (i.e. HO$_2$) was hereby rejected and this implied that there is a positive, moderate and

significant relationship between organizational support and involuntary job mobility in telecommunication companies in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study findings revealed that there is significant relationship between organizational support and job mobility in telecommunication companies in Rivers State. This finding agreed with the assertion that the relations between the employee and the organisation they work for highlights that if the employees are treated fairly the organisation achieves its goals (Gould, 1979; Levinson, 1965). The organisation serves as an important source of socio-emotional resources for employees, these include salaries and benefits and respect from the organisation. Employees who become aware of the organisations recognition of their efforts are more likely to reciprocate in various forms, such as increasing their performance levels to reach set goals, but will also be more committed to the organisation. Employees with high organisational support feel the need to respond favourably to the organisation in the form of good job attitudes and organisational behaviours and also support organisational goals (Loi, Hang-Yue and Foley, 2006).

The relationship between organisational support and organisational commitment is commonly explained by reciprocity and social exchange. According to Eisenberger et. al., (1986) social exchange theory argues if employees perceive that the organisation is committed to their wellbeing and progress in the organisation, then the employee will be committed to their employer as well. Employees who are committed to their organisation on the affective level feel obligated to help the organisation reach its targets through their contributions such as greater efforts at work (Eisenberger, et. al, 1986; Rousseau, 1989). Organisational support is increased if the needs of the employee are met by the organisation, these needs include approval and a sense of membership in the organisation which can be attained by giving employees a chance to contribute in the decision making process (Eisenberger, et. al, 1986; Fuller, et. al, 2003).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concluded that there is a positive and very strong association between organizational support and voluntary job mobility in the telecommunication companies in Rivers State and the study saw that a positive and significant association exists between organizational support and involuntary job mobility in the telecommunication companies in Rivers State.

The study recommended that employee assistance programs should be implemented by management of telecommunication companies as part of organizational support aim at reducing employees work and other related stress, this will go a long way in making employees to be continually committed to their job and organization.

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