

A Multi-Frame Application of Organizational Climate Perception and Job Element Satisfaction in a Higher Educational Environment

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Abstract

The paper attempts to explore the believe that organizational climate generally exert considerable influence on Job satisfaction and the behavior of employees. The variables chosen for the study under organizational climate include management and leadership style, personnel policies, working conditions, and challenging jobs, participation in decision making, boredom and frustration, fringe benefits and suitable career ladder, while for job satisfaction, the elements include clear lines of communication salary package, promotional opportunities, appropriate administrative style, support from superiors, workload and feedback about performance.

Data used for the study consists of the responses to a structured questionnaire of three hundred and eighty-four (384) academic staff ranging from Professors , Associate professors to Graduate assistants of five (5) private Universities within the South-west Nigeria.

The findings of the study show that while the assertion is fully supported, the results of the analysis also revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between the major variables i.e. organizational climate and job satisfaction.

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Introduction.

Organizational climate and job satisfaction which manifest in a variety of human resource practices, is an important predictor of organizational success. There has been a long-standing interest in the study of organizational climate among organizational researchers. Its importance is partly due to its hypothesized relationship to other organizational phenomena including job satisfaction, job performance, leadership behaviours, staff retention, productivity, profitability and the quality of work group interaction (Oribabor,2007; James and Tetrick,2006 and Gonzaliz-Roma, Peiro and Tordera, 2008). Organizational climate is generally believed to exert a considerable influence on job satisfaction and the behavior of employees (Billingsley and Cross, 2002).

The present study has as its main objective attempts to explore this influence by examining the relationships between a balanced and unbalanced organizational climate and job satisfaction using academics in the South-west Nigeria. Variables like management and leadership style, personnel policies, working conditions, and challenging jobs, participation in decision making, boredom and frustration, fringe benefits and suitable career ladder and job satisfaction elements (e.g. clear lines of communication salary package, promotional opportunities, appropriate administrative style, support from superiors, workload and feedback about performance) are tested in this study.

However, the specific objectives are as listed below;

- a) To identify factors that determines job satisfaction of academics and their consequential effects on academic excellence.

- b) To determine the proportion of faculty leaving a university who are not satisfied with their workload, feedback about performance and salary package.
- c) To identify organizational climate variables that can cause job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction of academics.

A brief review of the theoretical framework relating to the variables under study is discussed below.

Theoretical Framework

Bolman and Deal's (1991c, 2006 2008) four-frame theory prescribes a multi-frame approach in understanding the attributes and situational contexts of organizational behavior. Distilled from organizational theory, these 'frames of reference' represent the reality of each specific organizational type, and 'shape how situations are defined....' (Bolman and Deal,1991c p506).

Bolman and Deal's (1991c,2006,2008) four-frame organizational theory has four essential components: structural, human resource, political and symbolic. The structural and human resource frames are related to management, while the political and symbolic frames are related to leadership. The theory assumes that these four organizational frames represent the diverse accentuation and nature of organizations, and in turn, shape how organizational leadership within the respective frames perceives organizational situations. In consequence, the accentuation and nature of organizations greatly influence how situations are defined and the manner in which they are managed most effectively. Bolman and Deal's theory postulates that successful organizations, including leaders and managers, are those that understand and utilize a multi-frame orientation of thinking in assessing situational and environmental characteristics and anomalies. As stated by Bolman and Deal (1991c:781), an increasingly complex and turbulent organizational world demands greater cognitive complexity....' that is, effective and successful

organizations need to understand multiple frames and know how to use them in practice. Thus, the four-frame theory was selected for this study because of its proven usefulness in understanding the complexity of manners, characteristics and behaviours of organizations and their members (Bensimon,2001; Bolman and Deal 1991c,2008, Thompson,2000).

Job Satisfaction

There are few, if any, concepts more central to industrial / organizational psychology than job satisfaction. In this century, the advent of the human relations movement is credited with emphasizing the importance of workplace attitudes. Indeed, the pioneers of the movement – Likert (1967) and Maslow (1970)) are credited with raising the field's consciousness with respect to workplace morale. Hoppock's (1935) landmark book roughly coincided with the Hawthorne studies that were the origin of the human relations movement. Hoppock's opening to his book aptly describes the emphasis that scholars of the time placed on Job satisfaction, "whether or not one finds his employment sufficiently satisfactory to continue in it ... is a matter of the first importance to employer and employee" (P.5). However, from this auspicious beginning, the job satisfaction literature has had its ebbs and flows.

The concept of job satisfaction has been widely defined by different people. (Edem and Lawal, 2006) specified that job satisfaction is a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job experiences. Reichers (2006) refined the definition of job satisfaction to constitute an attitudinal variable that measures how a person feels about his or her job, including different facets of the job. Austin and Gamson (1993) defined job satisfaction as an overall feeling about ones job or career in terms of specific facets of job or careers (e.g. compensation, autonomy, coworkers). It can be related to specific outcomes, for example, productivity. Many studies on the determinants of job satisfaction in higher educational institutions in the developed

world are available (Johnsrud and Rosser, 2007; and Terrel, Price and Joyner, 2008). However, in developing countries such as Nigeria, efforts in this direction are scarce. Examples of investigated jobs are: Satisfaction among heads of post-primary institutions in Delta state, Nigeria (Whawho, 2008) and Librarians (Edem and Lawal, 2006).

When the employee sees that his expectations are not met in the job environment, the job dissatisfaction emerges. It leads to the decrease in the workforce productivity, organizational commitment and commitment to the job and increase in the rates of the optional discontinuation of the job (James and Tetrick, 2006 and Allen, 2003;). Besides, the medical conditions of the employees might be affected negatively. Lower job satisfaction in the servers has been observed to bring about neurotic (insomnia and headache) and emotional negativeness (stress, disappointment) (Johnsrud and Rosser, 2007). Nevertheless, the best proof to the deterioration of the works is the lower job satisfaction. It causes secretly deceleration of the works, job success and job productivity and increases in the workforce turnover (Whawho, 2008; Edem and Lawal, 2006), occupational accidents and complaints.

In an effort to satisfy the needs of employees, many managers make use of incentive programmes, despite the fact that research has consistently confirmed that no amount of money will translate into sustainable levels of job satisfaction or motivation (Volkwein and Zhou, 2003). Fajana (2001) in his work identified a long range of factors combined to affect individual's level of satisfaction. These include, supervision or leadership (concern for people, task, participation), job design (scope, depth, interest, perceived value), working conditions, social relationships, perceived long range opportunities, perceived opportunities elsewhere, levels of aspiration and need achievement.

Most scholars recognize that job satisfaction is a global concept that also comprises various facets. The most typical categorization of facets; Verbeke, Volgering and Hessels (1998) considers five: pay, promotions, coworkers, supervision and the work itself. Allen (2003) adds a few other facets: recognition, working conditions and company and management. Fajana(2001) refers to job satisfaction as the general job attitudes of employees. He divided job satisfaction into five major components as including; attitude toward work group, general working conditions, attitudes toward the organization, monetary benefits and attitude toward supervision which he said is intricately connected with the individual's state of mind about the work itself and life in general. From the above, we proposed:

Hypothesis One.

Factors like clear lines of communication, realistic salary package and promotional opportunities do not contribute to job satisfaction.

Hypothesis Two.

Job satisfaction cannot be significantly described by work load, feedback about performance and support from superiors.

Organizational Climate

Organizational climate, defined as the way in which organizational members perceive and characterize their environment in an attitudinal and value-based manner (Verbeke, Volgering and Hessels, 1998), has been asserted as an important and influential aspect of satisfaction and retention, as well as institutional effectiveness and success in universities. As a result of its subjective nature and vulnerability to control and manipulate by individuals within an

organization's decision making mechanism, the organizational climate is greatly influenced by organizational leadership (Allen,2003; Johnsrud, 2002; Volkwein and Parmley,2000).

The majority of research examining organizational climates in higher institutions has focused on faculty and student perceptions (Johnsrud,2002; Volkwein and Zhou, 2003). Albeit minimal in comparison to research based on faculty and students, there have been a handful of studies specifically addressing organizational climate and academic staff. As stated by Volkwein and Zhou (2003):

Higher education research has shown that several work-related variables exert positive and significant: a supportive organizational culture, teamwork, relationships with colleagues and superiors, worker autonomy and self-fulfillment (Austin and Gamson, 1993; Berwick, 2002).

Similar to the above evidence, two recent studies by Volkwein and colleagues (2000, 2008) examined the academic job satisfaction at both public and private universities. Their collective findings reported job insecurity, stress and pressure as having a significant negative impact on overall satisfaction, while teamwork, recognition, advancement, feelings of independence, and social and professional relationships with colleagues and supervisors had a significant positive impact on overall satisfaction.

Two studies conducted by Johnsrud et al, (2000, 2007) examined the morale of junior academics. They defined morale as a state of mind regarding one's job including satisfaction, commitment, loyalty and sense of common purpose with respect to one's work. They found that organizational climate-related items such as trust, communication, guidance, feedback and recognition of competence from superior (i.e. senior academics) are significant contributors to overall morale. Another study examined the organizational climate and its relationship to job insecurity in three different universities. Utilizing approximately sixty (60) academic staff interviews. Allens (2003)

qualitative examination identified the following organizational climate- related items as contributing factors to high level of insecurity, lack of respect and trust, poor interpersonal relationships, and lack of feedback on performance evaluation during the annual appraisal.

The present study will contribute to the above research on organizational climate and its relationship to job element satisfaction (workload, support from superiors, feedback about performance clear lines of communication,etc.). Utilizing Bolman and Deal's (1991c, 2006,2008) four-frame theory of organizational behavior to assess the perceived organizational climate, the present study differs from earlier research in that it examines main factors in the organizational climate that cause job satisfaction among academic staff and its relationship to observed differences among the perceived degree of job element satisfaction. Furthermore, the current study will examine the organizational climate as perceived by academic staff of selected private Universities.

Hypothesis Three.

There is no significant relationship between organizational climate and job satisfaction among academics in southwest Nigeria.

Hypothesis Four.

Organizational climate does not include boredom and frustration, personnel policies, working conditions and participation in decision making.

Methods and Instrumentation

A cross sectional study design with an exploratory and descriptive design was used. Cross sectional design was used because it uses one-time-only observation but involve as many variables as are necessary for the study.

Also, exploratory and descriptive designs were used because they focus on the phenomenon of interest, which according to this study, is to find out whether there is a difference in the way senior academics and junior academics perceive their organizational climate and help in identifying factors relating to organizational climate, that cause job satisfaction among academics (Berwick, 2002).

The study population from which the sample was drawn for this study consists of the eighteen (18) private universities in the South-west Nigeria. Out of these eighteen private universities, five (5) were taken as the study sample through judgmental sampling method from which questionnaire was administered to the academic staff ranging from the professors, associate professors, to graduate assistants, e.t.c. The total number of academic staff in the selected private universities is 754. (Researcher's Field Survey Report, 2010). Moreover, the private universities chosen for this study are Covenant University, Bells University of Technology, Crawford University, Babcock University and Bowen University.

The distribution of the sample size over the five Universities, which are the different strata was carried out by using Proportional Affixation Criterion (PAC), i.e. Universities sample in each stratum is proportional to the relative weight of the stratum in relation to the population. Within each University, selection is conducted through simple random sampling. In all, 384 copies of questionnaires were administered to these private Universities but a total of 293 questionnaires were returned fully and appropriately filled.

This represents a response rate of 76.30%. An analysis of the questionnaires by total responses showed that Covenant University has the highest response rate of 87 (29.69%); Bowen University has 72 (24.57%); Babcock University has 70 (23.89%); Bell University has 40

(13.65%) and Crawford has 24 (8.20%). Therefore the whole 293 questionnaires retrieved were used in the analysis of this study.

For hypothesis one, Multiple Regression which measures nature of relationship and contributions of variables to a system of equation was used to analyze the hypothesis. This is upheld at $r^2=.825$, $df=292$ at 0.000 significant level. For hypothesis two, again, Multiple Regression was used to analyze the hypothesis. This is upheld at $r^2= .798$, $df= 291$ at 0.000 significant level, while for hypothesis three, Multiple Regression was used to analyze the hypothesis. This is upheld at $r^2= .798$, $df= 291$ at 0.000 significant level, and for hypothesis four, as well Multiple Regression was used in analyzing the variables here. The result of regression shows that organizational climate include boredom and frustration, personnel policies, working conditions and participation in decision making. This is upheld at $r^2= .857$, $df= 292$ at 0.000 significant level.

Hypothesis Testing

Four hypotheses were tested in this study. For hypothesis one, Findings show that 82.5% of the variability in job satisfaction can be explained by factors like clear lines of communication, realistic salary package and promotional opportunities. This results in the rejection of the null hypothesis and the adoption of the alternative hypothesis.

Literature suggests that climate dimensions are moderately strongly related to job satisfaction in facets as security working conditions and advancement opportunities. That clearer lines of communication, opportunities for promotion and competitive salary package are variables which motivate people and influence job satisfaction. That immediately these are absent or inadequate, lecturers are neutral towards work but when present, they are highly motivated and satisfied (Billinsley and Cross, 2002).

Table 1: Regression Model Summary of Organisational Climate and Satisfaction

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | .908(a) | .825 | .823 | .20318 |

Source: Researcher's Field Survey Report, 2010

For the second hypothesis, findings from the use of multiple regression shows that the variability in job satisfaction can be explained by the factors like work load, feedback about performance and support from superiors. The remaining 20.2% of variability is due to other unexplained factors. Thus, this supports the rejection of the null hypothesis but support the acceptance of alternative hypothesis at $r = .798$, $df = 291$ and 0.000 significant level. However, literature suggests that satisfaction within an organization is as a result of poor planning, poor communication, unclear rules and regulations, unreasonable pressures, excessive work (otherwise known as work load), understaffing, uncooperative heads of departments/ units and non-academic duties. This was confirmed by our analysis. Several other studies affirmed these factors listed above as describing job satisfaction in organization. Bensimon, (2001), Austin and Gamson (1993), Bensimon and Neumann (1993) and Allen, (2003), in their studies identified organizational structure; rules, regulation and policies; supervision and leadership, work group; work environment, etc as factors that cause satisfaction in the work environment (Whawho, 2008).

Table 2: Model Summary of Coefficient of Determination of Feedback, Workload, Supervisor Support and Job Satisfaction

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | .893(a) | .798 | .796 | .21826 |

Source: Researcher's Field Survey Report, 2010

For the third hypothesis, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient analysis finding shows that there is a significant positive relationship between organizational climate and job

satisfaction. Therefore, the first hypothesis is upheld at sum of squares and cross- products of 40.268 and 35.118 respectively, $df = 293$ and p value $= 0.671$ significant level.

Correlation here is high because Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient analysis reveals the significant positive relationship between the major variables i.e. Organizational Climate and Job Satisfaction. Moreover, literature indicates climates of an organization and job satisfactions of their employees vary together. That climate had the greatest impact on satisfaction with interpersonal relationships on a job, a moderate impact upon satisfaction with recognizable advancement in the organization and relatively less impact upon self-realization from task involvement. Cameron and Smart, (1998); Denison, (1996); Volkwein, Malik and Napierski-Prancl, (2009).

Table 3: Correlations Analysis of Organisational Climate and Job Satisfaction

| | | Organcclimate | Jobsatis |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| Organcclimate | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .671(**) |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | Sum of Squares and Cross-products | 40.268 | 35.118 |
| | Covariance | .138 | .120 |
| | N | 293 | 293 |
| Jobsatis | Pearson Correlation | .671(**) | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | Sum of Squares and Cross-products | 35.118 | 68.098 |
| | Covariance | .120 | .233 |
| | N | 293 | 293 |

Source: Researcher's Field Survey Report, 2010

Lastly, the fourth hypothesis is upheld at $r^2 = .857$, $df = 292$ and at 0.000 significant level. The findings show that 85.7% of the variability in organizational climate can be explained by boredom and frustration, personnel policies, working conditions and participation in decision making. The remaining 14.30% of variability is due to other unexplained factors. This supports the further retention of the alternative hypothesis and the rejection of the null hypothesis. Literature indicates different organizational climate as comprising personnel policies, working

conditions, opportunity in partaking in decision making. For example, Volkwein and Zhou (2003) and Udogo(2008),admitted that communication, problem solving, decision making, learning and motivation all can be affected by the organizational climate, which in turn might have impact on the effectiveness and productivity of the organization as well as the work environment and employee well being in the workplace.

Some studies (Thompson, 2000; Mathisen and Einarsen,2008 and Oribabor, 2007) found that these variables- boredom and frustration, personnel policies working conditions and participation in decision making can be said to reliably make up organizational climate.

Table 4: Model Summary of Coefficient of Determination of participation in Decision-making, Boredom and Frustration, Personnel Policies, Working Conditions and Organizational Climate

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | .926(a) | .857 | .855 | .14150 |

Source: Researcher's Field Survey Report, 2010

Research Implications and Conclusion

Based on the findings using the job satisfaction antecedents and the various organizational climate variables identified in the study, following are the implications of this research for academics, management practitioners and consultants.

In the area of the universities personal career development, we recommend that the universities management be more responsive to the academic career development programmes as had been recommended by the staff especially to the junior academics for their advancement .

The management team should continually conduct workshops, or seminars to update their staff in their various endeavors and different leadership styles so that they can select the most appropriate leadership style in accordance with a particular situation maturity of their staff and be updated on the current research modules and outlets.

The management team should conduct a survey within their universities in order to determine the availability and adequacy of equipment and resources necessary for the execution of responsibilities and negotiate remedial action with the authorities. Also strict control over existing equipments and material resources should be taken to prevent unnecessary wastage and loss.

Management team should design a year plan regarding career development for all categories of academic staff to ensure that all academics are given a fair opportunity to develop. They should design criteria for selecting the staff that are to be sent for career development and training, and administer these selection criteria fairly.

Management should not practice favouritism when selecting staff for career development. A selection committee can be established with representatives from the different categories of academics staff. Policies and opportunities regarding career development should be collated and communicated to all employees through circular/memos and meetings to ensure that all academics are well informed.

The management team should show recognition and appreciation for work well done/achievement and provision of incentives to facilitate job satisfaction –e.g. announcement in meetings, personal letters and a rotating trophy. Volkwein, Malik and Napierski-Pranci (2002) state that positive reinforcement increases the probability of a recurrence of the desired behaviour.

The management team should involve academics when developing or revising the goals and objectives of the institution through workshops, so that academic suggestions can form part of the development process, thus enabling successful implementation. Also, they should conduct workshops on cultivating and emphasizing ethical standards, loyalty and value clarification.

Management and senior academic staff should design a system that will encourage academic to put forward their inputs regarding empowering possibilities by creating suggestion boxes that can be placed in prominent areas. Not only that, management should acknowledge good ideas put forward by subordinate by giving credit privately and publicly. They should create opportunities for growth for example, by giving academics (junior academics most importantly) challenging assignments.

Management should ensure that existing benefits for academic staff are fairly, justly and competitively allocated to the staff. They should allocate courses to staff according to their skills and preference so that they do not leave the organization because they are allocated courses they do not feel comfortable with.

Management can arrange meetings to be once in a month, so as to promote communication between the academics and thus reduce the effects of boredom resulting from every now and then meetings which prevent them from doing their best on their jobs. The use of circulars and memos should be encouraged to ensure that all academics have the same information without having to gather all the time.

However, this study had provided other variables like lines of communication, salary package, promotional opportunities, personal policies, working conditions, participation in decision making, etc, to study job satisfaction in which none of these studies used combination of these variables. This study therefore, provides research opportunities for further researchers on the field to expand the horizon of knowledge on these variables identified as job satisfaction antecedents.

In conclusion, the study concentrated on the study of private universities alone, which limit the reliability and validity of the results obtained. Thus, the study then paves way into other research

opportunities in the field to stretch the depth of knowledge into public universities- i.e. the federal and state universities.

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