

AVID COMMITMENT TO ORGANIZATIONAL OBJECTIVES AND INTEGRITY: VERITABLE TOOLS FOR NATION BUILDING

Dr. Cletus I. Emeti

*Department of Office and Information Management
Niger Delta University
Bayelsa State, Nigeria*

&

Dr. (Mrs) Gift J. Eke

*Department of Office and Information Management
Niger Delta University
Bayelsa State, Nigeria*

Abstract

The paper looked at employees' commitment to organizational objectives and integrity as veritable tool for nation building. The study presupposes that building a virile nation starts not from the government or political class, but essentially from the Nigeria labour-force, government employees, public/private organizations and any form of employment where workers are paid salaries or wages. With major objectives of finding out whether avid commitment /integrity on the part of workers have any effect on the overall achievement of enterprise goals and objectives. We identified appropriate theoretical platform or framework for the study. Chaos Theory was chosen as it explains a system that is not linear and therefore dynamic in nature. Business environment is dynamic. Ramifications of commitment and integrity in the workplace and their effects in the organization were exposed and conclusions made. It was recommended, that organizations should become more dynamic in decision making to face the ever-increasing complexities in organizations and in the environment. The

paper also recommends that as organizational workers become commitment- and integrity-compliant, individuals should see nation building as personal by believing that they alone can change Nigeria.

Introduction

Organizations are formed majorly to reduce mistakes associated with human inadequacies and imperfections. Inadequacy and imperfection in terms of limited knowledge, skill, competences and the like. As people from different backgrounds come together, there is less fear of failure, as what the organization needs to succeed which is lacking in Mr. A may be present in Mr. B. Nobody we all know, is a master of everything and can hold monopoly of knowledge.

Building an organization, therefore, becomes a project with all hands on deck; the top management, the middle level management and the lower level management all contributing in their big or small ways (depending on their abilities) to

the growth of the organization. It must be noted here that success of this organization building project means prompt payment of salaries to workers, advancement, promotion, good health, achievement of personal objectives etc. On the other hand, if the project fails, loss of employment, agony/pain in homes, possible collapse of relationships, increase in job applicants in the labour market.

In our above narrative, organization has been used to mirror the nation as a whole where all of us belong as participants who are contributing in different capacities with different skill competences to move our country forward. The much we put into the project determines the extent we shall succeed or fail. A committed effort will certainly take us to the next dream level, but the reverse will obviously plague us, and our focused Eldorado will elude us even in the face of wonderfully good opportunities to succeed.

With the conference theme in mind and our topic in focus, we shall in this paper mirror the country through the organization and find out how workers commitment to objectives can lead to nation building. We are aware that commitment to objectives alone may not be all that is necessary to move any organization forward. After all there are workers who are committed to objectives just because of fear of being sacked in this era of high unemployment. In this case, if given any opportunity under cover or flimsy protection will derail and plunge the organization. He can do this because he naturally lacks integrity.

Integrity, according to Webster dictionary, is the “quality” or state of being honest and having strong moral principle. Nweke (2017) sees integrity as the ‘foundation of character’ and observed that a person who has integrity also has an unblemished character in every area of his or her life’. The mark of people who have high integrity is that they always do highest quality of work in everything they do. They are in fact distinguished wherever they work - in the offices, businesses, industry, government, etc.

It will therefore be the focus of this paper to see whether avid (total) commitment of workers to organizational objectives and integrity of the worker put together, can be the much needed panacea to our nation building effort. Charity they say begins at home.

Objectives of the Study

As already stated in the introduction, nation building is the main objective. This we want to achieve through:

- (i) Finding out the workers real interest in the organization -personal or organizational objectives.
- (ii) Finding out what it means to be committed to the organization.
- (iii) Finding out what it means to have integrity
- (iv) Finding out the effect of commitment /integrity on the part of the workers on the overall achievement of the enterprise goals and objectives.

Theoretical Framework

We did not lose sight of the underpinning theory that shaped our work, hence we

aligned our study to existing appropriate organization theories - Chaos Theory. Chaos theory as proposed by Edward Lorenz and Michael Feigenbaum as in Kazmi (2002) postulates that at the root of all complex systems – whether they are organizations or the environment - lies a set of rules that provide a dynamic order to the surface complexity. These systems cannot be considered as linear systems where a simple cause-and-effect model can explain the behavior of these systems. Rather, these systems are non-linear and dynamic in nature. Any change that takes place in the non-linear system is chaotic. This theory which uses mathematical models has become very relevant and useful in management considering the fact that management operates in a dynamic environment, dealing with human beings and their unpredictable behavior. The theory teaches that in a dynamic environment, it is suicidal for organizations to remain static. Changing dynamically as the environment changes is a must for managers in handling workers and expect their avid commitment and integrity in the workplace.

Organizational Objectives

Goals denote what an organization hopes to accomplish in a future period of time. They represent a future state or an outcome of the effort put in now. A broad category of financial and non-financial issues are addressed by the goals that a firm sets for itself.

Objectives are the ends that state specifically how the goals shall be achieved. They are concrete and specific, in contrast to 'goals' which are generalized. According to Kazmi (2002) objectives make the goals

operational. While goals may be qualitative, objectives tend to be mainly quantitative in specification. In this way they are measurable and comparable.

Objectives define the organization's relationship with its environment. By stating its objectives, an organization commits itself to what it has to achieve for its employees, customers and society at large. Objectives also help an organization to pursue its vision and mission by defining the long-term position that an organization wishes to attain and the short-term targets to be achieved.

Objectives, in fact, provides the basis for strategic decision making, by directing the attention of strategists to those areas where strategic decisions needs to be taken. Objectives provide the standards for performance appraisal by stating the targets to be achieved in a given time period and the measures to be adopted to achieve them.

Workers Commitment and Types

Employee involvement in the mission and vision of an organization, and the types of employee commitments towards an organization remain at the center of designing any management strategy. Business leaders have led through the centuries by understanding employee psychology, employee emotions and employee expectations, and by addressing employee needs in a manner that resulted in a win-win situation for both employers and employees. This situation guaranteed organizational commitment of the employees and in turn helped the organization realize its goals. Organizational commitment in itself is simply the strength of the attachment an

employee feels towards an organization. It may be measured by the degree to which an employee fulfills his/her job responsibilities. And it may also be measured by behaviors employees observed in the workplace.

Types of Commitment

Slack, Orife and Anderson (2010) proposed an analytic view of organizational commitment, splitting it into three definable components - affective, continuance and normative commitment. Allen and Meyer (1996) saw it the same way.

Affective Commitment. Affective commitment, or how much an employee actually likes the organization, has a tremendous effect on employee and organizational performance. High levels of affective commitment in employees will not only affect continuance commitment, but also encourages the employee to try to bring others into the talent pool of the organization. An employee with high level of affective commitment acts as a brand ambassador of the organization. On the other hand, an employee with continuance commitment (due to lack of alternatives), but poor affective commitment may harm the organization by criticizing it in his/her social circles.

Affective commitment of an employee is directly proportional to positive work experience. So, management policies and strategies that make proper strength and weakness assessments of employees and create situations and workflows where the maximum number of employees can individually experience positive work experiences, help to build a successful organization.

The great emphases placed by recruiting managers upon person-organization-fit is also to ensure a high level of affective commitment in employees. Affective commitment is higher when the gap between individual values and organizational values is minimal. However, the congruence between individual values and organizational values in employees can also be built and enhanced by strategies and programmes to enhance employee understanding and recognition of organizational values.

Continuance Commitment. This is a measure of the willingness of an employee to continue working for the same organization. When continuance commitment is not completely driven by affective commitment, it usually boils down to the costs that an employee associates with leaving the organization. Continuance commitment is also driven to a great extent by organizational culture, and when an employee finds an organization to be positive and supportive, he/she will have a high degree of continuance. Important organizational factors like employee loyalty and employee retention are components of continuance commitment.

Normative Commitment. Normative commitment builds upon duties and values, and the degree to which an employee stays in an organization out of sense of obligation. There are times in small companies when payments are delayed and the employees have to suffer pay cuts or deferred pay, but they stay on, because they do not want to leave an employer during bad times. Normative commitment comes from a sense

of moral duty and the value system of an individual. It can be a result of affective commitment, or an outcome of socialization within the workplace and commitment to co-workers.

Normative commitment is higher in an organization that values loyalty and systematically communicate the facts to employees with rewards, incentives and other strategies. Normative commitment in employees is also high where employees regularly see visible examples of the employer being committed to employees well-being.

In general an employee with greater organizational commitment has a greater chance of contributing to organizational success and will also experience higher levels of job satisfaction. High levels of job satisfaction, in turn, reduces employee turnover and increases the organizations ability to recruit and retain talents.

Benefits of Workers Total Commitment to Organizational Objectives

Employees total commitment to organizational objectives has many benefits:

Increased Employee Safety: Because engaged employees are more connected to their workplaces, they are more aware of their surroundings both mentally and emotionally. Research has shown that 70% fewer safety incidents occurs in highly engaged workplaces. Instead of worrying about whether there is room for advancement or whether their boss likes them, engaged employees can focus on the task at hand.

Better Employees Health: Engaged employees are less likely to be obese, less likely to suffer from chronic disease, more likely to eat healthier, and more likely to exercise than unengaged employees. This is because engaged workplaces tend to show respect for employees needs, encouraging employees to appropriately care for their health; think policies like flexible schedules, fresh fruits and veggies in the breakfast room, and company-sponsored road races. Healthy employees provide numerous benefits for an organization.

Happier Employees: Highly engaged organizations do not have resort to mechanisms like peer pressure, termination, or other high stress behaviors to motivate employees. Instead, these organizations use practices like employee recognition, one-on-one meeting, and 360⁰ feedback to drive performance. Without bosses barking threats at them, employees are happier; and happy employees save their employers money. The American Psychological Association estimates that more than \$500 billion are lost every year due to workplace stress.

Better Home Life: Engaged employees have happier home lives, according to a Kansas State study. The study states in part that

“individuals who were engaged in positive experiences at work and who shared those experiences with significant others perceived themselves as better able to deal with issues at home, because better companions, and because more effective overall in the home environment”.

In other words, engaged employees are beneficial not just to their workplaces alone; they are beneficial to their families too. They don't complain about their jobs to a significant others, they have the energy to play with their kids after work, and generally contribute to positive home atmosphere.

Greater Employees Loyalty: As younger generations enter the workforce, the definition of employee loyalty is changing. What once was define as long-term dedication to a company's goal, now looks more like a tit-for-tat interaction. And that is not the only scary news: 46% of employees would accept another job offer if the opportunity arose. Just because an employee is not looking for a job does not mean he/she would not leave if something better comes along. But when employee are engaged they stick around. Employees don't leave when they care about the success of the organization and they are appropriately challenged by their work.

Better Quality: It was Tom Peters in his work "In search of Excellence" that said "Techniques don't produce quality products and services, people do. People who care, people who are treated as creatively contributing individuals". Engaged employees are functioning on all cylinders, which means they are less likely to make mistakes and more likely to achieve excellence.

Greater Productivity: Employees are trying all sorts of things to increase employee productivity, from wearable activity devices to threats of sack. But they are missing the solution: employee

engagement. Engaged employee are more likely to work diligently and expend discretionary effort in their jobs resulting to higher productivity.

All the above benefits and their chain effects in the organization, lead to greater positive contribution to the economy and this, by the way, is how to build a nation. It is only from highly committed employees that meaningful transparency and accountability can have expression.

Role of Integrity in the Workplace:

The single most important quality you can ever develop that will enhance every part of your life is the value of integrity. Integrity is the core quality of a successful and happy life. Having integrity means being totally honest and truthful in every part of your life. In the organization where we work, a person with integrity becomes the bank of confidence to many. Everybody around knows he/she cannot disappoint, in terms of giving genuine, honest and truthful advice. He/she cannot report or backbite colleagues to curry favour, cannot give or accept gratification for assisting colleagues and customers to the organization in the course of doing his/her work. His transparency in relating with his superior officer is not only total, it is palpable that his corrupt colleagues will be cautious of him/her. In a short time the infectious nature of integrity, transparency and in fact, accountability, percolates and gains ground in the workplace. It becomes out fashion to behave otherwise. Very corrupt workers may, in the alternative begin smear campaign against the upright or leave the organization if they cannot cope.

It is very easy for an organization managers to identify people of high integrity working with them. They always do the highest quality of work in everything they do. They are always totally honest with themselves in everything they do, and strive to excellent work on every occasion. People with high integrity realize that everything they do is a statement about who they are.

To be truly honest with others, you first have to be totally honest with yourself. You have to be true to yourself, you have to be true to the very best that is in you. Only a person who is consistently living a life with the highest values and virtues is a person truly living a life of integrity. If you are always honest and true to yourself you cannot be false to anyone else. It is therefore the organization that benefits in all of these virtues and values of integrity.

Commitment/ Integrity and Nation Building

On the face of it, when workers are highly committed to objectives and have integrity, there in every likelihood that their productive efforts will be high. When this is the case, profit maximizes, workers salaries and incentives are given promptly, investors and shareholders smile and by extension the nation is built on a positive pedestal.

But commitment is built most time upon the assumptions and opinions to which the organization managers have about the workers. Douglas McGregor's Theory X assumption attests to this. He, ab ni tio, assumes workers to be lazy and lack commitment and integrity. Ejiofor (1985) also corroborated this and identified managers attitude types and how they can

make or mar both the organization and the workers. He observed leadership styles of management to be key to workers personal motivation, commitment to objectives and enduring integrity.

Trait Theories: The earliest researchers on leadership focused on identifying well-known leaders and attempting to find out what it was in them that enabled them to command the loyalty of so many people. For instance, how Moses a stammerer, was able to lead the Israelites through adversity for forty years, or how Jesus, and obscure carpenter's son, was able to found a worldwide religion that has lasted for more than 2000 years. What was it in Napoleon that enable him to inspire the French and subjugated almost all Europe; how did Churchill sustain the fighting spirit of the Britons and made them win the Second World War. Coming nearer home, how was Nkruma able to mobilize Ghana and inspire the whole of Africa; why Zik was able to rise against colonial rule, mobilize the Nigerian large population and win Nigerian independence; why Muritala Mohammed was able to rekindle the spirit of this nation in just six months, and how Michael Okpara was able to instigate an agricultural revolution in the former eastern Nigeria in the early sixties. Due to its orientation or manifestation towards great men the traits theory is also called 'Greatman Theory'. There are qualities, sine quanon, prepared by traits theorist for effective leadership. Terry (1968) put forward the following

- Energy – physical and mental
- Emotional stability
- Knowledge of human relations
- Empathy
- Objectivity

- Personal motivation
- Communicative ability
- Teaching ability
- Social skill
- Technical competence

From the above it is seen that the personality of the leader speaks volume of workers performance in the organization. Abebe (1980) as in Ejiofor (1985) stated that the qualities of a manger should 'include absolute loyalty, dedication and commitment; there is no half-measure. Equally important are integrity, fairness, hardwork, intellect, ability to work with others, the possession of basic commonsense, ... insatiable desire to learn and he must be a leader not a boss''.

From the foregoing it is seen that to build a nation everybody should play a role - the junior worker in the office, the supervisor, the manager, the director and in fact every stakeholders in the organization. The microcosm of the entire nation is what the organization represents. That little effort genuinely and dedicatedly put into our assigned duty with integrity, not minding our status, is all we need to beat our chest and say that we are building a great nation.

Conclusions

A committed worker in the organization, we have seen, is a highly valued asset. A worker with integrity we have also seen is even a bigger asset. What they do at micro level snowballs from just a unit and departmental effectiveness and growth; it positively affects the entire organization for good.

Qualities that make for effectiveness in the organization have been identified, and

managers advised to lead their team with positive (not negative) assumptions of their abilities. The manger cannot achieve it alone. After all, trait theory has taught us that to command the loyalty of your followers every effort should be made to see yourself as a leader, not a boss, motivate workers and let them know they are capable and can do it better.

When workers are highly committed to objectives and have integrity, there is every likelihood that their productive effort will be high. Productivity increases, profit increases, salaries increase and shareholders and directors all smile. As this becomes the case the nation is already built on a very solid pedestal - where accountability and transparency hold sway.

Recommendations

The paper recommends as follows:

1. Organizations should become more dynamic in decision making to face the ever-increasing complexities in organization and in the environment.
2. As organization workers become commitment- and integrity- compliant, individuals should see nation building as their personal assignment believing that they alone can change Nigeria.
3. Organization workers should embrace the numerous benefits of commitment and integrity in the organization, including better employee health, better home life, increased safety, happier employees, etc.

To end this presentation let me request that we all key into Ejiofor's philosophy of 'I alone can change Nigeria' by beginning to do the right thing always. Remember the

words of John Mason ‘Right is right even if everyone is against it, and wrong is wrong even if everyone is for it’. Thank you for listening.

References

- Allen, N. J. and Meyer, J. P. (1996). *Affective continuance and Normative Commitment: An examination of Construct Validity*, Journal of Vocational Behaviour, 49, 252-276.
- Ejiofor, P N O (1985) *Making Our Organizations Perform*, Public Service Lecture Series No. 2, Anambra State.
- Kazmi, A (2007) *Business Policy and Strategic Management*, New Delhi, Tata McGraw-Hill Publishing Company Limited.
- Levy, D (1992) *Chaos Theory and Strategy: Application and Managerial Implications*, Strategic Management Journal, Vol. 13, 111-125 as in Kazmi (2007).
- Nweke C B (2017) *Integrity*, Danpon Resources Ventures, Port Harcourt
- Slack, F. J., Orife, J. N. and Anderson, F. P. (2010). *Effects of Commitment to Corporate Vision on Employee Satisfaction with Their Organization: An Empirical Study in the United States*, International Journal of Management 27, 3.
- Society for Human Resource Management (2013). *Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement*.