Ethical Leadership and Organisational Commitment of Oil Servicing Company in Rivers State

UGU, Grace Etu & Dr. E. Tantua (Jnr.)

Department of Office and Information Management, Faculty of Management Sciences, Rivers, State University, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, PMB 5080, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

Abstract: *This paper examined how cloud ethical leadership impacts on organisational commitment oil and gas servicing companies in Rivers state, Nigeria. The study was operationalized with the dimension of ethical leadership like Fairness. Organizational commitment was measured by affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment the purpose for this study is to determine the impact of ethical leadership on organizational commitment. The accessible population was employees of six (6) registered and functional oil servicing firms in Rivers state whose staff strength is 80 and above and also those that have been in existence for than 10- 20 years. The study used cross-sectional survey approach and descriptive research design, The Taro-Yamene sample size determination formula was used to determine the sample size. A sample size of 300 staff was used for the study. The study was guided by four research questions and nine research hypotheses. Questionnaires were the major instruments used in gathering primary data which were analyzed using correlational analyses. The questionnaire used was subjected to face/content validity, this was done to ascertain the validity of the questionnaires to be administered and my supervisor also vetted on the questions administered. The scale used for this study had been previously adjudged reliable. However, we also checked by verifying reliability outcomes through confirmatory test of internal consistency on the instrument with our sample using Cronbach alpha at the threshold level 0.7 which is generally accepted by the rule of thumb. Data was analyzed and results presented in tables, mean and standard deviation. And finally hypotheses were tested using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient. The study found that ethical leadership impacts on organisational commitment oil and gas companies in Rivers state. The study recommends that in order for oil and gas companies should maintain their hedge in this high rivalry economy by being committed to the welfare of the employees of the organisations.*

Keywords: *Ethical Leadership, Organisational Commitment, Fairness, Affective Commitment, Continuance Commitment and Normative Commitment*

INTRODUCTION

The thought of organizational commitment has gained much interest in the field of management and behavioral sciences because of the predictable outcomes of commitment (Mathieu & Zajac and Meyer & Allen 1990). The nature and belief of the organizational commitment concept is that a person has a sense of commitment to the organization he or she works for. This may involve recognition with, tendency to stay in and willingness to exert, efforts for organization. According to (Porter, Crampton & Smit, 1976) organizational commitment could be defined as the beliefs and feelings formed internally or as a set of intentions that enriches an employee's desire to remain with an organization and to accept its major goals and values. The organizational commitment has also been regarded as an important construct in understanding the work behavior of employees. In a broader sense,

commitment may be defined as an attitude or an orientation towards the organizations which links or attaches the identity of the person to the Organization (Sheldon 1972). Hrebiniak and Alutto (1972) define commitment as a structural phenomenon which occurs as a result of individual organizational transactions and alterations.

The approaches to organizational commitment have undergone some changes in the last three decades, the most significant of which has been its being uni-dimensional or multi-dimensional. However, due to downsizing and amalgamation of organizations, some scholars have understated the effect of organizational commitment on the variables including turnover, absence from work, and job performance; they consider the study of organizational commitment pointless. But no one can overlook the importance of organizational commitment both to individuals and to organizations. Organizational commitment is an important organizational and professional belief, which has interested many scholars from different disciplines. Mowday, Porter, & Steers (1979) argue that organizational commitment has noteworthy implications for the society, organizations, employees and even management. It is believed that leadership is a type of process whereby a manager tries to ease the duty of reaching to aims through creating effective motivation and humility; in addition, he encourages the staff to be more interested in doing their jobs (Alhoseini, 2001). As the educational organizations are among the most important organizations in the societies, and human beings are the most important output of educational organizations, investigating organizational commitment and its role in making such organizations more effective is among the priorities.

In today's competitive world, organizational commitment is highly critical and valuable. Numerous studies have highlighted that commitment plays a great deal for the successful performance of an organization. This is because highly committed employee will identify with the goals and values of the organization, has a strong desire to belong to the organization and is ready to display greater affinity in terms of organizational citizenship behaviour i.e., a willingness to go over and beyond their required job duties. Hence organizations cannot perform well unless the employees in competitive organizations are committed and work effectively in teams. According to Porter, Crampton & Smit (1976) organizational commitment could be defined as the beliefs and feelings formed internally or as a set of intentions that enriches an employee's desire to remain with an organization and to accept its major goals and values.

Meyer and Allen (1994) also explain that it is a psychological state that features the relationship of employee with the organization and have implications for the decision to continue membership in the organization. It is easy for organizations to say that people are our most important asset but it is much more difficult to prove it (Nehmeh 2009). Research undertaken by (Finnigan 2000) indicates that perception of the organization's values is the strongest predictor of employee commitment. (Mowday et al 1982) has differentiated organizational commitment between the commitment as an attitude and commitment as behaviour. Individual's identification with the goals of an organization and his willingness to work towards them is reflected through attitudinal commitment whereas behavioural commitment results

from the binding of individuals to behavioural acts there is cyclical relationship between these two. It has also been argued by (Reichers 1985) that current approach to organizational commitment ignores the multifaceted concept of organization that has been prominent among organizational theorists.

Organizational commitment is considered to be a critical concept. The presence of organizational commitment can be used to gain employees support for the organization and in turn maximize the benefits to receive it from their employee with greater productivity. If there is a lack of organizational commitment it may give rise to negative effects on employee productivity that can contribute to failure of organization. A study was conducted (Osa & Amos 2014) to examine the impact of organizational commitment on employee productivity with a sample of 200 members of staff of Nigeria Brevery PLC at head office. The findings deduced that organizational commitment had a significant impact on employee productivity and as such improves performance and effectiveness. Another study (DeCotiis & Summers 1987) was conducted using a sample of 367 managerial employees. Job satisfaction and commitment were found to be predictive of productivity and individual motivation. It was concluded that commitment is central to organizational life, where organization commits to meeting the needs and expectations of its members and its members commit to the service of the organization in terms of its goals and values.

In today's competitive world, organizations cannot perform well unless the employees are committed and work effectively in teams. A study (Madi et al 2012) was conducted in the banks of Gaza and Palestine to investigate the relationship between the perception of employees and the impact of such a perception on their commitment to these banks. The findings revealed that employees of the banks in Gaza were quite satisfied in terms of their satisfaction towards the job. It is shown that there is a positive relationship between three dimensions of employee's perception including job satisfaction, perceived job characteristics, perceived organizational characteristics & affective commitment. Moreover among the four dimensions, only perceived job satisfaction has a significant relationship with continuous commitment. An investigation (Ahmad et al 2014) on the impact of organizational commitment and employee performance on employee satisfaction was carried out in banking sector covering 110 employees of 10 banks of Pakistan. The findings revealed the fact that organizational commitment and employee performance play a major role for employee satisfaction. It was found that there existed a positive relationship between organizational commitment and employee satisfaction and similarly employee performance has positive relationship with employee satisfaction.

In the past decades, the interest in studying ethical leadership has been growing steadily. Ethical leadership has been described in a variety of ways. Kanungo (2001) noted that ethical leaders engage in acts and behaviours that benefits others, and at the same time, they refrain from behaviours that can cause any harm to others. Brown, (2005) suggested that the combination of gratitude, ethical standards, and fair treatment of employees are the cornerstone of ethical leadership. Trevi o. & Brown (2004) proposed that ethical leadership, in

its true sense, promotes ethical conducts by practicing as well as managing ethics holding everyone accountable for it. Khuntia & Suar (2004) suggested that ethical leaders incorporate moral principles in their beliefs, values, and behaviours. According to Culia (1998) ethical leadership intelligence is a leadership directed by respect towards ethical values and beliefs and for the rights and dignity of others.

The construct domain of ethical leadership is broad, and several different types of values may be relevant including altruism, compassion, honesty, gratitude, fairness, humility and justice. Ethical leadership is also indicated by behaviours reflecting these values. Examples include being very supportive and helpful when someone has a problem, being fair when distributing rewards and benefits, being open and honest when communicating people, making sacrifices to benefit others, talking about the importance of values, setting clear ethical standards for the works, keeping actions consistent with espoused values and holding peoples accountable for ethical and unethical actions. It is obvious that ethical leadership intelligence overlaps to some extent with relations-oriented behavior constructs in the leadership literature, such as providing supportive or considerate leadership, empowering leadership, developing subordinate skills and self-confidence, and representing subordinate interests (Yukl, 2010).

There are a number of reasons organizations behave unethically: shareholder pressure for growth, senior leadership striving to achieve its stated goals, impending financial losses, greed, and quite often ignorance. Repeatedly then, the offending organization has a well-structured and thought-out code of ethics or statement of ethics. So, what happens between this commitment to ethics and the unethical act? We propose that there is a malfunction in the ethical filter where the values espoused by the organization at the highest levels fail to filter down to those responsible for organizational functions. We further propose that quite often there is also a disconnect between senior executives and an organization's code of ethics. If the senior leadership does not subscribe to its own code of ethics, then there is little reason to expect rank and file to consistently apply uniform ethical behavior (Moccia, 2012).

Furthermore**,** this study will also be guided by the following research questions:

i. To what degree does fairness influences affective commitment of oil and gas companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?

ii. To what degree does fairness influences continuous commitment of oil and gas companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?

iii. To what degree does fairness influences normative commitment of oil and gas companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?
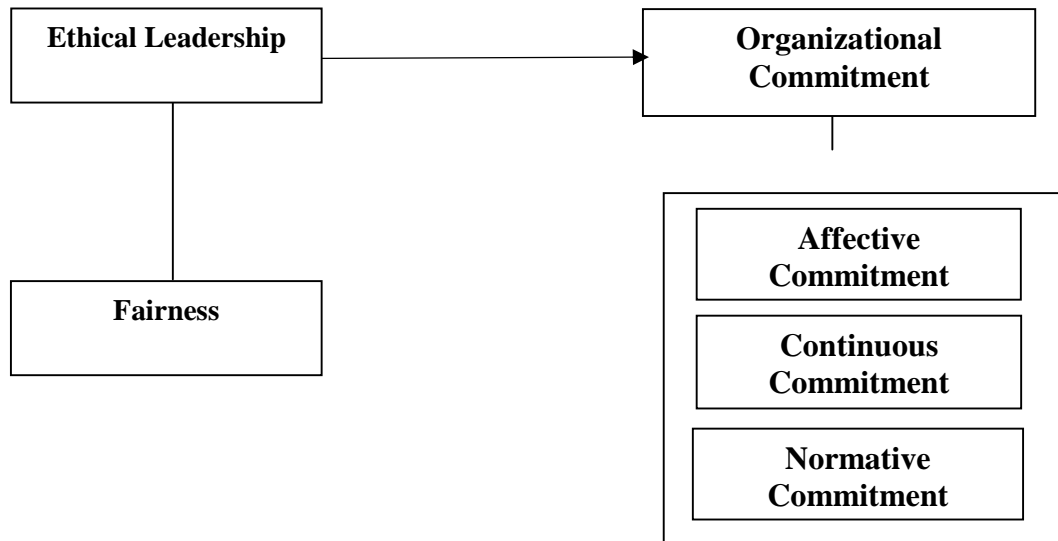
Fig.1 Conceptual Framework for the relationship ethical leadership and organizational commitment

Source: Desk Research (2021)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation
Transformational Leadership Theory

Bass (1985) coined the term transformational leadership, describing such leaders as change agents that elicit and transform followers' beliefs, attitudes and motivations. These leaders provide a vision and develop an emotional relationship with their followers, increasing the latter's consciousness and belief in higher goals, above their own interests. The specific behaviours of these leaders are classified into four dimensions: (a) idealized influence, (b) inspirational motivation, (c) intellectual stimulus, and (d) individualized consideration.

According to Bass (1985) idealized influence, or charisma, refers to the attributes ascribed by followers to their leader, according to their perceptions of the leader's power, confidence and transcendent ideals. These perceptions are driven by specific behaviours of the leader that reflect his/her values and beliefs. It is this emotional component of leadership that drives followers to forgo their own comfort in favour of the collective interest, that is, in the search for a greater good. Inspirational motivation refers to leader's behaviours aimed at inspiring and motivating followers to attain ambitious and challenging goals, or even apparently unattainable ones. Intellectual stimulation refers to the way a leader questions the status quo and appeals to the intelligence of followers to prompt them to question their own ideas, thus motivating innovative and creative decision-making. Individual consideration refers to the

socio-emotional support given by a leader to his/her followers, in response to their specific needs, which promotes their development and empowerment. Literature reviews and studies accumulated in recent years on transformational leadership show its positive association with performance outcomes (Judge & Piccolo, 2004), particularly in private companies (Dumdum, Lowe, & Avolio, 2002).

Concept of Organisational Commitment

Over the years, commitment has been defined and measured in many different ways. Indeed, this lack of consensus in the definition of the term has contributed greatly to its treatment as a multidimensional construct (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Even if multiple dimensions or forms of commitment exist, there has to be a core essence that characterizes it. To establish what that core essence is, one has to look for commonality among the existing conceptualizations and provides a set of definitions taken from the literature.

As indicated by Meyer & Herscovitch (2001), all of these definitions refer to a force that directs a person's behaviour. There appears to be consensus that the force is experienced as a mind-set (a frame of mind or psychological state), "a stabilizing force that acts to maintain behavioural direction when expectancy/equity conditions are not met and do not function" (Scholl, 1981). "A force that stabilizes individual behavior under circumstances where the individual would otherwise be tempted to change that behavior" (Brickman, 1987). "An obliging force which requires that the person honor the commitment, even in the face of fluctuating attitudes and whims" (Brown, 1996).

Measures of Organisational Commitment

Affective Commitment

Affective commitment refers to the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organisation. Employees with a strong affective commitment continue employment with the organisation because they want to. According to Mowday (1982), the antecedents of affective commitment generally fall into four categories: personal characteristics, structural characteristics, job-related characteristics, and work experiences. Although various research studies have been conducted to link demographic characteristics such as age, tenure, gender and education to commitment, the relations were neither strong nor consistent, the reason being too many variables such as job status, work rewards and work values moderating the relationship.

Continuance Commitment
Continuance commitment refers to an awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organisation. The potential costs of leaving an organisation include the threat of wasting the time and effort spent acquiring nontransferable skills, losing attractive benefits, giving up seniority-based privileges, or having to uproot family and disrupt personal relationships. Apart from the costs involved in leaving the organisation, continuance commitment will also develop

as a function of a lack of alternative employment opportunities. Employees whose primary link to the organisation is based on continuance commitment remain because they need to.

Normative Commitment

Normative commitment reflects a feeling of obligation to continue employment. Employees with a high level of normative commitment feel that they ought to remain with the organisation. Wiener (1982) suggests that the feeling of obligation to remain with an organisation may result from the internalisation of normative pressures exerted on an individual prior to entry into the organisation (family or cultural orientation), or following entry (organisational orientation). However, normative commitment may also develop when an organisation provides the employee with "rewards in advance" (eg paying college tuition), or incurs significant costs in providing employment (eg head-hunting fees or the costs associated with job training). Recognition of these investments causes employees to feel an obligation to reciprocate by committing themselves to the organisation until the debt has been repaid (Scholl, 1981).

Concept of Ethical Leadership

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The construct domain of ethical leadership is broad, and several different types of values may be relevant including altruism, compassion, honesty, gratitude, fairness, humility and justice. Ethical leadership is also indicated by behaviour reflecting these values. Examples include being very supportive and helpful when someone has a problem, being fair when distributing rewards and benefits, being open and honest when communicating people, making sacrifices to benefit others, talking about the importance of values, setting clear ethical standards for the works, keeping actions consistent with espoused values and holding peoples accountable for ethical and unethical actions. It is obvious that ethical leadership intelligence overlaps to some extent with relations-oriented behavior constructs in the leadership literature, such as providing supportive or considerate leadership, empowering leadership, developing subordinate skills and self-confidence, and representing subordinate interests (Yukl, 2010).

Fairness as a Component of Ethical Leadership

Fairness is a relevant component of ethical leadership. Fairness implies the elimination of one's feelings, prejudices and desires to achieve a proper balance between conflicting interests. The problem with fairness is that it is subjective. Again, perception is reality. To create a perception of fairness, employers should pay competitive wages, create and administer policies that are unbiased, offer competitive benefits, provide timely, accurate and useful performance appraisals, promote the most qualified employees and develop employees by providing opportunities for growth. Affording employees the opportunity to voice their concerns, play a vital role in ensuring interactional justice. Various research studies (Bies & Shapiro, 1988; Shapiro, 1991; Shapiro, Buttner & Barry, 1994) demonstrated that an unfavourable outcome, such as not receiving a promotion because of AA measures, is better received by a receiver when he or she is treated in an interpersonally fair manner such as being given an explanation for a decision. In such instances, although the employee might feel that the decision is not distributive fair, he or she will remain committed to the organisation because he or she was treated with respect and fairly.

Relationship between Ethical Leadership (Fairness) and Organizational Commitment

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Research has shown that one of the main reasons for failed change initiatives is the lack of commitment by employees (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). Another perspective in the change literature emphasizes resistance among employees to be a major cause of change failure (Pardo & Fuentes, 2003). Research has so far not linked resistance and change commitment. Furthermore, fairness during a change process plays an important role for the success of the change; employees are more likely to commit to a change if they perceive the process to be fair (Fedor et al., 2006). Greenberg (1987) labeled this phenomenon as Organizational Justice. Previous research has had different approaches to measure organizational fairness. Greenberg (1990) used a two-factor model where only procedural and distributive fairness was used. Procedural fairness refers to how the procedure of the change was carried out, while distributive fairness refers to the outcome of the change.

Fairness and employees commitment has been widely researched. Several studies support the notion that fairness of leaders as saliently related to employees' commitment, satisfaction and motivation to their organization (Abdul Shukor et.al, 2008 and Colquitt et al., 2001). According to Meyer et al. (1997), perception of fairness illustrates that the organization is committed to its employees. If people feel that the decisions are fair, they would respond with commitment, higher satisfaction and would be more willing to involve in 'extra-role behavior' (Colquitt et al., 2001). In fact, researchers such as Cook et al., (2004) argue that the evaluation performance will not be effective if it is perceived as unfair by those involved in the evaluation process. Since employees' perception of justice is important to the performance outcomes, management of the organizations was advised to have the ability to change the employees' perception of the performance evaluation (Tang et al., 1996).

The study postulates the following hypotheses to be tested:

Ho$_1$: There is no significant relationship between Fairness and affective commitment of oil and gas companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State

Ho$_2$: There is no significant relationship between Fairness and continuous commitment of oil and gas companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State

Ho$_3$: There is no significant relationship between Fairness and normative commitment of oil and gas companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the cross-sectional survey in its investigation of the variables. Primary data was sourced through structured questionnaire. The population for the study was eight hundred and eight (808) employees. The sample size of 300 was determined using the Taro Yamane's formula for sample size determination. The research instrument was validated through by experts as provided by supervisors vetting and approval while the reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring coefficients above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Statistics. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Bivariate Analysis
The Spearman Rank Order Correlation coefficient is calculated using the SPSS 21.0 version to establish the relationship among the empirical referents of the predictor variable and the measures of the criterion variable.

Table 1: Correlations for fairness and organizational commitment measures

		Fairness	Affective	Continuous	Normative
Fairness	Pearson Correlation	1	.930**	.905**	.920**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	180	180	180	180
Affective	Pearson Correlation	.930**	1	.904**	.904**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	180	180	180	180
Continuous Normative	Pearson Correlation	.905**	.904**	1	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		
	N	180	180	180	180

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

The table 1 is a correlation of hypothesis one and two. The correlation for hypothesis one shows a significant correlation at r = .930** where P-value = .000 (P<0.001). This implies a strong and significant relationship between both variables at 95% level of confidence. We therefore reject the non-hypothesis (Ho$_{1 :}$), and upheld the alternate hypothesis, thus, there is a significant relationship between normative commitment and fairness.

The correlation for hypothesis two shows a significant correlation at r = .905** where P-value = .000 (P<0.001). This implies a strong and significant relationship between both variables at 95% level of confidence. We therefore reject the non-hypothesis (Ho$_{2 :}$), and upheld the alternate hypothesis, thus, there is a significant relationship between normative commitment and humility.

The correlation for hypothesis two shows a significant correlation at r = .920** where P-value = .000 (P<0.001). This implies a strong and significant relationship between both variables at 95% level of confidence. We therefore reject the non-hypothesis (Ho$_{3 :}$), and upheld the alternate hypothesis, thus, there is a significant relationship between normative commitment and gratitude.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study using descriptive and inferential statistics methods in investigated the relationship between ethical leadership and organisational commitment of selected oil and gas servicing

firms companies in Rivers State, Nigeria. The findings revealed a positive and significant relationship between the predictor variable and the criterion variable using Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient tool at 95% confidence interval. The relationship of the dimensions of the ethical leadership: fairness, gratitude and humility correlated with the measures of organizational commitment such as affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment at different statistical strength. These findings also support Armstrong, (2006) who stated that, ethical leadership is born as a means to help businesses to satisfy their most important needs which are to attract, retain, motivate and engage staff, not just by means of salary increases, golden handcuffs and the like, but in a more effective way capable of producing long-lasting results. The aim therefore, is to maximize the positive impact that a wide range of rewards can have on motivation, job engagement, organizational commitments and job satisfaction, Manus and Graham (2003).

The test of hypothesis one in table 4.18 shows a significant relationship between fairness and continuance commitment in oil and gas servicing companies in Rivers State. This implies that, organizations that are fair tend to attract the loyalty of their employees thereby creating more committed workforce. This implies that, organizations that designed a team base gratitude strategy for completion of tasks attract the loyalty of their employees, thus, reducing the workload on individual employee in the organization and increase employee loyalty. This support the research work of Kramar and Syed (2012) when they identified that group rewards or incentives are more likely to yield a collaborative approach to performance and thus be more effective in reaching your shared goals. They also argue that collective incentive schemes may encourage more organisational buy in from employees compared to those schemes of an individual nature. However, this does not mean that team based rewards are not compatible with individual performance related pay schemes as both can be combined with careful attention. As Kerrin's and Oliver (2002) comment in their research on collective and individual improvement activities, the effectiveness of collective or team based rewards can be directly related to the culture of the organisation. As base pay from an individualistic point of view has always been seen as the backbone of compensation, when organisational design moves into supporting teams for productivity, then the applicable collective rewards should be adapted to support this. They found that companies faced challenges in moving from a traditional system of reward based around the individual to a more team based reward structure, but that they could operate simultaneously with success.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that ethical leadership bears a positive and a significant influence on organizational commitment and all the dimensions and measures show positive relationships. As observed that, oil and gas companies operate across various regions where the operating environments and the socio- economic characteristic of the customers are different. Therefore, the leaders of oil and gas companies should apply various ethical leadership styles to gain a competitive advantage in the industry. Referring back to our finding where gratitude, humility

and fairness affect the level of organizational commitment is an indication of why company's leaders should be conscious of their ethical parts if they want to achieve their ultimate goal.

Based on the foregoing conclusions, the following recommendations are suggested.

That for the success of the organization and total committed workforce from employee, management of organization should ensure the goal of the organization are design such that, its achievement connect with visible ethical leadership standard.
Management of organizations should ensure that works are assign on collaborative base as it enhances early completion of job, thereby decreasing delay in performance of activities in the organization. Management of organization should reward and encourage employee who go extra miles for the success of the organization.

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