

**PREDICTIVE IMPACTS OF PERCEIVED LEADERSHIP STYLES ON QUIT INTENTIONS
AMONG CIVIL SERVANTS IN ANAMBRA STATE**

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Abstract

This study investigated the predictive effects of perceived styles of leadership on quit intentions among civil servants in Anambra State, Nigeria. 321 civil servants drawn from various Ministries of the State participated in the study. There were 200 males (representing 56% of the total sample size) and 121 females (representing 44% of total sample size). Their ages ranged from 27 – 46 years (Mean = 44.54; SD = 55.22). The study design was cross-sectional with two levels of leadership – consideration leadership style; and initiating structure leadership style. One hypothesis, stating that initiating structure leadership style will be more predictive of quit intentions among Civil Servants in Anambra State was tested using regression analysis. Results of regression analysis showed that the initiating structure leadership style predicted turnover intentions among employees in a significant way $R^2 = 0.46$; $F = 382.15$, $p < 0.001$; 95 % (1.13, 1.45) for initiating structure leadership and $F = 382.15$, $p < 0.08$; 95 % (-.34, .028) for consideration leadership. This result confirmed the study hypothesis. Implications, study limitations and recommendations for subsequent research were highlighted.

Keywords: Consideration Leadership, Initiating Structure Leadership, Quit Intentions.

Introduction

Organizations often seek to be sustainably effective in achieving set goals and objectives. The efficient attainment of this state requires organizations to ensure adequate development and optimum utilization of its resources – particularly the human resource. Of all the resources at the disposal of the organization, the human resource has been found to be most critical to organizational success (Kritsonis, 2004). The human resource, in contrast to other resource factors within the organization, is capable of nursing aspirations, exhibiting some keen sense of justice, and is capable of a broad spectrum of behavioral manifestations (Ogbeide, 2012).

A fundamental attribute of the human resource in contrast to other resources is that while the latter is incapable, the human resource is actually capable of growing in its capacity to serve – depending upon the perceptions of prevailing dynamics in the industrial atmosphere. The prospect of an organization remaining

sustainably effective and competitive in its industry niche will be largely contingent upon the feelings, perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of the organization's human capital base.

It should be appreciated that the ability to attract and recruit high-quality employees with sound professional and technical competences may not necessarily translate into organizational success. This is so because, if the industrial climate is not right, upon the necessary socialization, employees will soon get confronted with those workplace developments, which they may evaluate as offensive and unacceptable.

People are social beings, and it behooves the focused organization therefore to foster an industrial climate that would effectively conduce to the facilitation of organizational goals in the most efficient manner. Positive organizational culture and work environment are believed to be key drivers of employee satisfaction, convivial workplace relations, and possible employee retention (Ogbeide, 2012); otherwise, the organization may have to contend with the challenges of employee turnover intentions, along with the associated concomitants.

Turnover intentions refer to an individual's estimated probability of the cessation of their membership of the current employing organization at some point in the near future. Intentions to quit have been identified as the main precursor of actual turnover (Tett and Meyer, 1993). Turnover can either be voluntary or involuntary and it constitutes the permanent withdrawal of membership of the organization. This study however is more concerned with the voluntary version of turnover.

Voluntary turnover is critical and it can be quite costly for the organization both in terms of direct costs (such as cost of replacement, selection and recruitment, engagement of temporary staff, as well as wasting of management's time), and very importantly too, in terms of indirect costs (such as the demoralization and pressure that come to bear on the remaining staff, costs associated with learning by new replacements, the inevitable shrinkage in the quality of product/service delivery, as well as the resultant loss of organizational memory); and the depreciation of overall social capital (Dess and Shaw, 2001).

It is believed that certain workplace dynamics which employees consider as inhibitive to the optimality of their sociological and psychological work performance, tend to awaken in these workers, the consideration of intentions to quit their jobs. A key factor that has been implicated in this regard is leadership.

Leadership is social influence in organizational settings, the effects of which are relevant to, and impact the achievement of organizational goals (Knight and Saal, 1995). It is a special case of interpersonal influence aimed at getting individuals or groups to do what the leader wants done. Militaristic management styles that are purely task-oriented, arbitrary, and without regards for employees' opinions, feelings and sentiments, tend to be perceived by workers as unedifying and unappreciative of their partnership with the organization in the collaborative effort to achieve set goals and objectives.

These workers are therefore continually under intense pressure of thoughts to extricate themselves from the inclement industrial climate foisted by such leadership dispositions. Employees' intentions to quit the organization therefore, naturally set in as the most viable alternative. It has been observed that exclusivist management styles that are lacking in consultations with workers, not only on how best to collectively work achieve organizational goals, but very importantly also, on critical issues directly affecting employees' work lives, tend to incite resentments in these workers toward organizational authorities (Anyaeibunam & Ogbeide, 2016); and they would consequently desire to withdraw their membership from such organizations.

Problem Statement

The leadership phenomenon, acting separately or along with some mediating mechanisms, has been linked to a number of work outcomes – including intentions to quit (Rokhman and Hassan, 2012). The issue of employee attrition, especially in developing Countries like Nigeria, has received very scanty documentation in the literature. This is largely due to the fact that the issue tends to be subsumed under the broad classification of 'brain drain; without specific isolation of the category of focus.

Also, it would appear, to the best of these researchers' knowledge, that not much research efforts have been invested in studying the effects of the Consideration and Initiating Structure leadership styles on severance intentions particularly among employees in the Anambra State Civil Service.

This gap is considered a strong source of concern to Civil Service organizations in Nigeria. An in-depth understanding of the effects of such organizational contextual factor, may avail relevant organizational stakeholders as well as significant others in industry, critical insights into what aspects and what levels of the variables that should be isolated, developed, and institutionalized, in order to effectively diffuse undesirable work attitudes - particularly quit ideations - among employees in Nigeria's Civil Service, promote mutuality of trust and respect in employer-employee interactions, and thus enhance the prospects for national growth and development.

Literature Review

Leadership

Research works have attempted to separate leadership into two broad categories: Consideration leadership versus Initiating Structure Leadership (Stogdill, 1963; Lawrence, 2007); Participative and Autocratic Leadership (Bass, 1990; Huang, Iun, Liu, and Gong, 2009); as well as Transformational Leadership and Transactional Leadership (Bass, 1990b; Bass and Avolio, 1997; Higgs, 2003; Buford, et al, 2005).

Initiating structure leadership and its variants (e.g. autocratic, transactional) are characterized by arbitrariness, highhandedness, exclusionism and non-consultation. On the other hand, Consideration leadership and its variants (e.g. Participative, transformational) involve actions taken by the leader to perceive the human needs of the members of his work group, and to support them in their personal attempt to satisfy those needs.

Research on leadership behaviors suggest that when employees perceive dispositions that treat them fairly, with warmth and respect, these employees tend to reciprocate by adopting behaviors beneficial to the organization (Organ 1988; Brown, 2003; Ogbeide, 2012). Demonstration of transformational leadership behaviors (analogous to consideration leadership) by workplace superiors enhances feelings of being valued as significant organizational members, which in turn, stimulates and reinforces emotional bonds to work groups, superiors, and the organization (Ogbeide, 2012).

Quit Intentions

The concept of quit intentions has remained a topical issue in organizations; and it is particularly a crucial issue in the field of Human Resource Management. The most valuable asset at the disposal of the organization is its people. Thus sustaining their retention in the job is very vital. There is currently a paradigm shift from the nomenclature of Human Resource to Human Capital which reflects the value, knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies of the people employed in the organization (Armstrong, 2009).

The phenomenon of employee attrition attracts tremendous interest; not just for its organizational significance, but also, due to its psychological and economic dimensions. Quit intention is an immediate precursor to actual quit; and actual turnover is expected to increase as intentions increase.

Three important adverse consequences have been implicated in the impact of turnover on organizations: increased organizational costs; operational disruption; as well as the demoralization of the remaining members of the organization. A key organizational cost among others, is the "cost of reduced productivity of the new worker, during the period required for the level of performance of the previous employee to be reached" (Tziner & Birati, 1996, p.114). Operational disruption occurs when high interdependence of work roles within the organization exists. The loss of a key member in an organization that is characterized by high interdependence and specialization can significantly undermine the aggregate abilities of the remaining work group or work unit to optimally accomplish their tasks (Staffelbach, 2008).

A possible demoralization of the remaining members of the organization could stem from the attitudes of the employees consequent upon the member's exit. If an employee decides to withdraw his organizational membership for an alternative position in an external environment, the action tends to provoke a reflective sentiment with the remaining members, such as interrogating their own motivation for still staying back in the organization.

The perceived reason for membership cessation may therefore be a critical issue for evaluation. If the reason for the quit derives from a non-organizational matter (such as family issues or location change) the feeling of demoralization may not really attend. If however the reason is provoked by some organization-related

issues (such as poor salary, perceived injustice or low supervisory support), then the feeling of demoralization may be quite profound; and may even set the tone for more quits.

Perceived Leadership Styles on Quit Intentions

Some research studies have examined the relationship between transformational leadership (an approximate variant of consideration leadership) and individual work outcomes through the mediating mechanism of organizational justice; and found that transformational leaders availed their subordinates opportunities to express their opinions and contribute to the efforts toward achieving overall corporate goals and objectives (cited in Rokhman and Hassan, 2012). These attributes tend to incline subordinates toward reciprocal gestures such as trust in management, increased organizational commitment, and reluctance toward organizationally-inimical thoughts like quit intentions.

Such dispositions were considered fair and encouraging by the subordinates. This goes to underscore the notion that if employees perceive a deliberate denial of opportunities by employers or sundry organizational authorities, to ventilate their feelings and contribute their opinions to work efforts within the organization, these workers tend to be exasperated, feel inconsequential in the scheme of work events, and subsequently tend to resent organizational authorities; which ultimately sets the tone for quit intentions.

According to the Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), organizations are regarded as loci of mutual social and long-term transactions between employers and employees (Wayne, Shore & Linden, 1997). These social exchange relationships tend to trigger certain unspecified future obligation (Konovsky, 2000).

A social exchange relationship, anchored on enabling leadership behaviors, is believed to possess the likelihood of promoting a contractual relationship that avails the employees the freedom to engage in discretionary behaviors. Thus, drawing from the earlier assertion that consideration leadership dispositions tend to promote feelings of being valued and well-treated as significant organizational members, this sentiment not only predispose employees to willingly assume roles even beyond their statutorily assigned tasks, but very importantly too, to continue to maintain their full membership of the employing organization (e.g. Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2000; Albrecht & Travaglione, 2003; Simon & Roberson, 2003).

In a study of 437 Chinese employees from some Multinational Companies, Alexander (2002) reported that perceived supervisory support (characteristic of consideration leadership) had a direct negative relation with turnover intentions.

In a study of 1187 registered nurses in the West, (Kalisch, 2009) reported that unsupportive work environment, and poor leadership quality reflected poor employee-employer relations; and had implications for the prospects of nurses wanting to voluntarily withdraw their services within a year.

Also, in a survey of 279 young professionals in China, findings indicated that consideration leadership variants, and particularly transformational leadership, were positively related to organizational loyalty, and negatively related to turnover intentions (Bu, 2011).

Hypotheses

Based upon the preceding literatures, this study hypothesized that Consideration rather than initiating structure leadership style will be predictive of quit intentions among civil servants in Anambra State.

Method

Participants

Participants for the study consisted of 321 civil servants drawn from various Ministries of the State. Participation was based purely upon the availability of the officers at their desks and their willingness to partake in the study. Some officers approached actually declined participation. The distribution of sample demographics included: gender (Males = 200 representing 56%; Females = 121 representing 44%) and age (Age Range = 27 – 46 years; Mean = 44.54; SD = 55.22). Copies of the questionnaire were administered on a total of 404 civil servants. Collected after correct completions were 321 copies of the questionnaire; representing 77% rate of return.

The questionnaire consisted of three Sections: Section 1 was concerned with sample demographics of age and gender. Section II comprised statements about employees’ perceptions of their superiors’ leadership behaviors. Section III contained statements concerning possible quit intentions among employees.

Instrument

The instruments used in the study consisted of the Leadership Behavior Descriptive Questionnaire (LBDQ-XII) by Stogdill (1963), to measure consideration leadership and initiating structure leadership behaviors; and the Turnover Intentions Scale, TIS by Ohana (2010) to measure quit intentions. The LBDQ-XII is a 12-item instrument comprising statements concerning both consideration and initiating structure leadership behaviors. The TIS is a 2-item instrument that attempts to probe the prospects of an employee staying on or nursing the idea of quitting the organization. A five-point Likert type rating scale was used to indicate respondents’ answers.

The reliabilities of the TIS and the LBDQ-XII were re-established by the researchers of current study for contiguity with Nigerian samples making use of 60 Medical Doctors drawn from Selected Private Medical Hospitals in Anambra State. Respondents’ ages ranged from 28 – 39 years; Females were 7 while Males were 53; and their tenures on the job ranged from 3 – 6 years. Results of the reliability analyses for the LBDQ-XII gave an Internal Consistency of 0.77 Cronbach Alpha and 0.69 split-half equal length Spearman Brown. For the TIS, result of the reliability analysis yielded an Internal Consistency of 0.89 Cronbach Alpha and 0.82 split-half equal length Spearman Brown; hence the instruments were considered appropriate for this study.

Data Analysis

Data collected on the LBDQ-XII and TIS were scored and sorted in accordance with the directions of the authors of the instruments. Multiple regression analyses were conducted to determine the percentage of variance explained by the leadership variable on the turn over intentions among respondents.

Results

Results of the multiple regression analysis (see Table 1) show that the initiating structure leadership behavior has a significant and positive relationship with quit intentions, whereas the consideration leadership behavior has no significant relationship. The value of $R^2 = 0.462$ shows that 46.2% of the variance was actually explained by the leadership variable; with $F = 382.15, p < 0.001$; 95 % (1.13, 1.45) for initiating structure leadership style, and $F = 382.15, p < 0.08$; 95 % (-.34, .028) for consideration leadership style. Beta-values of -.07 and .74 respectively for consideration leadership and initiating structure leadership styles further underscore the outcome that the initiating structure leadership, rather than the consideration leadership style, contributed more to quit intentions among Civil Servants in Anambra State; and this confirms the study hypothesis.

Table 1 Regression Analysis of Consideration and Initiating Structure Leadership Styles on Quit Intentions

Source	R ²	F	df	Sig	B	95% Conf. Interval		Sig
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
Constant	QUIT INTENTIONS							
	.462	382.15	2	.001				
Consideration					-.07	-.342	.028	.08
Initiating Struc.					.74	1.131	1.453	.001

Discussion

This study investigated the impact of perceived leadership styles on quit intentions among Civil Servants in Anambra State, South-East Nigeria. The study aimed in part to determine whether the study outcome will be consistent with findings of previous studies, and if not whether new instructive insights could be availed by the outcome of current study. The study hypothesis had to do with whether initiating structure leadership behavior would be more predictive of quit intentions among Civil Servants in Anambra State than consideration leadership.

Results of multiple regression analysis showed that initiating structure, rather than consideration leadership, was more predictive of quit intentions among Civil Servants in Anambra State $R^2 = 0.46$; $F = 382.15$, $p < 0.001$; 95 % (1.13, 1.45) for initiating structure leadership style, and $F = 382.15$, $p < 0.08$; 95 % (-.34, .028) for consideration leadership style. This confirms the only hypothesis of the study.

This result corroborates earlier findings by Fleishman & Harris (1962); Meyer (1968); and Seltzer & Bass (1990) that union commitment and turnover intentions are higher in work groups under initiating structure leadership. The outcome of this study also confirmed previous findings by Simon (1994); and Catano, Pond & Calloway (2001) that transactional leadership behaviors (analogous to initiating structure leadership) elicited more attachment to unions; and persuasions toward quit ideations (Ogbeide, 2012).

This study result is equally in agreement the prior findings by Brown (2003) and Okene (2008) that alluded to the notion that leadership behaviors that are exclusively task-oriented, arbitrary, and virtually lacking in socio-emotional content, tend to cause employees to distrust and resent their leaders/ employing organizations. As Jeffrey (2007) had observed, if distrust of management is pervasive among employees, it tends to lead to shrinkage in the desirability to continued organizational membership; thus accentuating quit intentions.

Practical implications of the study

The findings of this study boast of a number of theoretical and practical implications in the general world of work. The vast illuminations of critical workplace dynamics that are predictive of certain industrial behaviors constitute a significant contribution to the enrichment of the quality of theoretical analysis in this epistemic domain. A very significant industrial implication of this study outcome is one evidencing the positive association between initiating structure leadership behavior and quit intentions among Civil Servants in Anambra State.

Employers as well as relevant authorities within the Civil Service system may therefore be able to leverage the availed insight to whittle down proclivities toward quit ideations among Civil Servants in Anambra State by discouraging exclusivist, militaristic and autocratic leadership behaviors and diligently promoting leadership cultures that guarantees respect for, and broad-based participation by employees – especially on issues directly affecting their work lives.

Limitations of Study and future research

A key limitation of this study had to do with the integrity of the instrument used to measure the leadership variable – the LBDQ-XII. Even though the instrument was designed to measure initiating structure and consideration leadership behaviors, it contained some psychometric contradictions. The initiating structure and consideration leadership behaviors were found to be correlated (Weissenberg & Kavanagh, 1972) as well as independent (Schriesheim & Kerr, 1974).

Also, the LBDQ-XII was developed by Stogdill in 1963 with the language of those times and has not enjoyed extensive use as other leadership Scales. The wording of the instrument in not-very-contemporary language is believed to constitute a veritable source of limitation to the study.

The universe of the sample source was also a vital issue here. The sample study was drawn exclusively from a population of Civil Servants in Anambra State, South-East Nigeria. This raises some integrity issues concerning the generalizability of the findings of this study to other populations outside the Civil Service structure.

Again, the fact that the sample was drawn from the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria, puts a question mark on the prospects of extrapolation of the study findings to other geopolitical zones of the country with different socio-cultural and ethno-religious peculiarities.

Similarly, this study, rather than being longitudinal, was cross-sectional in design; and for that reason, the findings are likely to be undermined by common method variance. Also, that the leadership variable explains only 46% of the variance in quit intentions tends to point to other possible variables that could be implicated but not captured in this study. It constitutes some limitations somewhat on the outcome of this study; and calls for future investigations. .

Conclusion

The study examined the predictive impacts of perceived leadership styles on quit ideations among a sample of Civil Servants in Anambra State. An integral of the focus was to examine the extent to which convergence could be established between the outcome of this study and the findings of previous studies. This objective is in tandem with Kantowitz, Roediger & Elme's (1994) assertion that converging operations constitute veritable means for enhancing the generalizability of scientific results.

Results obtained from this study substantially converged with findings of past studies in which the relationship between perceived leadership styles and quit ideations were agenda issues. The study outcome revealed that perceptions of consideration leadership dispositions not only attenuate contemplation of quit intentions among employees, but also significantly stimulates and bolsters employer-employee emotional bonds that trigger the adoption of a variety of discretionary behaviors, which are beneficial to the organization.

Aside from the highlighted convergences, this study contributes in a definite way to furthering and deepening the knowledge and understanding of the specific and general workplace dynamics within the Civil Service structure that tend to predispose these employees to the organizationally inimical ideation of membership cessation.

The socio-psychological import of this study finding would appear to persuade to the effect that perceived offensive leadership behaviors, initially proceed to awaken the consciousness of a stifling category in the industrial firmament, of which if an appraisal of the prospects of its permanence is established, the individual, in temporary psychological disequilibrium, is nudged into a frantic search for a suitable job alternative, in order to extricate self from the disorientating climate foisted by the stifling category, and regain composure.

This study outcome therefore tends to persuade to the logic that the employee's severance intention, fundamentally draws capacitation from the perceived repressive industrial atmosphere foisted and entrenched by the prevailing leadership disposition in the work arena. It is thus expected that Governments at the various hierarchies of authority, should be able to tap into the outcome of this study, to identify those workplace variables to isolate, promote and institutionalize, to encourage the retention of valuable employees in the Civil Service and hedge against the vast concomitants often associated with exit ideations, and the very probable, actual attritions.

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