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RESEARCH ARTICLE

WORKPLACE EQUITY SENSITIVITY AS A VERITABLE TOOL FOR ENHANCING JOB SATISFACTION IN SELECTED MANUFACTURING FIRMS IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Casualization also referred to as the nonstandard work mode is prevalent in virtually all sectors of the Nigerian economy and the manufacturing industry is no exception. The casual work arrangement has become a wide spread phenomenon already in Nigeria manufacturing industry due to high rate of unemployment occasioned by the oversaturation of manpower in the labour market. This paper takes a departure from previous studies by examining the nexus between work place equity sensitivity (WPES) and job satisfaction using three elected manufacturing firms in Ogun State as reference point. The study was grounded on the Equity Theory and The Two-Factor Theory respectively. The study adopted a survey research design where a sample of one hundred and twenty (120) casual workers from three manufacturing firms in Agbara, Ogun State, Nigeria served as unit of analysis for the study. Findings from the study indicated that there exist a significant relationship between job satisfaction and work place equity sensitivity. In addition, a significant relationship was found to exist between the entitled and pay satisfaction. From the foregoing, the study concluded that the perception of equity of casual workers would go a long way in ensuring their satisfaction on the job. As a result, the study recommended that management of manufacturing firms in Nigeria should ensure pay equity and not necessarily equality, if job satisfaction is to be attained among casual workers.

KEYWORDS

Benevolent, Casual worker, Entitled, Job satisfaction, Pay, Work itself and Work Place Equity Sensitivity

Introduction

The phenomenon of casualization in Nigeria has become an unavoidable malady, which has come to stay. Various attempts to eliminate or subsidize it adoption has proven unsuccessful, mostly due to the increase of private enterprises, corruption in government agencies and gaps in the Nigeria labour laws and other statutory. (Eyongdi, 2015). Rather than focusing on the rights and wrongs of this work system which many scholars in time past have investigated, the issue of job satisfaction for the casual worker despite the precarious work conditions calls for more studies, especially

when the motivating factors for casual workers are flexibility and pay. The later which for most casual workers is not commensurate with the value of work done. Studies have it that most casual workers are not satisfied with their pay. (Fapohunda, 2012, Rasak, 2012, Oyenouru, 2011).

Thus, pay dissatisfaction arise mostly when pay packages of casual workers is compared with that of the permanent regular workers, even when same quantity and quality of work is done. It is of the assumption that if the pay and other dimensions of job satisfaction is distributed fairly in commensurate with work done with the duration

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of tenure being the only difference between the casual worker and the permanent worker, there will be increase in job satisfaction for the casual worker even if he/she knows that his tenure is limited. Hence, the casual worker if he earns same pay with the permanent employee of same organisation with same qualification and experience, doing same jobs will feel more satisfied with his/her job. However the response and perception of the casual worker towards this equity approach seem to be uncertain. There are possibilities of negative or positive response if these changes are effected in an organization. It is thus the thrust of this study to investigate the relationship between work place equity sensitivity and job satisfaction.

The construct, workplace equity, became a prominent issue of study in the mid 1983 when the Canadian government enacted the employment equity act of 1986. Though the Act was focused on achieving workplace equity by making sure that ability and qualification are the only criteria for employment opportunities, benefits and advancement. It most concern was to correct the disadvantages of experienced by four groups of people which includes women, visible minorities, aboriginal people and persons with disabilities (Cardi, 1993). Steinhous and Perry (1996) as cited in Donthu and Sabramanyam (2022) posit that satisfied workers are not likely to indicate low performance and are normally highly productive identifying with the organizational goals and values. Thus, there is a chain that connects the effect of workers satisfaction to works performance and the organisational productivity. Hence, organizations stand a chance of increasing productivity if the casual workers who make over 50% of the manufacturing companies in Nigeria are experiencing increasing job satisfaction.

Workers tend to be satisfied when they are aware that reward for the work done is commensurate with the quantity and quality of work done hence employers will do justice when the ensure that rewards are always consistent to work done. Thereby reducing the chances of workers feeling dissatisfied; which will definitely occur when there are disparities in reward/payment for the same job in same organization.

Statement of the Problem

There is an assumption that the unfair treatment of casual workers despite their qualification and input to production has it effect on their performance on the job. Studies such as Fapohunda, (2012), Bamidele (2013) are of the opinion that improvement in the work conditions of the casual workers will engender their positive performance and productivity. In a bid to ensure productivity, job satisfaction of the casual workers need to be determined. How will the casual worker respond to indicators that ensures job satisfaction? Will they respond negatively, positively or indifferent? Most study of equity sensitivity adopts the dimensions; benevolent, entitled and equity sensitive by Huseman, Hatfield and Miles (1987), little existing research has measured WPES using the separate dimensions of WPES which are Benevolent and Entitled as identified by David and Ding (2008). However, as David and Ding argued that equity sensitive is a middle ground in which any worker might belong to even though such worker has traits of benevolent or entitled; hence, they removed the middle ground. Also there exist no existing findings on the relationship between WPES and Job satisfaction among casual workers in Nigeria. The purpose of the study is to investigate the relationship

between WPES and Job satisfaction among casual workers in selected manufacturing industries in Nigeria.

Research Objective

The principal objective of this study was to investigate Workplace Equity Sensitivity and Job Satisfaction among selected manufacturing firms in Lagos, Nigeria.

The specific objectives are to: Examine if there exists any significant relationship between the benevolent and work itself; and Investigate if there exist any significant relationship between the entitled and pay Satisfaction.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in the study

H01: There exists no significant relationship between the benevolent and work itself.

H02: No significant relationship exist between the entitled and pay satisfaction

Conceptual Review

Work Place Equity

Equity is conceived as the presence of fairness and justice in the distribution of rewards and outcome such as payments and other work conditions. The concept is mostly associated with politics and sociology. (Son, 2011). Though a definite definition of the concept has been difficult to arrive at by scholars, however for the purpose of this study some perception of the concept by scholars would be considered.

Miles (2022) conceives work place equity as the idea that all workers are provided with fair and equal opportunities based on individual qualification and needs with reward in commensurate. Thus, her perception of equity implies a workplace that is void of any form of discrimination and prejudice. Though in her study she was particular about the less privileged persons who are discriminated because of their race and disabilities, however, in the Nigeria work environment there exist discrimination and an absence of fairness and justice in the work conditions and pay of casual workers when compared with the permanent employees.

Burrus and Matterns (2010) assert that workplace equity is an element used in ascertaining a fair distribution of outcome which they refer to as distributive justice. The concern for distributive justice became predominant as the question of how do people determine whether a payment is fair or not arise.

Work Place Equity Sensitivity

The idea of Equity sensitivity by Huseman et al (1987) came as an improvement on the equity theory by Adams (1963) with the objective of understanding the workers perception of equity. WPES is based on the premise that workers respond and perceive WPE differently in the work place which could be traceable to factors like their age, religion, tribe, experience, sex, etc. (Jason, 2008). There are

three dimensions that explain individual response to WPE as observed by Huseman, Hatfield and Miles (1987). These include

- I. The Benevolent
- II. The Equity Sensitive
- III. The Entitled

The Benevolent: These represents workers who are highly benevolent are unresponsive when their reward is lower when compared to other workers in the same organisation. In other words these workers have higher tolerance for being under-rewarded. This set of workers respond or perceives equity this way for three reasons;

1. Maybe there are naturally cooperative and want the organisation to move forward.
2. They might be highly empathetic and always want to help other people feel better.
3. Also, in a bid to attract societal approval and boost their self-image; employees might take this position of irresponsiveness. (Huseman et al, 1987)
4. Finally religious conviction could be another reason; adhering strictly to the religious teaching of contentment and the ultimate plan of God for their lives. This also implies not being covetous.

The Equity Sensitive: These are workers who prefer that the reward for a quantity and quality of work done by one person should be equal to that of another worker who does the same quantity and quality of work in the same organisation. This is a common perception of worker towards WPE. They generally prefer the equity ratio mostly because they feel distress when under-rewarded and guilty when over-rewarded.

The Entitled: These groups of workers are of a higher perception in that they are very responsive to equity and beyond that are willing to always be over rewarded than others. These workers who are highly entitled possess a relatively higher sensitivity to differences in reward, are more reactive emotionally and are willing to lie or cheat in order to receive the highest reward. The entitled worker has a higher negative effect. (Huseman et al, 1987)

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a primary factor that influences human behavior in the workplace. It is the degree of positive or negative feeling an individual have about his/her job. (Wood & Weasmer, 2008). It also connotes the workers feelings about the internal and external conditions and elements of the job. As a result of it importance, studies and investigations have been carried out by scholars in analyzing, understanding and measuring the construct and it effect and relationship with other variable in the work place. Job satisfaction is conceived to be impacted by emotion related to personality trait because studies have inferred that it has a positive relationship with pleasurable emotional state (Locke, 1976).

Job satisfaction can also be determined by how a worker feels about his/her job and the conditions surrounding the job such as supervision, organization's policies and processes, working condition, benefits, etc. (Gibson et al, 1979). Employees will therefore experience increasing job satisfaction as they have positive responses towards these work

environment and conditions (Dubrin, 1997). Luthans (2002), identified five dimensions in determining job satisfaction which include; **work itself, pay, promotion opportunities, supervision and co-workers**. However this study adopts pay and work itself as the indicators for measuring or determining the job satisfaction of casual workers. Firstly, to reduce the items on the data collection instrument, as most respondents are not willing to give their attention and time effectively when there are so many items to be responded to. Also pay satisfaction and the work itself has proven to be a major point of disparity and concern for the casual workers.

As observed by Fapohunda (2012) that the work conditions the casual workers are exposed to and their pay put them in the position of being extorted compared to the condition of work and pay of the permanent workers. Similar observations were made by (Rasak, 2012; Oyenouru 2011). Therefore in determining the job satisfaction of a casual worker in this study the pay and work itself are the indicators to be examined. However the study does not insinuate that the other items are not vital in measuring job satisfaction but for the purpose of this study just two of it indicators are used to determine the variable. On this premise the study therefore adopt pay satisfaction and work itself as the indicators for job satisfaction.

Pay

Greenberg and Baron (1995) as cited in Samases and Subramanya (2022), posited that workers job satisfaction is highly influenced or affected by the organization's pay system. Thus the utmost objective of every pay system is that employees be rewarded in a manner commensurate with the quality and quantity of work done; so as to achieve a fair, equitable and consistent pay system that is in line with the organizational values for the achievement of the set goals. (Armstrog & Murlis, 1998)

Lawler (1981) posits that pay system that is fair and equal would engender job satisfaction. He also went further to assert that pay element like bonuses and annual salary increment will have a more pronounced effect on employees' job satisfaction. Therefore, this study conceives pay as monetary reward, incentives and bonuses for work done which is commensurate with the quality and quantity of work done salary increment inclusive.

Work Itself

Work itself in the words of Samases and Subramanya (2022) is the working environment and conditions of the workers and their perception about the task/responsibilities. Cohen, Panter and Turan (2013) identifies some factors as indicators for measuring employee work itself. This include; ability to utilization, achievement, activity, authority, creativity, independence, responsibility and variety. This has a way of creating a sense of responsibility and achievement for the employee. Thus the employees' perception of his work is very vital. Questions such as, What does the employee thinks about his/her current work? Does he consider it as fun? Comfortable, challenging or respected by others? Will reveal an employee's feeling towards his/her work.

Theoretical Review

The study adopts the equity theory by Adams (1965) and the two factor theory by Fredrick Hertzberg (1959)

The Equity Theory

The equity theory propounded by Adams (1965) is quite an established theory that proposes that people who feel they are receiving enough compared to another doing the same quantity of work may feel under benefitted, while people who feel they are receiving too much compared to another doing same quantity of work may feel over benefitted. The major thrust of the theory is that payment should be considered fair if the payment for work done is perceived to be comparable to the ratio of payment of work done for others. Huseman et al (1987), David and Bing (2008) criticized the equity theory on the premise that response to equity are different since every person does not respond to equity in the same way. While some workers will respond positively, some might respond negatively and others might just be indifferent. Their criticism gave rise to equity sensitivity by Huseman et al (1987)

The Two-Factor Theory

Fredrick Herzberg propounded the two-factor theory in 1959. The theory identified two factors in ensuring job satisfaction of workers. These factors are the motivation factors and the hygiene factors. To him the motivation factors are intrinsic factors which include recognition, involvement in decision making, and sense of importance and so on. It is believed that the presence of these motivation factors will bring about job satisfaction. On the other hand the hygiene factors are extrinsic items like pay, work conditions, fringe benefit etc. The basic thrust of this theory is that the hygiene factors do not bring about job satisfaction but the absence of them will result to dissatisfaction of workers. These are also known as the maintaining factors. To Herzberg the opposite of satisfaction is not dissatisfaction but rather 'no satisfaction'.

The theory has been criticized by many scholars on many grounds. Firstly, Specter (1972), Yousef (2000) and Levy (2003) all discovered that the extrinsic factors which is the hygiene factors such as work environment and supervision have positive effect towards job satisfaction and not only prevent dissatisfaction as opined by Hertzberg. Secondly, a study conducted by Ibrahim and Boerhaneddin (2010) also confirmed that compensation has a significant positive impact on job satisfaction.

Empirical Review

Relationship between the Benevolent and Work Itself

Sultan and Kamran (2011) in their study titled; equity sensitivity predicting job satisfaction and commitment having examined 300 respondents with 150 male and 150 females discovered that the benevolence has a positive relationship with work itself with a p value <.05 with $r=1.732$

West (2018) who investigated the relationship between the benevolence and job satisfaction with entitled as a moderating variable. The study discovered that a significant relationship exist between benevolence and job satisfaction with the p value < .05 and the $r = 350$ but also identified a significant negative relationship between entitlement and job satisfaction with the p value < .05 and the $r= -336$ using Pearson correlation. The study

adopted the dimension of equity sensitivity modified by David and Bing (2008) which modified the dimension of Huseman (1987) from three to two taking out equity sensitivity. They argued that the initial position by Huseman (1987) identified those who are indifferent to equity as equity sensitive when in reality these persons have moderately high level of benevolence and entitlement. Thus employee should grouped on the two categories. However in the perception of Huseman there are people in the organization that are equity sensitive these are people who respond positively to equity.

Relationship between the Entitled and Pay Satisfaction

Judge (1993) who reported in his study that pay negatively impacted the entitled. He went further to assert that the entitled performs less when they get more pay than what is justified. This he attribute to the superiority feeling the entitled possess when compared to others that give them a perception that their increase pay put them ahead and better than others hence they need exercise less effort.

Laila (2019) who also investigated the correlation between job satisfaction and the role of equity sensitivity towards career decision among expatriate oil and Gas Company in Malaysia, discovered that there exist a positive relationship with equity and job satisfaction amidst her study population. The relationship according to her findings was higher and at a moderate level when examined with career decision making.

Methodology

The aim of this study is to test the above hypotheses to investigate the relationship between WPES and job satisfaction. The unit of analysis in this study is the individual casual worker from selected manufacturing companies in Nigeria. The study was conducted with the aid of self-administered questionnaires which are designed in line with the dimensions of the variables under study.

Research Design

The study adopted the Job satisfaction survey designed by Specter (1972) and the Equity sensitivity questionnaire by Davidson and Bing (2008). Five point Likert scale was used to measure strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree and strongly agree.

Population of the Study

The total population of this study is 320 casual staff. A population is made up of all elements, subjects or observation relating to a particular phenomenon of interest to the researcher. The population cut across the total number of casual staff in the organizations of study as shown below:

Table 1: Population of casual Employees in the selected Manufacturing Firms

Organization	Total Number of Casual Workers
Nestle	115
Beloxxi	105
Beta Glass	100
Total	320

Source: Researchers fieldwork, (2024)

Study Samples and Sampling Procedures

A total number of 170 casual workers were selected across three manufacturing companies within Agbara, Ogun State Nigeria as the sample for this study using convenient sampling method (purposive sampling). A total of 170 questionnaires were distributed across three manufacturing companies which includes Nestle Nigeria, Beloxxi Nigeria and BETA Glass Ltd. The purposive and convenience sampling techniques were used in this study.

Determination of Sample Size for the Study

The sample size was calculated based on proportionate ratio and affixation criterion (PAC). This sample size adopted framework adopted was calculated by multiplying the population of the sampled organisations by the sample size and dividing with total population. The calculation is stated below to aid proper understanding.

$$\frac{\text{Population of the Sampled Organisations} * \text{Sample Size}}{\text{Total population}}$$

Table II: Distribution of Questionnaire according to Sample Size

S/N	Name of Organisations	Population	Proportion	Sample Size for the Study
1.	Nestle	115	$\frac{115*170}{320}$	61
2.	Beloxxi	105	$\frac{105*170}{320}$	56
3.	Beta Glass	100	$\frac{100*170}{320}$	53
	Total	320		170

Source: Researchers Framework, (2024)

Reliability and Validity of Research Instrument

Table III: Composite Reliability

Variables	Cronbach Alpha
Payment	0.857
Work itself	0.767
Benevolent	0.912
Entitled	0.783

Source: Researchers Computation, (2024)

The above table shows the composite reliability of the four factors/indicators for this study with the Cronbach Alpha for each factor. A reliability coefficient of .70 or higher is considered accepted. The instrument/ measures adopted to investigate job satisfaction and work place equity sensitivity have already been validated by other researchers as stated earlier. Samases and Subramanya (2022) validated this instrument in their study.

Analysis and Discussions

Under this section, the analyses of data obtained from the participants of the study were presented by the researchers. Initially, a total of One

hundred and seventy (170) questionnaires were administered to three selected Manufacturing Firms in Agbara Area of Ogun State. Obtained responses were analysed which formed the basis on which conclusion was made in this study.

Table IV: Result on Questionnaire Administration

Detailed response Rate	Distributed Copies	Retrieved Copies	Copies not Retrieved	Used Copies
Total	170	153	17	120

Source: Field Survey, (2024)

The above table reflected that the researchers administered 170 copies of questionnaires where 153 were retrieved and 120 copies of the questionnaires were found usable; this showed a response rate of 71.0%.

Test of hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Relationship between Benevolent an Work itself

		Benevolent	Work Itself
Benevolent	Pearson Correlation	1	.670**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	120	120
Work itself	Pearson Correlation	.670**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	120	120

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

Hypothesis 2: Relationship between the entitle an pay

		Entitled	Pay
Entitled	Pearson Correlation	1	.963**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	120	120
PAY	Pearson Correlation	.963**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	120	120

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

Interpretation and Discussion of Findings

Firstly, the study discovered that there is a significant positive relationship between the benevolent and works itself with an r value of .670 which signifies a strong relationship. This therefore implies that people who respond to WPES as this will be highly motivated by the work itself. This finding supports the findings of West (2018) who also arrived at a similar conclusion after his investigation. The findings also support the assertion of the two factor theory. Although, according to Herzberg works itself is a hygiene factor but Yousef

(2000) and Levy (2003) discovered that hygiene factors such as work itself also engender job satisfaction.

Secondly, the study also discovered a significant positive relationship between the entitled and pay as a dimension of job satisfaction. This also implies that an increase in pay will engender pay satisfaction of the entitled casual workers. Chances are that decrease pay will also lead to 'no satisfaction'. The findings also support the Equity theory by Adams (1968) as the entitled are highly sensitive to WPE. It also supports the findings of Judge (1973) who discovered that pay has a negative impact on Entitled. That is the entitled are less responsive when the pay increases and more responsive as pay decreases.

Conclusion

The study examined workplace equity sensitivity as a veritable tool for enhancing job satisfaction in selected manufacturing firms in Ogun State, Nigeria. From the study outcome, it was discovered that a significant positive relationship exist between all the dimensions employed in proxying the variables of the study. Many scholars have opined for the jettisoning of the casual work arrangement, however this system has remained in fact still increasing in Nigeria where almost every sector in the economy practice one form of casual work arrangement or the other. This study is coming from a realist perspective that it is a vain task clamoring for the ousting of the casual work arrangement instead the satisfaction of the casual worker and how the arrangement can be improved to ensure job satisfaction of the casual worker is thus the rationale of this work. The findings of this study have therefore suggested that a positive significant relationship exist between job satisfaction and WPE sensitivity. Therefore every measure as suggested by this study to ensure equity will in turn ensure the satisfaction of the casual worker.

Recommendations

The study suggests the following:

Having discovered that pay satisfaction for the entitled casual worker increases as pay increases and commensurate with work done, organizations should ensure pay equity and not necessarily equality. That is workers should be rewarded in commensurate with the quality and quantity of work done, experience and qualification, undermining if he/she is a casual worker or a permanent employee.

Casual workers who performed outstandingly should be recognized and rewarded too. Recognition and reward for outstanding performance should not be limited to permanent employees alone.

This study also calls for a clear legislation for the protection of the casual workers right; emphasizing that the only discrepancy between the casual worker and the permanent employee should be in job security and job tenure. Other areas such as pay, benefits, and work conditions should be on equity base. Although there are gray legal provisions which casual workers can benefit from presently however, clear statute protecting the interest of the casual worker need to be enacted.

Suggestion for Further Studies

The study also suggests a further study of WPES as it relate with work commitment of casual workers. Also similar study can also be carried out in other sectors too examining the regular/permanent employees.

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