## PERSONAL VALUES, PSYCHOLOGICAL ATTACHMENT AS CORRELATES OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AMONG PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYEES IN SOUTH-WEST NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Organizational commitment is essential to the success of any organization, and it is dependent on a range of factors, including personal values and psychological attachment. The study examined the interrelationship between personal values, psychological attachment, and organizational commitment among public service employees in South-West Nigeria. The study employed descriptive survey research design of the ex post facto type, and data were collected using a set of four self-administered questionnaires from 380 public service workers. The questionnaires consist of three sections: personal values, psychological attachment, and organizational commitment. Data gathered were analyzed by means of descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and regression analysis at the .05 significance level. The results showed that personal values significantly predicted organizational commitment and psychological attachment significantly predicted organizational commitment among public service employees in South-West Nigeria. It is therefore recommended that managers of public service organizations should pay greater attention to personal values and psychological attachment among employees in order to enhance organizational commitment and optimal productivity.

Keywords: Personal Values, Psychological Attachment, Organizational Commitment, Public Service, South-West Nigeria
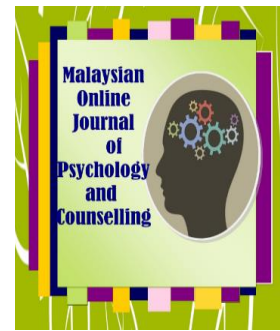
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INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian public service sector is a critical component of the country's economy and plays a significant role in the provision of essential services to citizens. Despite its importance, the sector has faced several challenges, including inadequate funding, corruption, and a shortage of qualified personnel. According to Achimugu, Stephen and Aliyu (2013), public service in Nigeria is replete with story of scandals that border on fraud, abuse of office, lack of accountability among other vices and these have affected the performance of public in their quest for improved and efficient service delivery. Lawal and Owolabi (2012) further affirmed that because of the countervailing power that has been lacking, government officials in Nigeria tend to serve their personal interest while in office without any fear of being called to account for their actions. These challenges have contributed to a decline in the quality of public service delivery in Nigeria. One key factor that can affect the performance of public service employees is their level of commitment to the organizations where they work. Organizational commitment is analogous to employee's psychological attachment to their organizations and their willingness to work towards its goals. Organizational commitment has also been described as the degree to which employees identify with and are willing to remain with an organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Organizational commitment is essential for the success of any organization, as it is linked to various positive outcomes such as job satisfaction, job performance, and lower turnover intentions (Lam & Zhang, 2016). Previous research has indicated that high organizational commitment is connected with better job performance, lower turnover rates, and greater job satisfaction. Several factors have been identified to influence organizational commitment, including personal values and psychological attachment (Lodahl & Kejner, 1965).

Personal values are also important in shaping individuals' behavior and attitudes towards work. Personal values are the beliefs and principles that individuals hold dear and influence their decision-making and behavior. Personal values are generally regarded as life's major principles which are highly important elements in any organization with the capacity to affect workers' performance. Schwartz (1992) assert that personal values of employees are highlighted in their work behaviour and can have a serious effect on organizational commitment. Understanding employees' personal values can help organizations create a work environment that aligns with employees' values, thereby increasing their job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

The concept of psychological attachment has appeared as a propitious area of research in the field of organizational psychology in contemporary times (Ali, Rehman, Ali, Yousaf, & Zia, 2018; Feldman & Ng, 2017). Psychological attachment can be defined as the affection, bond or tie that an employee forms between himself or herself and his or her organization. It is an emotional bond with a specific person that endures across time and space. It has been indicated that psychological attachment is critical as it increases the commitment of workers and helps an organization to stay ahead of its competitors (Feldman & Ng, 2017). Dedicated and dependable workers provide various benefits to the organizations where they work and these may include employees working extra hours, projecting themselves as good representatives of their organizations, as well as, going beyond the rules and standards to aid the organization in functioning effectively (Ali *et al.,* 2018; Bennett & Durkin, 2010; Feldman & Ng, 2017). Employees that are psychologically attached to the organization are punctual at work and are usually more inspired to put in additional efforts, while, conversely, workers with low level of psychological attachment are less inspired. They also give more rationalization for absenteeism such as illness, repeatedly arrive late for work, and have increased rates of unplanned absence as compared to highly committed employees.

Many studies have been carried out on effectiveness and efficiency of public service in Nigeria. These studies were reactions to accusations of ineptitude and gross inefficiency in the Nigerian public service. However, there is a dearth of studies on the relationship between personal values, psychological attachment and organizational commitment of the workers in these organizations. It is significant to note that psychological attachment is among the factors that normally lead to increased morale, great inspiration, sound organizational climate and optimal productivity. Organizations need workers that are psychologically attached to their organizations and their work in order to comprehend the global economic competition.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The general perception of an average Nigerian is that the public service is grossly inefficient in the performance of its duties with special reference to epileptic service delivery system. The government has responded with various public service reforms aimed at repositioning the public service for efficient service delivery. In spite of these efforts by the government, there has not been much visible improvement in the public perception of the public service in Nigeria. Identified as culprits for the inefficiency are – corruption, shortage of qualified personnel and poor funding of the various ministries and departments.

Therefore, this study investigated the correlation between personal values, psychological attachment, and organizational commitment among public service employees in South-West Nigeria. Specifically, the study explored the personal values that are most important to public service employees in South-West Nigeria and how these values influence their psychological attachment to their organizations and their level of organizational commitment. The findings from this study could provide insights into how public service organizations in Nigeria can improve employees' job satisfaction and performance by creating a work environment that aligns with employees' personal values.

Hypotheses
Ho1: Personal values will not significantly predict organizational commitment among public service employees in South-West Nigeria.

Ho2: Psychological attachment will not significantly predict organizational commitment among public service employees in South-West Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

Design, Population, Sample, and Sampling Technique
The study made use of descriptive survey research design of the *ex post facto* type since the variables of the study were not manipulated or controlled but were only described as they already exist among the participants. The population comprised of all public service employees in South-West Nigeria. A sample size of 380 public service employees was used in this study. The participants were selected through the stratified random sampling technique from the six states of South-West geo-political zone of Nigeria.

Four instruments were deployed to aid data gathering. Demographic Data Inventory (DDI), Organizational Commitment Scale (OCS), Personal Values Scale (PVS) and Organizational Identification Questionnaire (OIQ).

Demographic Data Inventory (DDI) having five items was developed by the researchers to assess the demographic characteristics of the respondents, namely, gender, age, cadre, academic qualification, and work experience.

Organizational Commitment Scale (OCS) which the researchers adopted was developed by Mowday, Porter, and Steers (2014) and has been widely used in various previous studies to measure workers' commitment to their job or organization. The researchers assessed the reliability of the instrument and reported a Cronbach's alpha of .90 which indicated that the items on the scale are internally consistent with one another. The analysis of the results obtained revealed a coefficient of stability of .84 which indicated that the instrument yields stable scores over time.

The researchers also adopted Personal Values Scale (PVS) which was developed by Scott (1965) to measure personal values using 12 sub-scales with four to six items per scale. The sub-scales measure the following: intellectualism, kindness, social skills, loyalty, academic achievement, physical development, status, honesty, religiousness, self-control, creativity, and independence.

Furthermore, the researchers adopted Organizational Identification Questionnaire (OIQ) which was also developed by Cheney (1983) and was used to measure psychological attachment. It contained 25 items which were designed to assess both the product and the process of identification. It was designed to reflect membership, loyalty, and similarity.

To establish content and construct validity of the instrument, it was given to colleagues and other experts in the relevant fields. The validated instrument was thereafter subjected to test-retest method to establish the reliability of the instrument. The result indicated r = 0.78.

Three hundred and eighty copies of the instruments were administered. Permission to administer the instruments was obtained from the most senior officer in each of the public organizations of interest. After obtaining this consent, the time scheduled for the actual data collection exercise was fixed. The researchers personally administered the instruments on the available public servants in the conference room of each of the organizations after explaining the nature and purpose of the study to them and obtaining their consent to participate in it. Three hundred and fifty-nine (359) copies of the administered instruments were retrieved, giving an attrition rate of 5.5%. Data collected were analyzed using correlation analysis and regression analysis at 0.05 level of confidence.

RESULTS

Table 1: Demographic information of respondents indicating age, sex and educational status.

	Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Age	Below 30	84	23.4	23.4
	31-40	72	20.1	43.5
	41-50	130	36.2	79.7
	Above 50	73	20.3	100.0
	Total	359	100.0	
Sex	Male	236	65.7	65.7
	Female	123	34.3	100.0
	Total	359	100.0	

Senior School Certificate	73	20.3	20.3
OND/NCE/A' Level	46	12.8	33.1
First Degree	184	51.3	84.4
Postgraduate Degree	56	15.6	100.0
Total	120	100.0	

Table 1 above showed that according to age, 84 representing (23.4%) of the respondents were 30 years and below, 72 representing (20.1%) of the respondents were between the ages of 31 and 40 years, 130 representing (36.2%) of the respondents were between the ages of 41 and 50 years, 73 representing (20.3%) of the respondents were above 50 years. Analysis showed that the majority of the respondents were between the ages of 41 and 50 years with 130 (36.2%).

Table 1 above also indicated that according to sex, 236 representing (65.7%) of the respondents were male while 123 representing (34.3%) of the respondents were females. Analysis revealed that, majority of the respondents were male with 236 (65.0%). This is because public service is still a male dominated job in Nigeria. The Table further indicated that the majority of the workers have first degree certificates with 183 representing 51.3% of the respondents. It indicated that the majority of workers in the public service are well educated to perform the functions required of them.

Hypothesis One
Personal values will not significantly predict organizational commitment among public service employees in South-West Nigeria.

Table 2: Coefficients of the simple linear regression analysis for the impact of personal values on organizational commitment

	B	Std Error	β	T	Sig.
(Constant)	26.936	2.749		18.402	.000
Personal Values	.349	.031	.370	7.846	.000

Dependent variable: Organizational Commitment

Table 2 revealed significant results (β = .370, t = 7.846, $p < .05$). The null hypothesis is therefore rejected while the alternative hypothesis is accepted, showing that personal values will significantly predict organizational commitment among public service employees in South-West Nigeria. Table 2 further showed that personal values is positively associated with organizational commitment and that the latter can be predicted from the former by means of the regression equation:

Organizational Commitment = 0.349 x Personal Values + 26.936

Hypothesis Two
Psychological attachment will not significantly predict organizational commitment among public service employees in South-West Nigeria.

Table 3: Coefficients of the Simple Linear Regression Analysis for the Impact of Psychological Attachment On Organizational Commitment

	B	Std Error	β	T	Sig.
(Constant)	17.017	7.942		21.006	.000
Psychological Attachment	.295	.053	.319	5.395	.000

Dependent variable: Organizational Commitment

Table 3 revealed significant results (β = .319, t = 5.395, *p* < .05). The null hypothesis is therefore rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is upheld, showing that psychological attachment will significantly predict organizational commitment among public service employees in South-West Nigeria. Nigeria. Table 3 further revealed that psychological attachment is positively associated with organizational commitment and that the latter can be predicted from the former by means of the regression equation:

Organizational Commitment = 0.295 x Psychological Attachment + 17.017.

DISCUSSION

The investigation of personal values, psychological attachment and organizational commitment among public service employees in South-West Nigeria is speculative and was prompted by the need to reverse the lackadaisical attitudes of most public servants to work and enhance their commitment to their organizations. To achieve this, two hypotheses were brought forward to serve as guide while searching for evidence.

The first null hypothesis stated that personal values will not significantly predict organizational commitment among public service employees in South-West Nigeria. A test of this hypothesis resulted in its rejection and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis that personal values will significantly predict organizational commitment among public service employees in South-West Nigeria. This finding is in line with Schwartz (1992) who through his classical theory of basic human values affirms that employees' personal values are reflected in their work attitudes and influence organizational commitment. From the findings as shown in table 2, it is evident that personal value is an essential factor for workers to be committed to their organization. Where little attention is given to personal values, employees tend to look focused and see each passing day at their place of work as just another day. This will surely affect their commitment to the success of the organization. Another angle to looking at personal values in an organization is to place personal values of employees' side by side with that of the employers. Finegan (2000) asserted that a match between personal values of individual employees and their employers' values can have a positive impact on employees' organizational commitment because employees are more than likely to feel more comfortable in a work environment where values are identical or shared.

The second null hypothesis stated that psychological attachment will not significantly predict organizational commitment among public service employees in South-West Nigeria. A test of this hypothesis resulted in its rejection and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis that psychological attachment will significantly predict organizational commitment among public service employees in South-West Nigeria. This finding agreed with that of Feldman and Ng (2017) who found that psychological attachment enhances productivity and organizational commitment of employees. It is an accepted fact that psychological attachment of workers to an organization is an indication that

such employees will devote more attention and time to the growth and success of such an organization. With this optimal productivity and efficiency is assured. The finding of this study is also corroborated by the findings of Potgieter, Coetzee and Ferreira (2021) where they suggested that organizations should navigate a way to engage in intervention that will enhance employees' psychological attachment to their organization because this will increase productivity and also create a positive attitude for career well-being and development among the workers.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined personal values, psychological attachment as correlates of organizational commitment among public service employees in South-West Nigeria. It concluded that both personal value and psychological attachment significantly impacted organizational commitment among workers in public services in South-West Nigeria.

The following recommendations are put forward, considering the findings of this study:
1. Managers of the organization should pay greater attention to personal values among employees. Positive values should be fostered and aligned with the goals, objectives and values of the organization.
2. Managers of the organization should foster and strengthen the psychological attachment of employees to the organization. Policies such as welfare programmes, motivation and reinforcements (i.e., reward and punishment) that can increase psychological attachment should be introduced or improved upon. This can be done by acknowledging and rewarding positive behaviours and imposing sanctions on negative behaviours.
3. Seminars, workshops, and training programmes focusing on personal values and promoting psychological attachment should be organized for public service employees in order to provide them with the necessary information and skills to increase their organizational commitment and subsequent organizational productivity.
4. Organizations should continuously strive to improve the working conditions of employees through making provisions for the needs, aspirations and concerns of staff.
5. Future research should investigate the influence of other employee characteristics such as the organizational citizenship behaviour and workplace relationship on organizational commitment in order to have a more comprehensive understanding of employees' organizational commitment.

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