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EMPLOYEE CREATIVE BEHAVIOUR: A PREDICTIVE STUDY OF PERCEIVED RELATIONAL INJUSTICE AND WORKPLACE OSTRACISM AMONG PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS

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ABSTRACT

The global pandemic and its concomitant effects on global economy has adversely impeded workplace creativity and workplace effectiveness especially in Africa. The present study examined perceived relational injustice and workplace ostracism as predictors of employee creative behaviour in the public sector. Participants in the study were one hundred and forty-six (146) employees drawn from public sector. They consist of 85 female and 61 male. The age of the participants range from 27 to 57 years with age mean of 41.55 and standard deviation of 7.14. Simple random sampling and accidental sampling technique were used to select the participants. The Employee's Creative Behaviour Scale, Perceived Relational Injustice Scale and Workplace Ostracism were used for the data generation. The study adopted correlational design and Hierarchical Multiple-Linear Regression statistics as appropriate statistics for analyses of the data. Findings indicated that no significant prediction between perceived interpersonal of perceived relational injustice and employee creative behaviour at $(F_{2,\ 143})$, $\beta = .11$, $t = 1.24$, $p > .05$. Perceived information of perceived relational injustice on the other hand, significantly predicted employee creative behaviour at $(F_{2,\ 143})$, $\beta = .19$, $t = 2.23$, $p < .05$. Furthermore, work ostracism significantly predicted employee creative behaviour at $(F_{1,\ 142})$, $\beta = .53$, $t = 6.03$, $p < .05$. Therefore, it was recommended that hoarding of information and ignoring members' effort in organisations should be avoided to enable the public sector experience growth and productivity.

Contribution/Originality: This study contributes to the existing literature in the area of creative behavior of employees in the public sector through the understanding of basic workplace psychological determinants like perceived injustice and workplace ostracism in the South Eastern part of Nigeria.

1. INTRODUCTION

Overtime, it has been observed that Nigerian public sector organizations are fond of undermining the creative ability and behaviour of her employees: This may have unwittingly continued to harm and militate against the progress of most organizations. In some circumstances when employees' behaviours, creativities and abilities are grossly neglected, employees feel humiliated and this may in turn result into absenteeism, turnover intentions and laisser-faire attitude to work. This no doubt may inadvertently affect the organizational goals and values that in

turn also affect the service users of that organization based on the unpalatable attention they received from the employees. Hence, employee creative behaviour that is supposed to sustain, develop, breed innovation and competitive advantage for the general good of the organization becomes an avenue for counter work productive behaviour and weapon against organizational goals, values and productivity. From this line of thought, the term "employee creative behaviour" will be distinctively and succinctly examined.

Employee creative behaviour is the development of product ideas and services, practices or procedures which are unique and useful with immeasurable value to the organisation (Amabile, 1996). Hence, the behaviour is seen as an enabler of strength in organisation with a desired outcome seen across designated tasks and workplaces (Shalley, 1995; Shalley & Gilson, 2004). Employees' creative behaviour is perceived as a precious capital within organisations which encourages variety, change and adaptation (Gilbert, Prenshaw, & Ivy, 1996). From this interesting insight into the term "employee creative behaviour" by Amabile (1996); Shalley and Gilson (2004) other notable researchers like Boden (1998); Simonton (1977); Woodman, Sawyer, and Griffin (1993) found it imperative delving into the construct and thus made the research area much more interesting and even fascinating. According to Boden (1998) employee creative behaviour is of three types: The "combinational" creative behaviour that combines familiar ideas; the "exploratory" creative behaviour that generate innovative ideas through structured exploration of concepts and "transformational" creative behaviour that transforms structural dimensions, so that new ones can be produced. Moreover, a creative employee differs from less creative employees by having a rich body of domain-relevant skill and knowledge , feeling motivated at work, open to risks and experiences, independent and unconventional etc (Simonton, 1977).

As much as workplace environment enhances creative behaviour of employees, through employees interactional justice, and trustworthiness, high developmental feedback presents as a highly contributory factor towards instilling learning/improvement on work orientation that is vital for creativity at work. Through interactional justice, employees acquire the knowledge and information needed to be creative and on the other hand, commands respect from organisational members. On occasions where their ideas are not accomodated, trust reassures them that their hard work and risk taking are well worth the effort because management has the competence and professionalism to follow through on creative ideas (George & Zhou, 2007). Furthermore, Raudeliūnienė, Meidutė, and Martinaitis (2012) classified three major groups of factors that affect employees' creative behaviour. He enumerated the factors to include: Individual Factors (i.e. domain-relevant skills, creativity-relevant skills, intrinsic task motivation, self-efficacy, and intelligence), Organizational Factors (i.e. the role of management; if it is communicative, tolerant of mistakes, flexible in adopting rules and supportive in the provision of equipment and resources). Positive factors (i.e. sufficient resources, justice treatment, positive leadership, work group support, freedom, job complexity, goals at work, time pressure, workload pressure, tasks, rewards, staffing policies and affective commitment).

Nonetheless, Egan (2005) stated that the existence and behaviour of creative employees is fundamental to every organisation, regardless of the sector. Conversely, Rangarajan (2008) clarified that most creativity research was conducted in the private sector, while only few concentrated on government organisations (which are part of the public sector). Further, McLean (2005) declared that employee creativity plays a significant role in local government organisations by employing ideas in a creative behaviour to fulfil the requirements of the community and enhance quality of life. Hence, Rangarajan (2008) shared the same viewpoint, stating that interest in employee creative behaviour in public-sector organisations is significant for two reasons:

1. It has been ignored compared to creativity in the private sector.
2. The possible effect on collective utility is superior since people are influenced by decisions made by organisations in the public sector.

Thus, it is evident that there is a paucity of research that explored the factors that affect employee creative behaviour within the public-sector context, Jingjit and Fotaki (2010). Therefore, it is important for the public sector

to improve and value their employees' creative behaviour with understanding of how perceived relational injustice and work ostracism were connected. So, management and researchers in Nigeria must focus on identifying, understanding, and utilizing techniques and approaches which promotes the creativity of employees, since there are limited or no study in this area in Nigeria to the researcher best of knowledge. Sequel upon that, perceived relational injustice is a factor that may have predictive impact employee creative behaviour.

Perceived relational injustice refers to how employees are being given inappropriately treatment (with respect and sensitivity) and/or explanations for decisions made in the workplace (Bies, 1986). It includes lack of respect for rights, interpersonal communication, timely, honest and appropriate explanations, respectful, truthful and courteous behaviours etc. (Colquitt et al., 2013). Additionally, perceived relational injustice enacts negative undesirable consequences which includes, turnover intentions, counterproductive work behaviours, negative emotions and attitudes, Colquitt et al. (2013); Proost, Verboon, and Van Ruysseveldt (2015) .

Unfortunately, perceived relational injustice has the tendency of incurring organisational and individual problems in the workplace as an occupational stressor, Colquitt et al. (2013). This is because , unfair relational treatment, decision processes and distribution of rewards violates expected exchange and reciprocity in the workplace, Nasurdin, Ahmad, and Razalli (2014).

Factual, Elovainio, Heponiemi, Sinervo, and Magnavita (2010) posited that the lack of perceived relational justice is associated to many unfortunate outcomes such as psychiatric disorders, psychological strain, illness-related work absences,sleep disorders etc. Perceived relational injustice may also trigger major health problems like ulcers, gastritis and cardiovascular diseases, as well as all other all conditions intimately connected to workplace stress. Based on that, employees may retaliate against their perceived relational unfairness or injustice from the management and decide not to share their creative ideas, since they were underminded (Andrews & Kacmar, 2001). It is at this point of understanding that the researchers considered yet another factor that could have a predictive and negative impact on employee creative behaviour. That factor or construct is workplace ostracism.

Workplace ostracism explains the situation where employees feel ignored by organisational members at work (Ferris, Brown, Berry, & Lian, 2008). In organizations where there is workplace ostracism, it causes a higher level of depression and a lower level of satisfaction to the organization's employees (Ferris et al., 2008; Hitlan, Cliffton, & DeSoto, 2014). However, there two types of ostracism that happen in the workplace, one is purposeful ostracism and second is unpurposeful ostracism. The former means, a person ignored someone intentionally and the person is aware of behaviour, that the person is doing this to hurt or target someone and mostly purposeful ostracism at the workplace is a silent treatment (Williams, Bernieri, & Faulkner, 2013). The non-purposeful ostracism is when people are not ignoring others intentionally. They are unaware that their behaviour is hurting someone (Williams et al., 2013). Moreover, workplace ostracism reduces the social interaction between colleagues, which affects employees' psychological and mental health, because when employees share their feelings and emotions, they feel mentally, and psychologically relaxed (Heaphy & Dutton, 2008).

Research showed that because of workplace ostracism, employees become stressful which results in turnover and reduction in desirable creative behaviour of employees (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999). This also hampers the job satisfaction, commitment and creativity ideas of the employees. Moreover, it also increases the level of furious aggression, conflicts and counterproductive behaviour. To this, Chughtai (2008) submitted that ostracism which is an interpersonal interaction that is inappropriate, has the tendency of bringing tense interpersonal workplace relationship and negative interpersonal experiences. Hence, as people feel humiliated, left out and angry, it could lead to undesirable consequences which in the long run affects organisational well-being, creative ideas and membership with such organisations. As a result, it is believed that employees will become victims of interpersonal neglect within the workplace and become marginalised, Le, Peng, and Gao (2013). However, it is worthy to note that workplace ostracism tends to affects that type of employees which have neuroticism tendencies because they are very emotional, they feel demotivated from this ignorance in the workplace (Hitlan et al., 2014). This affects

employee creative behaviour because it is only when employees have amicable relation that they can share their work environment problems and information and even feels belonged.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Interactionist Theory of Creative Behaviour (Woodman & Schoenfeldt, 1989)

Theoretically, the study was anchored on the interactionist theory of creative behaviour by Woodman and Schoenfeldt (1989). According to the theory, creative behaviour is based on the creation of a valuable, useful new product, service, an idea, procedure, or process by individuals working together in a complex social system. Meaning the theory considers the perspective of relational injustice and work ostracism on process, product, person and situation into a creative behaviour of employees in an organization. Thus, the authors justified following an interactionist perspective because it has great promise for demonstrating human behaviour in complicated work and social settings.

Moreover, this theory also considers the employee creative behaviour which is a function of antecedent conditions like past reinforcement history, biographical variables, cognitive style and ability such as divergent thinking, ideational fluency as well as personality factors like self-esteem, and a locus of control, relevant knowledge, motivation, social and contextual influences like physical environment, task and time constraints. Further, group creative behaviour is also seen as a function of employee creative behaviour "inputs," the interaction of the employees involved like group composition), group characteristics such as norms, size, and degree of cohesiveness, group processes that are approaches to problem-solving, and contextual influences which is the larger organisation, characteristics of group task). As a result employee creative is a function of the creative output of its component groups and contextual influences such as perceived, relational injustice, organisational culture, work ostracism, reward systems, resource constraints, the larger environment outside the system, and so on

Therefore, public sector employee creative output includes new innovation, services, ideas, procedures and processes. These output come from the the individual, the group and the organisational features and behaviours emerging within situational influences both from creativity, coercing and enhancing at each level of social organisation.

Though these output can be marred and can affect the employee creative behaviour if perceived relational injustice and work ostracism is not properly addressed and tamed by appropriate authority in the public sector organization (Woodman et al., 1993). Empirically, there are no studies linked the study variables (employee creative behaviour, perceived relational injustices and work ostracism), as a result the study established the following hypothetical assumptions in order to test the predictability of these two independent variables (perceived relational injustice and work ostracism) on the dependent variable (employee creative behaviour).

2.2. Hypotheses

1. Perceived relational injustice will not significantly predict employee creative behaviour.
2. There will be no significant predictive impact of work ostracism on employee creative behaviour.

3. METHOD

The study was a quantitative research that adopted correlational design because the study was geared towards gaining insight into the possible relationships between the study variables (perceived relational injustice, work ostracism and employee creative behaviour). However, correlations are not enough to establish causalities, but they offer a good baseline to continue analysis with a linear regression model.

Hence, Hierarchical Multiple-Linear Regression statistics served as appropriate statistics for analyses of the data. Participants in the study were one hundred and forty-six (146) employees drawn from public sector offices in Anambra State. They consist of 85 (58.2%) female and 61 (41.8%) male. The age of the participants range from 27

to 57 years with age mean of 41.55 and standard deviation of 7.14. The educational qualification data indicated that 6 (4.1%) have Master of Science (MSc), 72 (49.3%) have a Bachelor of Science (BSc), 22(15.1%) Higher Diploma Degree (HND), 33(22.6%) have Ordinary National Diploma (OND) while 13 have Secondary School Certificate Examination (8.9%).

The marital status data indicated that 88 (60.3%) are married, 26(17.8%) are single, 6(4.1%) are widow, while 26 (17.8%) are separated. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the offices, while accidental sampling technique was used to select the participants. This is because only the workers that participated in the study were those available, accessible and willing, hence, the study recourse on these sampling methods. Three instruments were used for the study. The instruments are: The Employee's Creative Behaviour Scale by Rice (2006) Perceived Relational Injustice Scale by Colquitt (2001) and Workplace Ostracism by Ferris et al. (2008).

3.1. The Employee's Creative Behaviour Scale by Rice (2006)

The scale consists of 9 items: Each item was measured based on a Likert scale, where "1" represented 'strongly disagree', while "5" represented 'strongly agree'. The scale was designed to measure the production of ideas that are both novel and useful in the workplace that is emphasizing the meaning of production as 'the action of' production. Based on employee perception: Cronbach alpha of 0.92 was reported of the scale by the author: While on management perception: Cronbach Alpha of 0.94.

3.2. Perceived Relational Injustice Scale by Colquitt (2001)

The scale is designed to measure interpersonal and informational injustice in an organization. The scale consists of 9 items with a Likert type response format ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always). Colquitt, and reported interfactor correlations ranging from .40 to .71, composite reliability indices between .88 and .94, and moderate correlations between OJ, job satisfaction, and workplace incivility. The two subscales presented good reliability indices (Cronbach's alphas between .88 and .94, and composite reliability between .89 and .94). Convergent validity, which was explored through the average variance extracted (AVE), was in the range of .51 - .60, and the correlations of the subscales with work engagement reached values between .44 and .48.

3.3. Workplace Ostracism by Ferris et al. (2008)

10 items served to measure an employee level of rejection sensitivity or the level of an employee disposition to anxiously expect, readily perceive, and intensely react to rejection in the workplace. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each statement using a 7-point response scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree).The scale has Cronbach's alpha of 0.87.

4. RESULT

Table-1. Descriptive statistics of employee creative behaviour, perceived relational injustice and work ostracism.

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Employee Creative Behaviour	18.90	4.42	146
Perceived Interpersonal Injustice	10.44	1.83	146
Perceived Information Injustice	7.82	2.00	146
Work Ostracism	23.05	9.77	146

Table-2. Zero-order matrix correlational coefficient for employee creative behaviour, perceived relational injustice and work ostracism.

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Employee Creative Behaviour	——			
2. Perceived Interpersonal Injustice	0.02**	——		
3. Perceived Information Injustice	0.01**	0.00**	——	
4. Work Ostracism	0.01**	0.01**	0.01**	——

Table-3. Hierarchical multiple linear regressions analysis of employee creative behaviour, perceived relational injustice and work ostracism.

Model	R	R²	Adjusted R²	Std.E	Df	F	B	t	Sig.
1	0.249ª	0.062	0.049	4.31	2	4.72			
PII							0.11	1.24	0.219
PII							0.19	2.23	0.027
2	0.503ᵇ	0.253	0.238	3.86	1	36.41			
PII							-0.04	-0.49	0.625
PII							-0.02	-0.21	0.835
WO							0.53	6.03	.000

Results from the Table 1 and 2 above, at r (N=146) = .02**, $p<.01$, (M=10.44 and $Std.$ D=1.83) indicated a significant relationship between the perceived interpersonal injustice of perceived relational injustice and employee creative behaviour; r (N=146) = .01**, $p<.01$, (M=7.82 and $Std.$ D=2.00) indicated a significant relationship between perceived information injustice of perceived relational injustice and employee creative behaviour. On work ostracism, the result from r (N=146) = .01**, $p<.01$, (M=23.05 and $Std.$ D=9.77) indicated a significant relationship between work ostracism and employee creative behaviour.

Results from the Table 3 above, indicated that **Model 1**: Perceived interpersonal and Perceived information of perceived relational injustice accounted 62.0% for employee creative behaviour, with R = .249, R^2 = .062, adjusted R^2= .049, ($F_{2, 143}$) = 4.72, $p<.05$. While perceived interpersonal of perceived relational injustice did not significantly predict employee creative behaviour at ($F_{2, 143}$), β= .11, t = 1.24, $p>.05$, and Perceived information of perceived relational injustice significantly predicted employee creative behaviour at ($F_{2, 143}$), β=.19, t = 2.23, $p<.05$.

Model 2: Overall accounted 53.3% for employee creative behaviour, with R = .503, R^2 = .253, adjusted R^2=.238, ($F_{1, 142}$) = 36.41, $p<.05$. Perceived interpersonal of perceived relational injustice did not significantly predict employee creative behaviour at ($F_{1, 142}$), β= -.04, t = -.49, $p>.05$; and perceived information of perceived relational injustice did not significantly predict employee creative behaviour at ($F_{1, 142}$), β= -.02, t = -.21, $p>.05$. While work ostracism did significantly predict employee creative behaviour at ($F_{1, 142}$), β= .53, t = 6.03, $p<.05$.

5. DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

From the findings, the first hypothesis which stated that perceived relational injustice will significantly predict employee creative behaviour was not accepted, because perceived interpersonal injustice of perceived relational injustice did not predict employee creative behaviour. However, perceived interpersonal injustice of perceived relational injustice did predict employee creative behaviour. Though, at correlational level, perceived interpersonal and information injustice correlated with employee creative behaviour. This implies that perceived relational injustice for factor like interpersonal is not actually predictor that affects employee creative behaviour in as much as it surfaces at the correlational stage as a factor. But perceived information injustice that might be linked to the old saying that "knowledge is power".

Hence, perceived information injustice maybe said to be power that increases employee creative behaviour. Due to this information injustice against the employee, it may be an avenue, employees use to create new ideas for survival in order to avoid revamping the feeling of neglect in them that is likely to inspire turnover intentions and absenteeism that will be detrimental to them or the organization directly or directly. Since, employee development of ideas about products and services, practices or procedures are unique and potentially have useful direct or indirect value to the organisation (Amabile, 1996). Which interactionist theory by Woodman and Schoenfeldt (1989) believed is often regarded as a vital source of competitive strength for organisations since it has become appreciated across diverse tasks, professions and organizations since, employees' creative behaviour is perceived as a precious capital that neglected may backfire.

However, the second hypothesis which postulates that there will be a significant predictive impact of work ostracism on employee creative behaviour was confirmed. This indicates that work ostracism increase employee

creative behaviour increases. This maybe on the basis that when an employee is ostracised it may ignite the feeling of alertness, commitment, determination, and in some cases of novel ideas in order for the employee to prove is mettle since, his/her organization fails to value and notice the employee creative ideas. Hence, it can be insinuated that reduction in the social interaction with colleagues fires-up employees' psychological and mental health in the area of creativity. This somehow, contradicts the idea that workplace ostracism causes a higher level of depression and a lower level of employee satisfaction (Ferris et al., 2008; Hitlan et al., 2014).

In a note of finality, no organization survives without its employee creative behaviour. This is on the ground that creative of this employee is the bedrock of any organization wishes to survive. Hence, relational injustice and ostracism at workplace, if not properly checkmated will cause various public sector to lose its best hands. Prior to this proposition, this study x-rayed the predictive impact of perceived relational injustice and workplace ostracism on employee creative behaviour.

And the following observations were made that the perceived interpersonal injustice of perceived relational injustice did not predict employee creative behaviour. While perceived information injustice of perceived relational injustice and work ostracism predicted employee creative behaviour.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Since perceived interpersonal injustice of perceived relational injustice did not predict employee creative behaviour there is need for the management of the organizations to start looking inward. Meaning to start drafting policies that will be inclusive that no employee will feel inferior; since inferiority usually affects cognitive patterns of an individual. This also affects employee creative behaviour. So ensuring an inclusive management will inspire the employee to feel belonged and also contribute novel ideas for the growth of its organization and productivity.

2. Hoarding of information and ignoring members' effort should not be seen in any organization. Unhealthy competitions, envy, jealousy, anger and depression could arise from such discordant phenomenon. So, organizations that wants to be productive and experience growth must run an open door policy where everybody's idea is valued since the perceived interpersonal injustice of perceived relational injustice and workplace did predict employee creative behaviour. This will aid the reduction of perceived relational injustice and ostracism from employees with creative ideas.

7. THE IMPLICATIONS

The study has numerous theoretical implications in the sense that it will add to the existing knowledge of the variables, it's understanding and proper conceptualization. It also has overwhelming practical implications for universities and other organizations. For instance, running an inclusive management will inspire employees to feel belonged and also contribute novel ideas for the growth of its organization and productivity. This will in turn increase organizational harmony and productivity.

This study x-rayed the predictive impact of perceived relational injustice and workplace ostracism on employee creative behaviour. And the following observations were made that the perceived interpersonal injustice of perceived relational injustice did not predict employee creative behaviour. While perceived information injustice of perceived relational injustice and work ostracism predicted employee creative behaviour.

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