

GENDER: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOB SATISFACTION AND OFFICE COMPETENCIES AMONG ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT PERSONNEL IN KATSINA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to examine the relationship between the gender job satisfaction and office competencies among males and females Administrative Support Personnel (ASP) in Katsina State tertiary institutions, Nigeria. A survey research design was employed in this study. A total of 530 questionnaires was distributed and 356 (67%) responses were found useful. A t-test statistical analysis of the mean scores of office competencies of the two groups revealed that the difference between the mean scores of the males and females is not significant. Similarly, the t-test results showed that there is no significant difference between males and females in their job satisfaction. The regression analysis showed that office competencies predict job satisfaction. Therefore, based on the result of the analysis, it could be concluded that office competencies lead to job satisfaction. Similarly, the result indicated that there was no significant difference between males and females office competencies and job satisfaction as well.

KEYWORDS: Administrative Support Personnel, Gender, Job Satisfaction, Office Competencies

INTRODUCTION

This paper presents a study on the relationship between the gender job satisfaction and office competencies among males and females administrative support personnel working in Katsina State tertiary institutions, Nigeria. Theories of motivation utilized by management of organizations to attain employees' job satisfaction are discussed. Literature related to gender issues and administrative support personnel are highlighted. Certainly any professional could be identified by means of the function or type of task he performs in his work place. As such, office professionals like administrative support personnel (ASP) could be identified through the functions they perform in any organization they are working. Their main function in any type of organization is to provide support to the administrative executives to whom they are attached. In Nigeria, typing at a speed of 50 words per minute, producing, receiving and sorting office correspondences, receiving and making telephone calls, coordination meetings, minutes taking at meetings, filing system maintenance, mastery of word processing application and much more are some of the competencies required. In addition, administrative support personnel take dictation in shorthand at a speed of 120 words per minute and transcribing same, making travel arrangements for the executive, conducting research, database maintenance, scheduling executive's office work, making calendar for office activities, ensuring office supplies, operating and maintaining office equipment, as well as other duties and responsibilities as they may be assigned by the officer they serve, are their main administrative support functions (Porter, 2014; Tamim, 2007; Ndinechi, 2012).

Specifically, office competencies are needed by Administrative Support Personnel in order to provide for the kind of administrative support required in the office of today. Such competencies as for the Nigeria's peculiarities include; internet, email, database, word processing, teamwork, and communication. The aspects of the Information and Communication Technology competencies are needed to send, find or prepare information using modern techniques and devices while communication and teamwork are required because this category of workers communicate and associate with different types of people from all works of life for the discharge of their daily work. Their work demands interaction with coworkers, clients, executives and managers. Other categories of customers they interact with include office cleaning staff, couriers, mail carriers, cafeteria cashiers and cooks. However, in Nigeria these office workers, as literature indicated, lack of adequate training from their various institutions that ought to make them fit for the above mentioned job duties and responsibilities (Onamade and Temitayo, 2012; Okwuanaso & Ohakwe, 2007; Onifade, 2009; Abolade, 2013; Akpomi and Ordu, 2009). The inappropriate training was compounded by outdated training equipment, lack of updated curriculum, and the lack of electricity power supply. The educational qualifications of administrative support personnel in Nigeria ranged from Commercial Secondary School Certificate, National Diploma (ND), Higher National Diploma (HND), National Certificate of Education (NCE) in Business Education, to Bachelor's Degree in Secretarial Studies or Office Education or other qualifications obtained from private institutions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

One of the burning issues today is about gender equality. Numerous researches have been carried out on issues related to gender with a view to correct the imbalance between males and females. For instance a study on information and communication technology competency on gender was conducted by Danner and Pessue (2013). The findings of the study showed that there was no significant difference in Information and Communication Technology competency between males and female students. This study therefore indicated that there was equal opportunity given to both males and female students towards the learning of information and communication technology. However, studies advanced by Schaumburg (2001) and Atan, Azli, Rahman and Idrus (2002) revealed that women have less interest in using computers than their male counterparts. In his contribution, Derbyshire's (2003) study found out that women demonstrated less computer skills than boys. The study revealed that boys scored better than girls in computer skills. Furthermore, females are found to have negative attitudes in related computer activities which make men more computer literate than females (Kadel, 2005; and Sefyrin, 2005). Similarly, gender study was conducted by Rajagopal and Bojin (2003) where they found that gender differences exist between males and females in computer manipulation related skills with males having more self-efficacy than females. This is in line with the study of Meelissen (2005) who confirmed that boys have more self-efficacy in building web page than girls. It has also been established that males have higher perceived Information and Communication Technology competencies than females in the area of Kubang Pasu, Malaysia (Tengkufaekah, 2005).

A notable study related to gender on job satisfaction among staff members of Azad University in Iran was conducted by Hajiha, Jassbi, and Ghaffari (2014). The findings of their research indicated that women in comparison to men are less satisfied with their jobs at Azad University in Iran. In his study, Oshagbemi (2000) found out the effects of gender on the job satisfaction among 1,102 faculty members in the United Kingdom. Unlike Hajiha, Jassbi, and Ghaffari's (2014), Oshagbemi's findings indicated that overall, high ranking female academicians at the rank of senior lecturers, readers and professors are more satisfied with their job than their male counterparts. Moreover, a research conducted by Okpara (2004) based on gender job satisfaction in the Nigerian banking industry, the result of the study indicated that men

have higher salaries than their female counterparts. For this reason, male bank workers were found to be more satisfied with their salary than their female colleagues. This implies that unlike female bankers, male bank workers are satisfied with their jobs based on the dimension of salary. Furthermore, his study revealed that there were gender differences in promotion because male bankers enjoy more promotion than female bank workers which added to the job satisfaction of male bank workers. Contrary to Ofuani's (2010) study, which was conducted to find out whether working women in the Benin city are satisfied with their jobs or not. The result of the study indicated that women employees are satisfied with their jobs overall regardless of the amount of experience, marital status, age, qualification and relationship with supervisors. This finding is in line with the findings of Clark (2006) and Usman (2006).

It is pertinent to note that job satisfaction is a situation where an employee is contented with his job. Some researchers like Brief & Weiss's (2002) define job satisfaction based on the entire or overall job satisfaction of an employee and not on the individual facets of workers' job satisfaction. In the same manner, Hajiha, Jasbi, & Ghaffari (2014) also viewed job satisfaction from the perspective of the job as a whole as distinct from its different facets. They argued that job satisfaction refers to a worker's overall attitude towards his job. In their opinion, an employee is satisfied with his job when he demonstrates a positive attitude on his job and vice versa. However, numerous factors determine Job satisfaction; as such an employee may be satisfied with a particular facet of the job and may be dissatisfied with another different facet of his job. In this case, an employee may be satisfied or dissatisfied with one or more facets of his job. For instance he may be satisfied or discontented with one or more dimensions of the job satisfaction like the work itself, organizational policies, advancement, responsibility, and achievement, organizational policies, interpersonal relationship, pay, working conditions or supervision. On their contribution, Greenberg and Baron (2003) argued that job satisfaction is an employee's affective, cognitive, and evaluative emotional reactions in respect of employees' jobs. Job satisfaction reflects the extent to which employees are contented with their jobs and the sense of fulfillment that is derived from their job tasks (Griffin and Moorhead, 2007).

The definitions highlighted are concerned with the overall job satisfaction of an employee. Some literature considered job satisfaction as an equity which comes as a result of employees' comparison between the benefits enjoyed by his colleagues with whom he is on the same level and that of his own earnings from his job (Tutuncu and Kozak, 2007). Similarly, Griffin and Morehead (2007), and Greenberg and Baron (2003) definitions viewed job satisfaction as the overall satisfaction derived by an employee from his job. Tutuncu and Kozak's definitions of job satisfaction are based on the workers equity or inequity judgment of an employee. That is, a worker is satisfied or unsatisfied with his job when he compares the values he derives from his job in comparison with what other workers of the same level in his organization get by doing the same job. In their contribution, George and Jones (2008) indicated that job satisfaction is the beliefs and feelings that workers have concerning their jobs and that workers' levels of job satisfaction can be ranged from extreme dissatisfaction to extreme satisfaction. This implies that workers job satisfaction or dissatisfaction could be in levels. Robbins (2001) argued that job satisfaction is the worker's general attitude towards his job. Mullins (2005) was also of the opinion that job satisfaction is rather more of a worker's attitude towards his work. This means that workers' job satisfaction could be seen from the attitude they displayed in their work place. Job satisfaction being multifaceted and complex concept means different things to different employees. From the opinions of the foregoing researchers, job satisfaction could either be viewed based on the overall job or based on a particular facet of a worker's job.

In the views of Peretomode (2006), job satisfaction is the fulfillment acquired in terms of job experience, activities and rewards by the employee. According to him, job satisfaction is the feeling about responses to the aspects of the work environment. Riggio & Freedman (2000) asserted that job satisfaction is the overall feelings and attitudes one

has about his job. This implies that any worker perceived positivity or negativity aspects of a job contribute to the development of the overall feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction of a worker. Riggio and Freedman (2000) confirmed the same view with Arnold and Feldman (1986) who asserted that job satisfaction is the amount of overall positive feelings that individuals have towards their jobs. In their argument, Sousa-Poza and Sousa-Poza (2000) held a contrary view from some scholars as they emphasized that job satisfaction is more than the feelings and attitude towards employees' job. It involves the entire emotional and psychological feeling of an employee regarding his job. However, Rose (2001) introduced a bi-dimensional concept of job satisfaction consisting of intrinsic and extrinsic types of satisfaction. Intrinsic sources of satisfaction depend on the individual traits of an employee which include the ability to use initiative, or relationship with supervisors or colleagues. An extrinsic source of satisfaction is situational and depends on the context of an environment such as pay, promotion or job security. These are the financial and other material reward or advantage of a job that ignites satisfaction of the employees' job. This is in conformity with Luthans, (2006), Griffen and Moorhead, (2009) that the nature of the work performed by employees has a significant effect on their level of job satisfaction. Robbins (2001), and Luthans, (2006) supported the fact that pay has a significant influence on the performance of a worker's job. Most workers look for a payment systems that they believe to be fair, definite, and in line with what they expected (Robbins, 2003). It is obvious that satisfied employees are happy regardless of their gender and it follows that workers are only productive when they are happy with their jobs (Saari & Judge, 2004, p. 395). This means that when workers are happy with their job, massive production of goods and services will be realized which is the ultimate goal of any organization. Job satisfaction/dissatisfaction applies to all types of employees, regardless of the type of work they do. Employees' attitude towards their jobs can be positive when they are satisfied with their job and negative when they are dissatisfied with their jobs.

Quite a number of factors contribute to job satisfaction. Worker's job competency is one of the major factors leading to job satisfaction. This is because competent worker can confidently accomplish his job tasks effectively and efficiently, which eventually makes him happy and satisfied worker. Literature substantiated that worker's job competency leads to job satisfaction. Similarly incompetent worker is obviously dissatisfied with his job because he could not productively be able to put up his best and this leads to lower morale, productivity and dissatisfaction with the job (Wagner, 2007). Since numerous literatures supported that there is a relationship between competency and job satisfaction, then it is obvious that males and females administrative support staff's office competencies could lead to satisfaction in their job.

Herzberg's Motivator/Hygiene Theory of Motivation Leading to Job Satisfaction

This theory is referred to as intrinsic/extrinsic, two-factor, dual factor, or motivator/hygiene/maintenance motivation theory. The motivation/hygiene theory is known to be one of the most researched theories of modern management utilized to find long term solutions to the problems of employees' job satisfaction. The theory was developed by Herzberg by means of a research conducted on engineers and accountants and who were requested to respond by recalling a time when they felt exceptionally good about their jobs and when they felt exceptionally bad, including the events that transpired to return them to their normal or regular feeling about their job. The study resulted in coming up with two distinct and separate dimensions of satisfaction. The first set of dimensions was referred to as the "motivators/satisfiers or intrinsic" factors. The availability of these factors leads to "satisfaction". And the absence of these motivating factors leads to "no job satisfaction" and not dissatisfaction. The other dimensions were called the "dissatisfiers/extrinsic/hygiene/maintenance" factors. The presence of these factors leads to "no dissatisfaction". This

indicated that the opposite of “satisfaction” is “no satisfaction” and not dissatisfaction while the opposite of dissatisfaction is not satisfaction but “no dissatisfaction” (Herzberg, 1980).

The motivation dimensions are based on the work performed as well as the rewards of the work performed (House & Wigdor, 1967; Ramasamy, 2010). The intrinsic factors that lead to job satisfaction are the responsibility, advancement, achievement, recognition, and the work itself (Herzberg, 1980). Such factors activate the need for self-realization and self-actualization at work. In the opinions of Bassett-Jones & Lloyd (2005), lasting attitude to change in getting job satisfaction are promoted by advancement and Job responsibility while achievement was related to work itself and responsibility. Recognition by supervisor, subordinates, or peers enhanced positive feelings on the job and can as well provide additional satisfaction when based on achievement (House & Wigdor, 2007). On the other hand, hygiene factors, referred to as dissatisfiers, extrinsic or maintenance factors are based on the employee-relationship with the work environment (House & Wigdor, 2007; Ramasamy, 2010). Such extrinsic factors include organizational policy, supervision, working conditions, interpersonal relationships, and salary.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOB SATISFACTION AND COMPETENCIES

Numerous studies were conducted to find out the relationship between job satisfaction and work competencies. Work competencies are universal across all jobs regardless of gender inclination. That is all job satisfaction or job competencies involve either men or women or both. For instance the study conducted in Netherlands on the relationship between job satisfaction and competencies of workers by Grip, Sieben and Stevens (2006). It was found out that there exist a relationship between the workers' communication competency and their job satisfaction. Furthermore, the study revealed that workers that perform tasks below or above their levels of competence are found to be dissatisfied with their jobs. This means that workers' over-competence on the tasks they perform leads to job dissatisfaction (Gordon, 2007). This is in line with the findings of Ganzach's (2003) study. Workers' competency could be negative or positive regarding their job satisfaction (Gordon & Harvey 2008). Worker's competency is positive when it is of the level with the job tasks because at this level workers are found to be satisfied with their job. Conversely, the competency of a worker is negative when it is below or above the level of his job task. This is in line with the literature that over-competent or incompetent employees are not satisfied with their jobs (Ganzach, 2003; Grip, Sievens & Stevens, 2006; Gordon, 2007). Highly educated workers are found to be less satisfied with their job when the tasks assigned to them are below their competence (Grip, Sievens & Steven, 2006). This may be due to the fact that highly educated and over-competent workers have high expectations. This implies that workers' job satisfaction depends on the match between job characteristics and their aspirations. It is therefore very important to match the job contents of employees with the employees' expectations (Harscher, 2010).

Contrary to Grip, Sieben and Stevens (2006), Jung and Shin (2014) conducted a study on administrative staff to find out the impact of their job competency and their job satisfaction in a Korean research university. The study conceptualized job satisfaction as: Satisfaction in the workplace, job field, and the actual task. Their study focused on whether competent employees are more satisfied with their jobs or not. Therefore, a job satisfaction model was first developed and added to competency factors in the model to test whether competent employees are satisfied with their jobs. With continuous environmental changes in tertiary institutions, the human resource section is being established and developed which find effective ways of increasing their staff members' job competency based on the competency models. University of Australia as a tertiary institution utilized the competency models to assess and train its staff. The university defines staff competency as the task-performance ability that shares an organization's values and vision. The competency

model was utilized for staff management, recruitment, selection, and promotion systems to integrate the mentioned definition into the organization's objectives. Findings of the study conducted by the Jung and Shin (2014) identified the most relevant key competency needed by every tertiary institution. This competency was the ICT competency which was needed in any knowledge-based society where the facilities used for carrying out assigned tasks changes rapidly. Information technology is one of the most important competency confronting tertiary institutions (Green, 2011). The need to be current in terms of ICT should not be taken lightly at any tertiary institution (Rice and Miller 2001).

Many previous studies have determined the relationship between competency and job satisfaction (Sekaran, 2005; Sullivan and Uhlin, 2002). However, findings from the study of Tharenou (2012) concluded that a high level of competency leads to high job satisfaction. This study has implications for leaders of tertiary institutions and policy makers because tertiary institution's leaders and policy makers are encouraged to consider how staff members' job competence and job satisfaction can be improved through reform initiatives and managerial strategies. If competent employees are satisfied with their jobs, managerial effectiveness will be facilitated through workers' increased work performance. As such finding ways to increase the job competency that leads to job satisfaction of employees will be crucial in any managerial reforms. Furthermore, a study was carried out in the United States by Wang & Lee, (2009) where they analyze the interactive effects of job competence involving ICT professionals and ICT impact on job satisfaction. Findings indicated that job competency has a positive relationship to job satisfaction. The competencies required to operate as Administrative Support Personnel in the modern office are the internet, email, word processing, database, teamwork, and communication. The job dissatisfiers as advanced by Herzberg include the organizational policy, supervision, working conditions, interpersonal relationships, and salary while the satisfiers on the other hand include responsibility, advancement, achievement, recognition, and the work itself.

METHODOLOGY

The survey of this study was conducted in the seven tertiary institutions in Katsina State, Nigeria. The accessible population of the study constitutes the 1,873 Administrative Support Personnel. A total of 530 questionnaires were distributed among the seven tertiary institutions in the state. Out of the 530 questionnaires, 356 (83%) were found to be useful. The job satisfaction questionnaire was adopted from the Wood (1976) Job satisfaction instrument. The office competency questionnaire was modified from the "Educational and psychological measurement development and validation of scores on the basic technological competency for educational inventory developed by Flowers and Algozine (2000). One of the demographic aspects of the questionnaire was the gender. Four experts from Universiti Putra validated the questionnaire. Both the office competency and job satisfaction aspects instruments use a five-point Likert scale. Incompetent to Very Competent were used for office competencies while Very Satisfied to Very Dissatisfied was used for job satisfaction.

A t-test of the independent sample was conducted to take a comparison of the difference between mean scores of the office competencies among the males and females working in the tertiary institutions of Katsina State. As indicated in Table 1, the mean scores of the t-test analysis of the office competencies involving the gender groups showed that the difference between the mean scores of the males (3.71) and females (3.54) is not significant ($t = 1.83$, $df = 354$ and $p > .05$).

Table 1: Independent Sample T-Test Scores for the ASP Office Competencies Based on Gender (N=356)

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	df	P
Office Competencies	Male	300	3.71	.60	1.83	354	.068
	Female	56	3.54	.62			

*p>0.05; **p>0.068

Therefore, according to the Table 1 above, findings revealed that there was no significant difference in the mean scores regarding the office competencies ($t = 1.83, p = .068$) for the males and females ASP that are working in the tertiary institutions of Katsina State. The non-significance in terms of the competencies could be as a result of the same training exposed to both males and females ASP. The analysis indicated that for males ASP office competencies mean and standard deviation was ($M = 3.71, SD = 0.60$) while that of females ASP were ($M = 3.54, SD = 0.62$). However, the two means showed that the mean for males ASP (3.71) is higher than the mean for the females ASP (3.54). This showed that the females ASP have lower competencies than the males ASP. We can now conclude that the females are less competent than the males ASP currently working in the tertiary institutions of Katsina State even though the difference in the mean scores were not significant.

An independent sample t-test was equally carried out to compare the difference between the mean scores of job satisfaction involving females and males ASP that are working in the tertiary institutions in Katsina State. After carrying out a preliminary assumptions test, the independent sample t-test was conducted. As shown in Table 2, the analysis of the mean scores of job satisfaction of the two groups of males and females revealed that the difference between the mean scores of the females (3.79) and males (3.81) is not significant ($t = 0.36, df = 354$ and $p > .05$).

Table 2: Independent Sample T-Test Scores for the ASP Job Satisfaction Based on Gender (n=356)

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	df	P
Job Satisfaction	Male	300	3.81	.47	0.36	354	.712
	Female	56	3.79	.46			

*p>0.05 **p>0.712

Table 2 indicates independent sample t-test on job satisfaction based on gender working in Katsina State tertiary institutions. Findings indicated that there was no significant difference in the scores for job satisfaction ($t = 0.36, p = .712$) for the males and females ASP in Katsina State tertiary institutions. The mean and standard deviation involving males job satisfaction was ($M = 3.81, SD = 0.47$) while for the females, the mean and standard deviation scores on job satisfaction were ($M = 3.79, SD = 0.46$). However, the two means showed that the mean for males ASP (3.81) is higher than the mean for the females ASP (3.79). This implies that the males ASP demonstrated higher job satisfaction than the females administrative support personnel, however, the difference in the job satisfaction was not found to be significant. The reason for lack of significant difference between males and females in job satisfaction could be as a result of the same conditions of service enjoyed by both males and females ASP in the tertiary institution.

CONCLUSIONS

One of the most important issues today affecting our society in the northern Nigeria is the issue of gender inequality. Women in most cases are lagging behind in terms of opportunities in various human endeavors. This includes the enrolment in to schools to study courses related to administrative support personnel. As a result of this, findings of this study showed that there were 300 males occupying the positions of ASP in the seven tertiary institutions of Katsina State. On the other hand, only 56 females were employed as ASP in these institutions. Further findings showed that there was a relationship between office competencies and job satisfaction among administrative support personnel working in Katsina

state tertiary institutions. This is in conformity with the findings of Ndinechi (2012); Grip, Sieben and Stevens, 2006; Gordon, 2007; and Ganzach (2003).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Generally, all societies across the world should aspire to bridge the gap between males and females differences. This will enable nations to develop the potentials endowed to both males and females for real progress in all fields of human endeavors. With equal treatment among males and females, each could be made to be competent by maximizing their potentials in whatever work they do thereby obtaining full job satisfaction because studies have proved that competent workers are satisfied with their job while incompetent or over-competent employees are actually not satisfied with their job (Oyewomi, Suleiman and Ismail, 2012). Factors arresting the Administrative Support Personnel's competency in Nigeria should be addressed so that these types of workers could meet up the challenges of the modern office operations. Issues related to training and employment of female gender should be addressed so that females can be given the same chance as men to be trained and employed as administrative support workers. This will make any organization to move forward, which is the ultimate goal of any nation. All organizations should implement Herzberg's intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction dimensions with a view to improve and stabilize the job satisfaction of their employees.

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