

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES AND EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT IN DEPOSIT MONEY BANKS IN RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

The most important asset of any business is its people. Ensuring the employees are working at their greatest potential enhances productivity and efficiency; although many issues can inhibit and restrict an employee from working at their prime. This study examines the relationship between employee assistance programmes and employee commitment in deposit money banks in Rivers State. The focus was on three major employee commitment types affective, normative, and continuance commitment. The study was guided by three research objectives. Literatures on the concept of employee assistance programme, employee commitment, normative commitment, continuance commitment and affective commitment were duly reviewed in the study; and the study was anchored on the Social Exchange Theory. According to the study's findings, the organization's employee assistance scheme policy needs to be carefully reviewed to make sure all of its motivational strategies are successful. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that Deposit money banks are encouraged to provide fair employee assistance programmes for workers, as happy workforce tends to be more committed and work hard by putting in their best to achieve organizational goals, Deposit money banks should have a basic set of Human Resource (HR) policies in place that are intended to promote employee welfare, such as an effective safety management system, employee pension scheme, in order to increase the level of commitment of their employees, amongst others.

Keywords: Employee assistance programmes, employee commitment, affective commitment, normative commitment, continuance commitment.

1. INTRODUCTION

Any company's most valuable resource is its workforce. Although numerous factors can hinder and prohibit a person from working at their best, ensuring that they are doing so increases productivity and efficiency. Physical and psychological disorders are among these challenges, and both employees and employers may be at risk. These issues manifest as absenteeism, presenteeism, stress, burnout, illness, and disability. According to Josuah (2012), numerous workshops,

publications, and counseling activities may be offered to raise staff members' awareness of these problems and their coping mechanisms. According to Attridge, Amaral, Bjomson, Goplerud, Herlihy, McPherson and Teems (2010), work organizations can minimize or resolve these issues by implementing an employee assistance program (EAP). Employee assistance programs (EAPs) are initiatives sponsored by the employer with the goal of assisting in the resolution of a variety of workplace issues. The source of these problems can either be personal or work related. Hence, EAP typically provides screening, assessment, brief intervention, referrals to other services and case managements with longitudinal follow up for these problems.

According to Steele (1998), EAP are work-based programs that operate within a workplace with the aim of recognizing distressed employees, inspiring them to find solutions, and giving those employees who require these services access to counseling or treatment. In the same vein, EAP is said to have evolved in response to influences within and outside the workplace, into a diverse set of service groups with distinctive structure and services. EAP is defined by the Employee Assistance Professional Association (EAPA, 2010) as the work organization resources that make use of particular key technologies to improve employee and workplace performance through the prevention, detection, and resolution of personal and productivity concerns.

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is an employer-sponsored service designed to address personal or family issues, such as mental health, substance abuse, various addictions, marital issues, parenting issues, emotional issues, and financial or legal concerns, according to Employees' Assistance Society of North America (EASNA) (2010). According to EASNA (2010), EAP services are often offered by employers to their staff and are intended to help staff members get support for these issues so they may continue working and being productive. EAPA went on to define EAP as "a worksite-based program" intended to help (a) organizations address productivity issues and (b) employee clients identify and address personal concerns, such as, but not limited to, health, marital, family, financial, alcohol, drug, legal, emotional, stress, or other personal issues that may affect employee commitment.

Organizations are struggling to perform at their best level in today's rapidly changing business environment and fierce global competition. Today, it is believed that employee commitment is a natural process for people and companies to work well (Armstrong, 2012). Organizations make a lot of effort to encourage employee dedication. They are enhancing employee loyalty

by employing various techniques. It is not unexpected that one of the key factors in an organization's success is employee dedication. This is due to the desire of each employee to achieve his or her level of self-actualization motivation (Dorenbosch & Veldhoven, 2006). Employers must therefore develop employee help programs to increase commitment.

According to Guest (2012), commitment is a socio-psychological condition characterized by a strong identification with one's place of employment and acceptance of the organization's aims and values. This means that effective commitment is evidence in an employer's or an employee's emotional and total attachment to, identification with, and involvement in, the organization that he/she finds himself/herself. The model created by Meyer and Allen is one of the ones that has inspired the most research on employee commitment (1991). To distinguish between the different types of commitment, they gave them the names affective commitment (want to stay), continuation commitment (perceived costs of quitting), and normative commitment (felt obligation to stay). According to them, a single employee may exhibit more than one of each type of commitment. When someone has an affective commitment, they are motivated to carry out a plan of action. It alludes to workers' sentimental ties to, affiliation with, and participation in the company. Because leaving an organization would be expensive, an employee with a continuous commitment wishes to maintain their relationship with it. Additionally, he or she might be without any other options. The third type of commitment is normative commitment, in which individuals believe they have a duty to act in a particular way given how much the organization has invested in them. Employees that demonstrate strong emotional commitment will be driven to perform at higher levels and contribute more significantly to the organization than those who demonstrate continuous or normative commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Employees are deemed to be dedicated to an organization, according to Sharma and Bajpai (2010), if they are willing to prolong their relationship with the organization and make a significant effort to achieve organizational goals. Higher levels of performance at the individual and organizational levels would result from the high levels of effort put forth by workers who have a high level of organizational commitment. Performance here refers to the benefits emanating from shares and those from the functioning and operational activities of a firm or organisation (Rouf, 2012). For performance to be effective, employers have to recognize the regiment desires and needs of the employees and

how to make them work as a team in a diversified environment.

With respect to the influence of employee assistance programmes on employee commitment, Kabir and Parvin (2011) asserted that, to ensure the achievement of firm goals and improvement of organizational performance, organization must create assistance programs to engender commitment and cooperation within its employees through policies that facilitate employee satisfaction. Human resource satisfaction is closely related to highly motivated workers. Employees who are motivated eventually become loyal to the company or devote to it, which leads to higher productivity, performance, and lower turnover rates. Lo (2009) also pointed out that workers who feel committed to their jobs are less inclined to disengage and more receptive to change. Therefore, it is undeniable that these ideals seem to have potentially major repercussions for a core of devoted people who serve as the foundation of organizational life.

Additionally, workers that achieve a high level of employee commitment frequently feel extremely happy and content in their positions and help to raise organizational performance. Peace and Mohammed (2014) also established that employees with high commitment to an organization see themselves as an integral part of the organization. Anything that threatens the organization is an imminent danger to them as well. These workers actively contribute to the organization's mission and values and are always looking for ways to improve their work. In essence, devoted workers do their duties for the company as if it were their own, which improves organizational success. Additionally, Ehijiele (2018) discovered that affective, normative, and continuance commitment all significantly affect organizational performance. As a result, organizations must demonstrate a high level of commitment to their employees if they want to instill a sense of commitment in their workforce. As a result, businesses must ensure that their employees are fully content by offering the essential components and remedies that address their pressing problems and advance their wellbeing because doing so will enhance the businesses' overall performance.

Statement of the Problem

Organizations are obligated to implement effective intervention programs to enhance the quality of the working lives of their workers given the current global problems and workplace demands. An Occupational Alcoholism Program (OAP), which offered support to workers with alcohol-

related concerns like absenteeism and poor performance, among other things, first appeared in the 1940s in the United States of America (Daniels et al., 2005). Employers are helped by EAPs with issues that employees encounter frequently. The programs include a range of topics pertaining to emotional and personal issues. The most frequent issues include marital issues, health ailments, stress, and despair, among others. The organizational environment, social variables, intrinsic and extrinsic factors, and social factors all have an impact on employees' quality of work life. In order to address employee well-being and achieve the crucial organizational milestones of performance, productivity, and end outcomes, EAPs are the critical tools. These interventionary programs' advantages are economical since they address the root causes of subpar performance. As a result, this study will look into the connection between Rivers State's deposit money banks' employee commitment and their employee support program.

Aim and Objectives

The main goal of this research is to determine the relationship between employee assistance programmes and employee commitment in deposit money banks in Rivers State. The specific objectives of the study will include the following;

1. To determine the relationship between employee assistance programmes and affective commitment in deposit money banks in Rivers State;
2. To determine the relationship between employee assistance programmes and normative commitment in deposit money banks in Rivers State;
3. and to determine the relationship between employee assistance programmes and continuance commitment in deposit money banks in Rivers State.

Theoretical Framework

Social Exchange Theory is one of the theoretical frameworks used in this investigation. This hypothesis served as the study's theoretical framework. This theory is discussed in this section as follows:

Social Exchange Theory

The social exchange theory is the most effective tool for illuminating the significance of employee commitment. The social exchange hypothesis is based on an economic view of human behavior, according to which interpersonal interactions are driven by the desire to maximize gains and reduce losses. According to the fundamental tenet of the social exchange theory, relationships that offer more benefits than costs will result in durable mutual trust and attraction (Blau, 1964). Additionally, these social interactions include both monetary gains and psychological benefits like prestige, loyalty, and approbation. For instance, in the workplace, a supervisor may give a subordinate support and financial incentives in exchange for the subordinate's competence and personal sacrifices. Turnover in the organization has been the behavioral correlate of commitment that has been examined the most. This emphasis on turnover, though, might be a mistake. Employees must consistently complete their tasks and be willing to engage in activities outside of their roles in order for an organization to function effectively (Organ, 1988). Therefore, it makes sense to infer that the type of commitment employees experience will have an impact on their willingness to contribute to the efficacy and performance of the business.

Employees who aspire to belong to the company (affective commitment) may be more motivated to work hard for it than those who must belong (continuance commitment) or feel compelled to belong (normative commitment). It's interesting to note that most research using measures of affective commitment has found positive connections between commitment and performance. It's feasible that a duty to stay comes with a duty to contribute, in which case normative commitment would likewise favorably influence effort and output. The likelihood that commitment to perseverance would improve performance is probably the lowest. Employees that stay with the company solely out of necessity may not see much of a motivation to go above and beyond what is necessary to stay a member of the company. Employers require personnel who are prepared to go above and beyond the call of duty and exhibit extra-role behavior (Gilbert & Konya, 2020). Affective commitment strongly influenced the prediction of concern for quality, sacrifice orientation, and willingness to share information, according to research by Randall, Fedor, and Longenecker (1990). Continuity commitment did not significantly improve the prediction of any of these behaviors, and normative commitment only helped with the prediction of sacrifice orientation. Thus, these results support the idea that the three components of commitment have different effects on behavior at work other than turnover.

Conceptual Review

Employee Assistance Programme

The stressful challenges of sophisticated technology, work and family life demands, long commutes, and the ever changing economy, amongst others, demand compelling changes to be made at the workplace. Hence, employees need to be accommodated for the provision of optimal workplace performance, productivity and business goals, including the maximization of quality and keeping low costs. Employees must find a balance between their personal and professional lives since businesses in both the public and private sectors must value their workforce. Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), a valuable business strategy, provide many services to enhance overall organizational performance, including the assurance of quality and efficient service and customer satisfaction. The level of pleasure and contentment among employees has a favorable effect on the workplace. Additionally, they feel good about themselves, which improves employee morale, job satisfaction, inspires workers, and lowers staff turnover. According to Bunn (2010), EAPs are of importance to forward-thinking employers and these programs can help them to address the main reason for lost performance. An employer with an established EAP unit can offer, attract and improve talent more than employers without an EAP (Grobler et al., 2006). Additionally, achieving engaged workers, excellent performance, organizational productivity, and job happiness are goals. The study was carried out in a municipality in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa's public sector.

Other principles of EAPs entail mutual understanding between management and union; and also complementing the confidentiality of data; dealing with physical, emotional, matrimonial or domestic distress (Bar-Cohen, 2014); including legal or monetary problems; numerous addictions; issues of harassment; job-related strain or job conflict. Furthermore, companies need to take cognizance of reduced company costs, retaining valued employees, employees' behavioral well-being and resolving work-related problems.

The concept of "quality of work life" is connected to an employee's happiness at work., including employee satisfaction, physical and psychological health of workers and enhancing productivity of both workers and the organization. The research of QWL attracted interest in the 1990s, and it has since raised concerns among organizations and their people resources over work satisfaction and organizational success (Sinha, 2012). According to Sirgy et al. (2001), QWL indicates the impact of the workplace on work life satisfaction, satisfaction in 'non-work life domains', and also satisfaction with overall life. An employee's QWL and working experience improve their health

and psychological well-being (Srivastava, 2007). It is a setting where managers and employees can create trust. The idea behind work-life balance is that paid job and personal life should not be considered as competing concerns. It is envisioned as a two-way process that takes into account the demands of both employers and employees. Some researchers consider a hierarchical perspective on quality of life at work with non-work domains, such as life satisfaction (top of the hierarchy), job satisfaction (middle of the hierarchy), and more work-specific aspects, such as pay, coworkers, and supervisor (lower in the hierarchy) (Sinha, 2012).

Grover (2009) claims that welfare contributes to maintaining strong employee morale and motivation in order to keep them on board for a longer period of time. The welfare measures don't necessarily have to be financial; they can take any shape or form. The monitoring of working conditions, the development of a health infrastructure for the workplace, industrial relations, and employee assistance programs all fall under the umbrella of employee welfare.

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) has its roots in the early workplace alcohol programs in the United States (Buon, 2007). More specifically in the 1940s with the support of Alcohol Anonymous (AA) the first workplace EAP programs for 'alcoholic' employees were established in companies such as DuPont and Eastman Kodak. During the 1960s, programs were developed rapidly in the United States. During this time, occupational welfare work and chaplaincy services were introduced into some workplaces. It was not until the early 1980s, that an EAP approach was adopted in countries such as UK, Australia and New Zealand (Buon & Compton, 2003).

However, more and more EAPs are being made available to the local workers, who are most frequently the local employees of a multinational company with a US base. Particularly in Europe, EAPs frequently provide services that internal welfare officials or occupational social workers already do. The global EAP does offer outsourcing opportunities for HR Managers who wish to trim internal professional staff and this is often a key selling point for the global provider (Hopkins, 2005). Training, hiring, health and safety, and other human resource activities are among the EAPs that are typically outsourced. These are all excellent candidates for outsourcing (Storey, 1992)

The EAP industry has a commendable heritage built on the fundamental principles of compassion and integrity. Sadly, the outlook points to a change from an integrity-based reaction to one that is compliance-based. Occupational social workers have historically offered assistance to workers, especially in northern European nations (Hopkins, 2005). This work is similar to some features of

EAP work, especially in Germany and to a lesser extent in France. Multinational corporations and Pan-European organizations have only recently started to have an impact in other parts of Europe. This, combined with the welfare tradition in many Western European countries and, more recently, EU policy regarding a 'healthy workplace', has led to the beginnings of more substantive growth in EAP provision in the recent few years (Hopkins, 2005). The Certified Employee Assistance Professional (CEAP) credential is of some interest to existing professionals in some countries. Even though this frequently viewed as an 'American' credential, many countries in Europe lack good certification for workplace counseling.

Functions of Employee Assistance Programme

Many experts in the field still view Roman and Blum's (1988) classification of the basic functions of an EA as the foundation for defining and comprehending the distinctive characteristics of an EAP. They are:

- Identification of employees' behavioural problems based on job performance issues.
- Providing supervisors, managers, and union stewards with expert advice on how to use the policies and procedures for employee help.
- Availability and appropriate use of constructive confrontation strategy.
- Create micro-linkage with counselling, treatment, and other community resources.
- Build and sustain micro-linkages between the work organization and counselling, treatment and other community resources.
- Remaining focused on employee alcohol and drug misuse issues because this tactic has the most potential to result in recovery and real financial benefits for the company.
- Act as a consultant to the entire organization on matters involving personal difficulties that have an impact on employee wellbeing.

Employee Commitment

Organizational success may be impacted by employee commitment. Employee commitment is well recognized to reduce absenteeism, the desire to leave, real turnover, and to increase job satisfaction and productivity.

"Employee commitment" has been defined in a number of ways. The definition provided by Meyer, Stanley, and Parfyonova (2012), which takes a multidimensional approach to commitment definition and views it from affective, continuation, and normative viewpoints, is arguably the most thorough of these definitions. Normative commitment refers to the sense of duty to uphold and support an organization. Affective commitment refers to an emotional attachment to and involvement with an organization. Continuance commitment refers to the perceived costs of leaving an organization. Therefore, it is clear from definitions like the one above that employee commitment is a bond between the employee and the company that makes him or her (the employee) wish to keep serving the organization and aiding it in achieving its goals.

The level of involvement and identification that employees have with their organization's values, mission, and goals is referred to as organizational commitment, according to Price (2011). Accordingly, commitment among employees is the desire they have to remain with a company because they have faith in its goals and ideals. Employee commitment, according to Armstrong (2012), is defined as the loyalty and attachment that employees have to a company and is connected to how they feel about the institution. Therefore, commitment signifies both the behavioural tendencies and the feelings that employees have towards an organization.

According to Lee (2010), employee commitment entails a worker's loyalty and readiness to work hard for a company. This suggests that an employee's commitment to an organization is an emotional state that represents their relationships with the organization and their decision to remain there. According to Armstrong (2012), organizational commitment is the connection between a company and its individual employees. Employees take into account how closely their personal goals and values align with those of the organization.

Affective Commitment

Affective commitment is the term used to describe a worker's emotional connection to a company (Price, 2011). It refers to how much employees value their status as company members. Employees that are affectively committed are perceived to have a sense of identification and belonging, which pushes them to enhance their participation in an organization's activities, according to Rhoades (2001). Additionally, affective commitment encourages employees to want to work for the firm long-term and to be willing to fulfill its goals.

Continuance Commitment

According to Lee (2010), continual commitment is the understanding by employees of the expenses associated with leaving the company. As a result of one's own investments, which are nontransferable, continuation commitment is the desire to stay with a company. According to Price (2011), an employee has a continuation commitment when they require the perks and pay that come with staying with a company. Additionally, it could happen if workers think they won't be able to find work elsewhere or if they think the company is responsible for their success.

Coetzee (2005) claims that continuous commitment is calculative in nature because it is based on a worker's perception by assessing the risks and expenses related to leaving an organization. It focuses on a review of the financial advantages of being affiliated with the organization. According to Beck and Wilson (2000), organizational members who do not identify with the organization's values and aims but who do earn favorable extrinsic benefits as a result of their exertions in bargaining become more committed over time. Because of the cumulative investments that employees have made in the company, they are persuaded to stay there.

Normative Commitment

According to Lee (2010), normative commitment refers to a person's sense of duty to keep working. It results from the duties that an employee has to the company and from the individual's ideals. According to Coetzee (2005), employees who have a high level of normative commitment believe they should stay with the company. The internalization of normative pressures applied to an employee prior to entering the organization may be the cause of the feeling of obligation to remain with the company (Muncherji and Dhar, 2011). According to Price (2011), normative

commitment can develop when a firm gives its personnel benefits in advance. As a result, the workers may feel compelled to repay the favor and thereby commit to the company. According to Meyer and Allen (1990), who are mentioned by Coetzee (2005), normative commitment develops as a result of an employee's moral duties. This suggests that people believe it is morally acceptable to stay employed by a company whether or not they are happy with their jobs. As a result of employees' desires to return the organization's investment in them, normative commitment develops. These kinds of workers continue to work for the company out of necessity.

Empirical Review

Sukanebari and Konya (2020) looked studied the connection between the continued commitment of manufacturing enterprises in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, and the employee support program. The results of the study showed a substantial correlation between employee support programs and manufacturing companies' commitment to continuing operations in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Thus, the study came to the conclusion that employee support programs are an important predictor of manufacturing enterprises' commitment to continuing operations in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. According to the study, managers of manufacturing companies should be encouraged to offer equitable pay and benefits to their employees because motivated employees are more likely to work hard and give their all to accomplish organizational objectives.

In Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt, Graham-Douglas and Gabriel (2019) looked at organizational commitment and the employee assistance program. According to the study's findings, organizational commitment and employee assistance programs are significantly correlated in Port Harcourt's deposit money banks. The study found that Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt might increase their employees' affective, normative, and continuance commitment levels by offering employee assistance programs. The study thus recommended that Deposit Money Banks should seek out ways to integrate work flow and departments through lateral transfers. By such transfers, workers are exposed to the work processes and operations of related units and are able to bring alongside their expectations, previous experiences in previous roles which will enable them perform better and enjoy such change in positions.

In telecoms firms in Port Harcourt, Tamunomiebi (2019) investigated the connection between employee support programs and employee commitment. According to empirical data, employee

dedication and employee support programs are positively and significantly related in Port Harcourt's telecommunications industry. The study came to the conclusion that employee assistance programs at telecommunications businesses in Port Harcourt had a major impact on employee commitment. One of the study's recommendations was that management at work treat workers fairly and with respect by acknowledging their opinions in order to make them feel appreciated by the businesses they work for.

In Port Harcourt, researchers Dumbari, Oparanma, and Baridam-Ngobe (2019) looked at the connection between employee commitment and the employee support program. The results of the test of the hypotheses revealed a substantial correlation between employee support programs and indicators of employee commitment in Port Harcourt mobile telecommunications companies. The study recommended that management of telecommunication companies should adopt procedures that will eliminate potentials for gross injustices, as well as having a basic set of Human Resource (HR) policies in place that are intended to promote fairness, such as standardized salary scales and development programmes.

Conclusion

The study made conclusion that the performance of an organization is a determinant to its employee's service packages to its employees. The study made conclusions that employee assistance schemes policy needs to be scrutinized in the organization to ensure all the motivation practices are effective. Organizations have initiated counseling service to employees to motivate them and ensure performance is enhanced. Employees need counseling from different life's problems. According to the study's findings, a company must make sure that various employee aid initiatives are started. Employee dedication should not be increased by compromising their health and safety.

Recommendations

On the basis of the study's findings, the following suggestions are made:

1. Deposit money banks are encouraged to provide fair employee assistance programmes for workers, as happy workforce tends to be more committed and work hard by putting in their best to achieve organizational goals.
2. In order to improve the morale and dedication of workers at deposit money institutions, the long-term health and safety of employees should not be compromised.
3. To guarantee that employees feel appreciated by the businesses they work for, deposit money bank management should respect and treat them with kindness by offering both financial and non-financial compensation.
4. In order to boost employee engagement, deposit money banks should have a foundational set of human resource (HR) policies in place that are designed to promote employee welfare, such as an efficient safety management system and employee pension plan.

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