

Employee Commitment and Knowledge Sharing at Federal Medical Centre, Owerri, Nigeria.

*Emerole, I. and Onyechere, P.

Department of Management Technology, Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Nigeria.
**Corresponding author's email: emeroleikechukwu4@gmail.com*

Abstract

This paper examined employee commitment and knowledge sharing at Federal Medical Center, Owerri. The major objective of this study was to ascertain the nature of relationship between employee commitment and knowledge sharing at Federal Medical Centre, Owerri, and specifically to ascertain the nature of relationship between employee's affective commitment and knowledge source. The study adopted survey research design. The population of this study is the entire clinical staff of Federal Medical Centre, Owerri, with a population of 1297 staff. The sample size derived from Taro Yamani stood at 306 staff at 5% error margin. Primary data was used for this study. Content and face validity were used to ensure that the variables were adequately covered. The reliability of the instrument was done using Cronbach Alpha which yielded a reliability index of .966 and .930 for each of the variables. Data were collected through a questionnaire that was administered to the respondents. The hypothesis was analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation. The study revealed that there was a significant relationship between employees' affective commitment and knowledge source. This shows that increasing employees' affective commitment will significantly increase employees' knowledge source. Therefore, it was recommended that organizations should learn to maintain conducive and peaceful work environment because it increases and maintains commitment of employees and enhance knowledge sharing.

Keywords: Affective commitment, Employee commitment, knowledge sharing, Knowledge source

1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

Federal Medical Centres (FMCs) were established nationwide by the federal government of Nigeria in states that do not have federal university teaching hospitals. The act that established FMCs gave her the general mandate of provision of qualitative, affordable, specialized tertiary level hospital care to the citizenry and more importantly to reduce the burden of diseases within the communities through provision of prompt and emphatic preventive, curative and rehabilitative services. The overall vision establishing these FMCs is equitable presence of the federal government in providing tertiary healthcare.

Today, FMCs in Nigeria have recognized that success in their operations lies in their intellectual and system capabilities than in their physical assets. Hence, the human resources and more especially the clinical staff (Doctors, Nurses, Pharmacists and lab scientists) of the organization are known as the most important assets among all other organizational resources. This then implies that the actualization of organizational set goals and objectives is anchored on the employees. Suffice it to say that employee's commitment and contribution to organizational process can make or mar the success of the organization. More so, when an employee is committed to an organization, there is the tendency that the employee will stick to the organization, feel psychologically and emotionally attached to the organization and contribute meaningfully to organizational development irrespective of seeming factors that breed job dissatisfaction. In this vein when the consultants, resident doctors, chief pharmacists, matrons and senior nursing officers are committed, sharing knowledge with the interns and house officers will not be a challenge. Commitment of the employees to the organization gives employees willingness to work towards realization of organizational set goals including the sharing of knowledge among colleagues at work. O'Reily and Chatman (1986) defined employee commitment as a psychological attachment felt by a person to his organization that reflects the level in which organizational values and objectives are internalized.

However, it is the knowledge which the human resources (employees) possess that puts it ahead of all other resources. Knowledge is a rich and powerful strategic resource which can lead to a wide range of benefits for organizations. According to Laszlo and Laszlo (2002) knowledge is a resource that can be embodied in an individual or embedded in a routine or a process. Organizations today struggle to have employees with sufficient knowledge and ability to survive in this struggle by creating efficient learning opportunities with efficient management (Dogan and Demirel, 2008).

Mu, Tang and Mclahan (2010) defined knowledge sharing as the ability of people to efficiently, effectively and convincingly codify, articulate, communicate and spread knowledge in a way that other people can understand accurately and tactically put learning into practice. This is why fora where knowledge is shared have become an integral part of FMCs process and form the day to day work schedule of the employees. These fora are in the form of clinical ward round, bedside teaching, theatre sessions teaching, mortality review, seminars and conferences. But Employee commitment is important to knowledge sharing because high levels of commitment lead to several favorable organizational outcomes. It reflects the extent to which employees identify with and organization and are committed to its goals. Dordevic (2004) stated that the commitment of employees is an important issue because it may be used to predict employees' performance, absenteeism and other behaviours.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Federal Medical Centre Owerri has experienced difficulty in harnessing and utilizing effectively and efficiently the enormous knowledge embedded in the minds of their employees or even the ones entrenched in their business process. This seems to be due to lack of commitment by employees. The periodic mortality review has shown that most cases could have been properly handled or even mitigated; if the employees were effectively committed to knowledge sharing in the organization. This point to the fact that employee commitment seems to be lacking among clinical staff members due to claims by the staff

through their unions that the management is involved in acts of misconduct, financial misappropriation, corruption and high-handedness. These claims brought about an unhealthy as well as unfavourable working environment which may have dampened the commitment of employees. This requisite knowledge abounds and resides among the consultants, resident doctors and even, most of the house officers. However, commitment is needed for it to be effectively shared, commitment from both the perspective of the knowledge source and knowledge recipient. Dubrin, 2010 pointed out that Knowledge sharing in organizations has remained a black-box for both scholars and practitioners. Even with the existence of information systems, knowledge sharing is a difficult challenge for organizations (Argote, Ingram, Levin, and Moreland, 2000). Employee commitment is key to ease of knowledge sharing in organizations. Therefore, this situation at FMC, Owerri, if not remedied is detrimental to the organization and has led to abysmal poor organizational performance, poor job satisfaction, poor client satisfaction and in adverse cases, has led to more loss of lives. This is why this study seeks to establish the nature of relationship that exists between employee commitment and knowledge sharing in the organization.

1.3 Objective of the Study

The major objective of this study is to ascertain the nature of relationship between employee commitment and knowledge sharing at Federal Medical Centre Owerri, Nigeria. Specifically, the study is to ascertain the nature of relationship between employee's affective commitment and knowledge source.

1.4 Research Question

To achieve the objective, this study seeks to answer the research question of the nature of relationship that exists between employee's affective commitment and knowledge source.

1.5 Hypothesis

The hypothesis was formulated to guide this study.

H₁ There is a significant positive relationship between employee's affective commitment and knowledge source.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Employee Commitment

The employee is considered committed when he will remain in the organization for a long period of time, identifying and participating in activities of organization. Basically, commitment relies on the notion that committed employees have a desire to remain employed with the organization (Meyer and Allen, (1997) cited in Chew, 2004).

Meyer and Allen (1996) identified three types of employees' commitment to the organization namely: Affective, Continuance and Normative commitments. Affective commitment mostly refers to as emotional commitment. Affective commitment is defined as strong sense of belonging to the organization and or identification with the organization. It can also be seen as employee emotional connection to, identification with and involvement in the organization and its goals. Affective commitment is generally described as sentimentally the individual's willingness to stay at the organization by their own will. Continuance commitment is

highlighted by the need component of the employees in terms of gains and losses of continuing or discontinuing his activities in the organization. Therefore, continuance commitment is readiness to remain in an organization because of personal investment in the organization. Normative Commitment is the type of commitment that is based on the benefits achieved by the employees from the organization and his feeling of indebtedness, gratitude and respect to the organization in return for the reciprocal good relations that he/she developed with the organization (Seçkin, 2011). Normative commitment is related to the employee's feelings of obligation to remain with the organization.

2.1.2 Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge sharing involves a process of communication whereby two or more parties are involved in the transfer of knowledge. The process of knowledge sharing involves the provision of knowledge by a source, and then the interpretation of the communication by one or more recipients. The output of the process is the creation of new knowledge. Therefore, Usoro, Sharratt, Tsui and Shekhar, (2007) defined knowledge sharing as the process that involves the provision of knowledge by a source, followed by the interpretation of the communication by one or more participants involving the provision and acquisition of knowledge. Knowledge sharing enables employees to share their insights and experiences in order to allow faster and more cost effective project completions (Geraint, 1998). Employees can draw upon the experiences of others in their pursuit of finding solutions to problems. Lee, Huynh, Chi-kwa and Pi (2000) define knowledge sharing as activities of transferring or disseminating knowledge from one person, group or organization to another. Sharing knowledge is not merely a neutral exchange of information but it affects distribution of power, working relationships, models of influence and changes how individuals identify their responsibilities (Willet, 2002). Since knowledge sharing entails two or more participants engaged in the provision and acquisition of knowledge, it can therefore be measured from the perspective of both the source and the recipient of the exchange. However, for the purpose of this study, knowledge sharing is measured from the perspective of the knowledge source. Knowledge sharing is measured by conceptualizing it into three components- quantity (frequency), quality (usefulness or value) and focus (the degree to which the individual feels they engage in knowledge sharing) (Usoro *et al*, 2007). Redundancy of work is decreased as employees are re-creating knowledge (Arora, 2002). The overall results are cost and time saving, which is the creation of value for the organization. As practices and policies within an organization can importantly affect the motivation of workers to share knowledge, it is important to examine the various strategies that organizations employ to foster knowledge sharing, as they should drive the organization's practices and policies (Hislop, 2003). For an organization, knowledge sharing is the act of capturing, organizing, reusing and transferring experience - based knowledge that reside within the organization and making that knowledge available to others in the business (Hsiu-fen, 2006). The promotion of knowledge sharing within a firm depends to a large degree on changing employee's attitudes and behaviours to make them willing to share their knowledge (Jones,Cline and Ryan, 2006). Teams also play an important role in knowledge sharing. Organizations disseminate knowledge by seeding teams with new members who bring valuable experience from successful teams in the past. Of course, many employees are reluctant to share knowledge, fearing that they will lose power. Reward systems potentially

reduce this problem (Ezigbo, 2013). Therefore knowledge sharing is the means by which an organization obtains access to its own and other organizations knowledge.

2.1.3 Knowledge Source

The process of knowledge sharing is a dyadic exchange of organizational knowledge between a source and a recipient unit in which the identity of the recipient matters (Szulanski, 1996). Knowledge sharing is a complex process and to be effective, the source of the knowledge needs to package and distribute its knowledge in such a manner that the recipient can understand, absorb and use the knowledge. Parent, Roy and Jacques (2007) describe this capacity as the “ability to contextualize, format, adapt, translate and diffuse knowledge through a social and or technological network and or build commitment from stakeholders”. The knowledge source capability and credibility are important aspects of the process of knowledge sharing. Laying credence to the above, Joshi, Sarker and Sarker (2007) emphasized the sources capability, credibility and extent of communication as imperative in determining the extent of knowledge transferred to recipients.

Moreso, Gupta and Govindarajan (2000) introduced a “knowledge flow” definition that supports Joshi *et al* position: value of the source units knowledge stock, motivational disposition of the source units knowledge stock, motivational disposition of the source unit, existence and richness of transmission channels, motivation of the target unit, and absorptive capacity of the target. Martin and Salomon (2010) defined knowledge source transfer capacity (KSTC) as the ability of a source of knowledge to articulate uses of its own knowledge, assess the needs and capabilities of the potential recipient thereof, and transmit knowledge so that it can be put to use in another situation.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the knowledge based theory of the firm by Barney (1995). The theory considers knowledge as the most strategically significant resource of a firm. Its proponents argue that because knowledge based resources are usually difficult to imitate and socially complex, heterogeneous knowledge bases and capabilities among firms are the major determinants of sustained competitive advantage and superior corporate performance. This knowledge is embedded and carried through multiple entities including organizational culture and identity, policies, routines, documents, systems and employees. This therefore implies that the knowledge which employees have and share is what leads to the achievement of organizational set goals.

2.3 Empirical Review

Empirical studies on knowledge sharing and employee commitment abound, one of such studies was by Krishna Vijay (2008) who conducted a study on exploring organizational commitment from an organizational perspective: Organizational learning as a determinant of affective commitment in Indian software firms. This study examined whether organizational learning can predict affective commitment of employees in Indian software firms. The objective was to ascertain employee perceptions of organizational learning as measured by actions in the four organizational learning subsystems, namely, environmental interface, action/reflection, meaning and memory, and dissemination and diffusion predict affective commitment of employees in Indian software firms. This study found a significant positive correlation between organizational learning and affective commitment ($R = .73$). Further, each of the four organizational learning subsystems significantly predicted affective commitment of employees in Indian software firms.

Hsu-hsin, Tzu-shian and Ju-sung (2011) examined the relationship between high commitment HRM and knowledge sharing behaviour and its mediators. The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between high-commitment human resource management and individual knowledge-sharing behaviour. Furthermore, the mediating factors that link the relationship were examined. The structural equation model was applied to test eight hypotheses by means of a survey of 198 practitioners. Findings revealed that high-commitment human resource management was positively related to perceived organizational support. Perceived organizational support was positively associated with organizational trust and organizational commitment. Organizational commitment was positively related with knowledge-sharing behaviour. Perceived organizational support and organizational commitment mediated the relationship between high-commitment human resource management and knowledge-sharing behaviour.

Rizwan (2012) researched on the impact of knowledge management practices on organizational performance with evidence from Pakistan. The work sought to know whether knowledge sharing, organizational change and organizational learning have effects on knowledge management. At the end of the study, it was discovered that these three variables are correlated and have a strong effect on knowledge management.

Seyed and Kiarash (2012) investigated the impact of knowledge sharing on organizational commitment of employee using Iranian manufacturing company as case study. This study was conducted in Mazandaran, a northern province of Iran, and aimed to analyze the impact of knowledge sharing on organizational commitment of employees. 50 manufacturing companies were selected as statistical population of the study. There were 650 employees in the companies. The minimum number of sample size was determined as 242 employees. A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed among the employees and 268 usable questionnaires were returned. Factors Analysis and the findings show that knowledge sharing in companies has a significant positive influence on organizational commitment of employees.

Dixit and Bhati (2012) researched on employee commitment and its impact on sustained productivity in Indian auto component industry. The purpose of the study was to identify the impact of employee's commitment on sustained productivity in Auto-component industry in India. The research findings revealed that there exists positive relationship between the three commitments, affective, continuance and normative commitment and sustained productivity of the organization.

Chung-Chien and Chin-Jen (2013) studied the relationship between employee commitment and job attitude and its effect on service quality in the tourism industry". The major objective was to analyze the relationship between employee commitment and job attitude in the tourism industry and its effect on service quality. The study found out that employee commitment has an effect on job attitude and job commitment.

Also, Ezigbo (2013) carried out a research on developing intellectual asset by knowledge sharing. The study sought to determine the motivational factors that influence knowledge sharing, identify the obstacles to knowledge sharing and determine the nature of relationship between structural capital and human capital. The study revealed that reciprocal benefit recognition, information and communication technology and joy in helping others are the motivational factors that influence knowledge sharing. Fear of criticism, lack of incentives, organizational culture, inappropriate decision making and operational structure are the obstacles for knowledge sharing; there is a significant relationship between structural capital and human capital.

Budiardjo (2013) conducted a research on the relationship between job satisfaction, affective commitment, organizational learning climate and corporate performance” The study aimed to find out the correlation between job satisfaction and affective commitment; between affective commitment and corporate performance, and between organizational learning climate and corporate performance. Based on statistical analysis, the study found out that job satisfaction is significantly correlated with affective commitment. Both affective commitment and organizational learning climate have a positive correlation with corporate performance.

Ayatari (2014) researched on the of selection process and employee commitment using Yenegoa Local Government Council, Bayelsa state, Nigeria as a case study. The objective of the study was to determine if there was a relationship between Selection process (Test) and employee (Affective) commitment. It was found out that there was a direct relationship between selection process (Test) and employee (Affective) commitment. Apparently, very few of this study have been conducted in developing economy like Nigeria, much less in the public sector in which this study is designed to fill this gap in literature.

2.4 Summary of Reviewed Literature

From the review of related literature on the topic under study, one can see that sufficient work has not been done on the impact of employee commitment on knowledge sharing. Most of the empirical investigations concentrated on the impact of knowledge sharing on employee commitment. For instance, Krishna(2012), Hsu-hsin *et al*(2012), Seyed and Kiarash (2012) and others focused their work on the impact of knowledge management on organizational performance like Rizwan (2012). The studies did not analyze how employee commitment variables or even any one of the variables (affective, continuance and normative commitment) impact on knowledge sharing. Another important area of note in which the empirical studies have not touched is in terms of geography or regional assessment. The studies failed to find out how Nigerian organizations are faring in relation to the variables under study. The implication of this omission therefore is that it has become increasingly necessary to empirically investigate the impact of employee commitment variables on knowledge sharing more so in Nigeria.

3. Methods

3.1 Research Design

Research design is a plan or blueprint which specifies how data relating to a given problem should be collected and analyzed (Onyeizugbe, 2013). This research focused on employee commitment and knowledge sharing in Federal Medical Centre Owerri. The research relied heavily on primary data as data used in the analysis were sourced from field survey. The study adopted survey research design because of the variables under study and the large population of the study.

3.2 Population of the Study

The target population of this research is all clinical staff (doctors, nurses, pharmacists and laboratory scientists) of the Federal Medical Centre, Owerri. The population of this study is one thousand, two hundred and ninety seven (1297) clinical staff of the organization (doctors = 215, nurses =756, pharmacists = 85 and Medical laboratory scientists = 241).

3.3 Sample size and sampling technique (Source: Field survey 2016)

S/No	Clinical Staff	Population	Sample size
1	Doctors	215	93
2	Nurses	756	126
3.	Pharmacists	85	36
4.	Medical Lab Scientist	241	51
Total		1297	306

The sample size is three hundred and six (306). It is obtained from the population unit (1297) using Yamane’s statistical distribution formula using 5% error margin.

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2} \tag{1}$$

where,

- n = sample size
- N = Population size
- e = Error of tolerance 0.05(5%)
- 1 = statistical constant value

3.4 Method of Data Collection

A questionnaire structured into two sections was used to collect data for analysis. The section A captures the respondents personal data while the section B bothers on employee commitment and knowledge sharing issues. The response format is Likert 4-point scale of strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD). Secondary data was obtained from journal articles, textbooks, manual and materials from the internet were equally used for the study.

3.5 Validity of the Instrument

To make sure that the research instrument applied in this work is valid, the researcher ensured that the instrument measures the concepts they are supposed to measure. Face and content validity was used to authenticate the questionnaire items, a proper structuring of the questionnaire and a conduct of a pre-test of every question contained in the questionnaire was carried out to ensure that they are valid. The questionnaire was equally given to medical consultants in FMC Owerri to validate.

3.6 Reliability of the Instrument

Reliability of a measure concerns its ability to produce similar results when repeated measurements are made under identical condition (Borden and Abbott, 2008). To ensure reliability of the research instrument, Cronbach Alpha was used to analyze the two sets of scores generated. This yielded a reliability Alpha, Alpha of .966 for Affective commitment and .930 for Knowledge source. These are within the acceptable range of reliability index. Therefore, the questionnaire was adjudged to be reliable for data collection in line with George and Mallery (2003) which gave a measure for calculating Cronbach Alpha thus:-

Cronbach's alpha Internal consistency

$\alpha \geq 0.9$	Excellent
$0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$	Good
$0.8 > \alpha \geq 0.7$	Acceptable
$0.7 > \alpha \geq 0.6$	Questionable
$0.6 > \alpha \geq 0.5$	Poor
$0.5 < \alpha$	Unacceptable

The analysis of the result obtained above, is attached as Appendix 3.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

The scores for Affective commitment and Knowledge source were generated by summing up of all the respondents rating of questionnaire items associated with each variable. As such, each respondent had two sets of scores on the two variables. Affective commitment scores ranged between 5 and 11 while that of the Knowledge source ranged between 12 and 18. To answer the research question and test the hypothesis, the two sets of scores were correlated using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation.

3.8 Data Presentation and Analysis

Hypothesis

There is a significant positive relationship between employee's affective commitment and knowledge source.

Table 1: Pearson's Correlation between Employee Affective Commitment and Knowledge Source

		Employee Affective Commitment	Knowledge Source
Employee Affective Commitment	Pearson Correlation	1	.970
Employee Affective Commitment	N	298	298
Knowledge Source	Pearson Correlation	.970**	1
Knowledge Source	N	298	298

Source: Field survey 2016

Table 1 shows that the Pearson's correlation between employee affective commitment and knowledge source is .970. This is an indication of strong positive relationship between the two variables. This is an indication that increasing employees' affective commitment will most likely lead to an increase in their knowledge source. See fig. below for illustration of this relationship.

Table 2: Test of Significance of Pearson's Correlation between Employees' Affective Commitment and Knowledge Source

		Employee Affective Commitment	Knowledge Source
Employee Affective Commitment	Pearson Correlation	1	.970**
	<i>P-value</i>		.000
	N	298	298
Knowledge Source	Pearson Correlation	.970**	1
	<i>P-value</i>	.000	
	N	298	298

Source: Field survey 2016

Table 2 shows that there was a significant relationship between employees' affective commitment and knowledge source. This is demonstrated by the large r . $(298) = .970$ and $P\text{-value} < 0.05$. This shows that increasing employees' affective commitment will significantly increase employees' knowledge source.

3.9 Discussion of Findings

This study empirically tested whether there was a relationship between Affective commitment and Knowledge source. The result confirmed that employees Affective commitment is important and had influence on Knowledge sharing in FMC Owerri. The findings of this study also addressed the gap in literature because the study is first of its kind and has provided empirical evidence in the relationship between employee's Affective commitment and knowledge sharing. The patterns made by the small circles move in a diagonal line showing a near equivalence in low scores and high scores between employee affective commitment and knowledge source depicts high positive relationship between the two variables. Results imply that employee's affective commitment is positively related to knowledge sharing. This study contributes to current view that increasing employee's affective commitment is necessary to increase their ability to willingly share knowledge among colleagues in the organization. The finding of the present study is consistent with the previous research findings of Seyed and Kiarash (2012), Dixit and Bhati (2012), and Krishna Vijay (2008).

3.10 Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendation.

Summary of Findings

The findings revealed significant positive relationship between employee commitment (Affective commitment) and knowledge sharing (knowledge source).

Conclusion

The study then confirms that the increase in employees' affective commitment will significantly increase employees' knowledge source. Therefore it is obvious that when

organizations effectively increase employees' commitment, they will get employees willing to share knowledge in order to manage and develop their knowledge base and resources and in turn improve on their processes and administration. Therefore, considering the responses and result from the hypothesis, this study concludes that employees' affective commitment is very important in knowledge sharing and we know from literature that knowledge sharing plays a vital role in the actualization of the organizations goals.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to the management of the organization studied and other organizations who are interested in adopting employee commitment as a strategy for knowledge sharing.

- i. Deliberate efforts should be geared towards the improvement and upgrading of employees to make them feel committed to interact whether formally or informally to foster knowledge sharing in the organization.
- ii. Organizations should work towards having a conducive and peaceful work environment which increases and maintains commitment of employees and enhance knowledge sharing in organizations.
- iii. Organizations should as a matter of policy, recruit and select employees that fit well with their knowledge management culture.

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