



THE INFLUENCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT VIOLATION ON PRODUCTIVITY OF PUBLIC HEALTH WORKERS IN OGUN EAST SENATORIAL DISTRICT, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study was designed to appraise the influence of psychological contract violation on productivity of public health workers in Ogun State, Nigeria. This study was conducted among health workers in Ogun East Senatorial District of Ogun State. The study population included 1072 health workers of nine local governments in Ogun East senatorial district. Using multi-stage and random sampling method, a total of 100 respondents were selected from the population. Psychological Contract Violation Scale (PCVS) and Annual Performance Evaluation Scale for Health Workers (APES) were adapted for the study. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to verify the hypothesis formulated for the study. The results revealed that psychological contract violation had significant negative relationship with the productivity of public health workers. It was therefore concluded that psychological contract violation reduced public health workers' productivity. Based on the result, it was recommended that government should ensure that they enter into contracts of employment which they can conveniently fulfill as unfulfilled contract may lower the morale of workers which invariably will reduce the productivity.

Keywords: Psychological Contract Violation, Organizational Commitment, Productivity, Public Health Workers, Ogun State

Introduction

The essence of every organization is to improve workers' productivity in ways that contribute to the overall productivity and effectiveness of the organization. Employee productivity is important to individual workers, organizations in both the public and private sectors, and the national economy at large because it contributes to improved welfare and economic development (Akinyele, 2009). However, previous research has reported low productivity in several public-sector organizations in Nigeria (Ezulike, 2007; Iheriohanma, 2009; Mbogu, 2007), while other studies suggest that appropriate financial incentives may contribute to improved productivity among public servants (Tongo, 2010). A seminar organized by the National Manpower Board on Productivity in Nigeria in 1963 concluded that Nigerian labour was not as productive as it should be on average, particularly when compared with workers in Europe (Yesufu, 2006). The concern for productivity subsequently received greater institutional attention, including the recommendation of the Morgan Commission for the establishment of a National Wages Advisory Council. This concern eventually contributed to the establishment of the National Productivity Centre under the Federal Ministry of Employment, Labour and Productivity (Osoba, 2008; Umeh & Usman, 2009).



Productivity refers broadly to the relationship between the output of goods and services produced by workers and the human and non-human resources used in the production process. In other words, it is commonly expressed as the ratio of output to input; a higher ratio indicates greater productivity (Onah, 2010). Employee productivity is influenced by the conditions under which employees perform their duties. Brenner (2004) asserted that employees' ability to share knowledge throughout an organization depends partly on the conditions of their work environment. The survey discussed by Brenner further indicated that many organizations did not fully leverage the physical work environment to facilitate collaboration, innovation, and work effectiveness. Employees may therefore be more productive when the work environment provides appropriate conditions and facilities. The quality of the work environment can also influence employees' satisfaction and their capacity to perform effectively.

The foregoing suggests that employee productivity is not determined solely by employees' individual efforts but may also be related to organizational conditions and the employment relationship. Although adequate physical facilities and supportive working conditions are important, employees' perceptions of what their organization has promised and delivered may also shape their attitudes and behaviours at work. Improved working conditions, including appropriate health and welfare facilities, can provide workers with greater assurance and may support their ability to devote themselves to their duties. The performance of an organization, which is important to its survival and growth, depends to a considerable extent on the productivity of its workforce. Labour is generally regarded as one of the most dynamic factors involved in wealth creation because it can energize and facilitate the effective use of other resources (Yesufu, 2006). When employees are productive, they can accomplish more within a given period, whereas reduced productivity may require more time and resources to complete organizational tasks (Ikeanyibe, 2009).

One organizational factor that may be relevant to employee attitudes and work outcomes is the psychological contract. The psychological contract refers to employees' beliefs regarding the reciprocal obligations and promises that exist between themselves and their organization. Within this broader concept, psychological contract breach refers primarily to the cognitive perception that the organization has failed to fulfil one or more promised obligations, whereas psychological contract violation refers to the emotional and affective response that may arise from that perceived breach. Thus, breach and violation are related but conceptually distinct constructs. Psychological contract violation may involve feelings such as anger, betrayal, resentment, injustice, or mistrust when employees perceive that the organization has failed to adequately fulfil important obligations (Robinson & Morrison, 2000; Robinson & Rousseau, 2008).

Psychological contract violation has attracted considerable attention because employees' perceptions of unmet organizational obligations may be associated with their subsequent attitudes and behaviours. Violating the psychological contract indicates employees' perceptions that the organization has failed to keep promises or fulfil obligations towards them, which may be associated with unfavourable employee attitudes and behaviours (Robinson & Morrison, 2000; Robinson & Rousseau, 2004; Feldman & Turnley, 2004). Employees who perceive that promised obligations relating to promotion, pay, training, job security, career development, and organizational support have not been fulfilled may respond negatively. Conversely, organizations may expect employees to demonstrate loyalty, work beyond prescribed hours when necessary, perform discretionary tasks, provide adequate notice before leaving, accept transfers, protect organizational information, and avoid supporting competitors. These perceived reciprocal obligations form part of the employment relationship, although employees and organizations may not always have identical understandings of what has been promised or what each party is expected to provide (Robinson, 2005; Robinson & Morrison, 2000).

The possible relationship between psychological contract violation and employee productivity is particularly important because perceived failures in reciprocal employment obligations may affect how employees approach their work. Evidence has linked psychological contract violation with negative employee outcomes, including job dissatisfaction and turnover intentions (Bravo, Glibkowski, Wayne, & Zhao, 2007; Bal, Lange, Jansen, & Vander-Veide, 2008). Deery (2009) also reported evidence from customer service employees in which perceived inconsistencies between organizational intentions and actual practices were associated with employees' concerns about respect, involvement in decision-



making, trust, and the employee–employer relationship. Such findings suggest that the consequences associated with psychological contract violation may extend beyond employees’ personal attitudes to work-related behaviours and outcomes. However, the direction and magnitude of the relationship may vary across occupational and organizational contexts, making context-specific empirical investigation important.

This issue is particularly relevant in the Nigerian public health sector, where employees perform responsibilities that are directly connected with the delivery of essential health services to the population. Public health workers operate within organizational structures involving remuneration, promotion, training, job security, workload, professional development, supervision, welfare, and other employment expectations. Where employees perceive a discrepancy between organizational promises and actual experiences, such perceptions may be relevant to their attitudes and work behaviour. At the same time, productivity in public health institutions has implications for the efficiency and continuity of health-service delivery. Examining psychological contract violation among public health workers therefore provides an opportunity to understand whether perceptions of unmet organizational obligations are associated with employee productivity within a public-service setting.

Ogun East Senatorial District provides a relevant context for this investigation because it contains public health institutions in which employees work within the Nigerian public-service system and are subject to organizational policies, employment obligations, and service-delivery demands. Focusing on public health workers in the district also permits the study to examine psychological contract violation within a specific occupational and geographical context rather than assuming that findings from other occupations or countries apply directly to this population. This context-specific focus is important because perceptions of employment obligations and productivity may differ according to institutional conditions, occupational demands, and the broader work environment.

Although there is substantial literature on psychological contract violation and employee work outcomes, the existing evidence should not be characterized as being derived only from advanced countries without adequate empirical support. Rather, the literature is more extensive in some developed-country contexts, while context-specific evidence concerning the relationship between psychological contract violation and productivity among public health workers in Nigeria remains comparatively limited. The present study therefore seeks to contribute to the empirical literature by examining the relationship between psychological contract violation and employee productivity among public health workers in Ogun East Senatorial District, Ogun State, Nigeria. The study is consequently guided by the research question: What is the relationship between psychological contract violation and employee productivity among public health workers in Ogun East Senatorial District?

This study is guided by the following null hypothesis:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between psychological contract violation and employee productivity among public health workers in Ogun East Senatorial District, Ogun State, Nigeria.

Methodology

The study adopted an ex post facto research design because the variables of interest were examined as they naturally occurred without manipulation by the researchers. The population of the study comprised 1,072 public health workers in Ogun East Senatorial District, Ogun State. A multistage sampling procedure involving stratified and random sampling techniques was employed in selecting the participants. The nine local government areas within Ogun East Senatorial District were stratified for the purpose of the study. From each local government area, one general or secondary hospital and three public or primary health centres were selected, giving a total of nine general or secondary hospitals and 27 public or primary health centres across the senatorial district. A total of 100 public health workers were subsequently selected from the sampled health facilities through the stated sampling procedure. The respondents constituted the sample for the study.



Two instruments were used for data collection: the Psychological Contract Violation Scale (PCVS) and the Annual Performance Evaluation Scale for Health Workers (APES). The Psychological Contract Violation Scale (PCVS) developed by Robinson and Morrison (2000) was used to measure employees' perceptions of psychological contract violation. The scale measures employees' perceptions concerning the extent to which the obligations associated with the unwritten agreement between employees and their employers have been fulfilled or violated. The items were rated on a four-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strongly Agree. The original scale was reported to have a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.92. For the present study, the instrument was administered to 30 health workers at Olabisi Onabanjo University Teaching Hospital for a reliability assessment. The analysis produced a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .96, indicating a high level of internal consistency.

The Annual Performance Evaluation Scale for Health Workers (APES) was used to measure the productivity of the public health workers. The instrument was self-developed by the researchers to assess the performance of health workers in Ogun State. The items were designed to assess different aspects of health workers' job performance using a rating scale ranging from Outstanding (A) to Very Poor (F). For statistical analysis, the grades obtained by the respondents were converted into numerical scores according to the scoring procedure established for the instrument. The instrument was subjected to content validation by three (3) experts in the field of personnel psychology to establish its adequacy, clarity, and relevance to the measurement of health-worker productivity. The reliability of the APES was determined using the test-retest method, and the resulting reliability coefficient was 0.86.

The researchers sought the co-operation of the relevant authorities and respondents before administering the instruments. The purpose of the study and the general procedure for completing the instruments were communicated to the respondents. Respondents were assured that the information provided would be treated confidentially and used strictly for research purposes. Clarification was provided only when a respondent experienced difficulty understanding an item or the response procedure, without influencing the respondent's choice of answer. The researchers personally administered the instruments and ensured adequate monitoring during the administration. The completed instruments were retrieved immediately after completion.

The data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to determine the relationship between psychological contract violation and employee productivity among public health workers in Ogun East Senatorial District, Ogun State. The hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

This section contains the result of data analysis. The analysis were conducted based on the hypothesis formulated for the study.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between psychological contract violation and employee productivity.

Table 1: Correlation between Psychological Contract Violation and Employee Productivity

Psychological	Employee	contract violation	
	productivity		
Psychological Contract violation	Pearson correlation	1	
		-.452	
	Sig (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Employee productivity	Pearson correlation	-.452	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	100	100

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

This result indicated that there was a negative correlation between homework and academic performance ($r_{(100)} = -0.452$; $p < 0.05$). This means that psychological contract violation and employee productivity have a significant relationship.

Discussion of Findings

Analysis of the first hypothesis revealed a significant negative relationship between psychological contract violation and productivity among public health workers in Ogun State. Specifically, the result indicated that higher levels of psychological contract violation were associated with lower levels of productivity among the respondents. This finding suggests that employees who perceive that their employer has failed to fulfil important obligations or promises contained in the employment relationship tend to report lower levels of productivity. The negative direction of the relationship indicates that the two variables move in opposite directions, such that an increase in perceived psychological contract violation is associated with a decrease in productivity.

The present finding is also supported by the systematic review conducted by Topa et al. (2022), which synthesised evidence on psychological contract breach and its relationships with employee attitudes and behaviours. The review conceptualised psychological contract breach as employees' perception that their organisation has failed to adequately fulfil its obligations or promises and reported evidence of relationships between psychological contract breach and various work-related outcomes. The review provides a broader empirical basis for understanding why perceived failures to fulfil organisational obligations may be associated with less favourable employee outcomes. This perspective is relevant to the present finding that psychological contract violation was negatively related to productivity among public health workers in Ogun State. The finding may therefore be understood within the broader literature suggesting that perceived failures in the employment exchange are associated with changes in employees' work-related attitudes and behaviours. Nevertheless, Topa et al. (2022) noted methodological limitations in the existing evidence; consequently, the present finding should be interpreted as an association rather than evidence that psychological contract violation causes reduced productivity.



Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that psychological contract violation is significantly associated with lower productivity among public health workers. The findings suggest that employees who perceive that their employer has failed to fulfil expected obligations or promises within the employment relationship tend to report lower levels of productivity. Therefore, the findings indicate an association between perceived psychological contract violation and employee productivity.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The Ogun State Government and management of public health institutions should ensure that employment obligations and commitments made to public health workers are realistic, clearly communicated, and reasonably fulfilled. This may help reduce perceptions of psychological contract violation and promote higher levels of employee productivity.
2. Management of public health institutions should establish clear and accessible channels for communicating changes in employment conditions, responsibilities, benefits, promotion opportunities, and other work-related obligations. Such communication should be timely and transparent to reduce misunderstandings and perceptions of unmet organisational obligations among health workers.
3. Public health institutions in Ogun East Senatorial District should establish formal procedures for identifying and addressing perceived psychological contract violations. Health workers should have appropriate channels through which they can express concerns about unmet employment expectations and receive timely responses from management.
4. Management of public health institutions should regularly monitor employees' perceptions of their employment relationship alongside indicators of job productivity. Periodic staff surveys, performance reviews, and feedback mechanisms can assist management in identifying emerging concerns about psychological contract violation and taking corrective action before such concerns adversely affect productivity.
5. Human resource managers in public health institutions should strengthen employee–management engagement through regular consultation and feedback sessions. Such engagement can provide opportunities for health workers to communicate their expectations and concerns while enabling management to clarify organisational obligations and limitations.
6. The Ogun State health authorities should provide appropriate training for managers and supervisors on psychological contracts and employee relations. Such training should emphasise the importance of keeping organisational promises, managing employee expectations, communicating changes effectively, and responding constructively to perceived breaches of employment obligations.

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