
PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT AND EMOTION REGULATION AS ANTECEDENT OF WORK ENGAGEMENT AMONG STAFF OF JOSEPH SARWUAN TARKA UNIVERSITY, MAKURDI

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ABSTRACT

This study examined perceived organizational support and emotion regulation as antecedent of work engagement among staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi. Participants for the study consisted of 317 staff of the institution. The participants age ranged from 26-40 years. The instruments used for data collection were work engagement scale developed by Utrecht (2003), Organizational Support Scale developed by Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson and Sowa (1986) and Emotion Regulation Questionnaire developed by Gross and John (2003). Three hypotheses were tested using regression analysis. The result of hypothesis one indicated that there is no significant antecedent of perceived organizational support on work engagement among the staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi ($f(1, 312) = .247.035$; $P < .05$, $R = .663$ and $R^2 = .440$). The result of second hypothesis also indicated that there is no significant antecedent of emotion regulation on work engagement among the staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi ($f(1, 312) = .778.878$; $P < .05$, $R = .815$ and $R^2 = .714$). The result of the third hypothesis also indicated that there is no significant joint antecedent of perceived organization support and emotion regulation on work engagement among the staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi ($f(2, 311) = 391.125$; $P < .05$, $R = .846$ and $R^2 = .716$). Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that there both perceived organization support and emotion regulation has no antecedent on work engagement among staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi. Based on the findings, it is recommended that the university management in collaboration with the federal Government of Nigeria should make adequate provision for support to the staff of the institution to help heighten their level of work engagement. Also, the school counselors/psychotherapist should help work on the emotions of the staff of the university since this can also contribute to poor work engagement.

Keywords: *Perceived Organizational Support, Emotion Regulation Antecedent and Work Engagement*

INTRODUCTION

Employee engagement is increasingly drawing a lot of interest among practitioners and consultants in business circles (Saks, 2016). It has become one of the most popular topics of discussion in the organizational development space forming a fundamental constituent for employee surveys carried out by consulting firms (Saks, 2016; Bailey, Madden, Alfes, & Fletcher, 2017). Although is relatively new notion in general and in scholarly work in particular, the past decade has seen a surge in academic research in the concept of engagement which has been lauded as the key to an organization's success and a driver for an organization's bottom line results (Macey & Schneider, 2018; Saks & Gruman, 2014). At the same time, it has been testified that employee engagement is on the decline and there is a deepening disengagement among employees today (Bates, 2004; Richman, 2006). It has even been stated that only about 15 percent of employees worldwide are engaged in their job (Gallup, 2018).

Considerable attention has been indicated on organizational support among researchers in social and human resources. Many researchers considered support from the organization as a means of maintaining positive work outcomes, including engagement, task performance, and citizenship (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). Perceived organizational support (POS) is one of the main concepts that have a considerable impact on organizational, it affects all organizational policies. Creating appropriate work conditions, Supervisor support, appropriate rewards and justice in the workplace that are human values leads to the improvement of one's self-esteem, hope and personal growth of employees resulting in existence of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well being (Pourghaz, Toomaj & Yaghoubi 2014). Organizational support shows how much the organization acknowledges the employees and cares about their well-being. Receiving support from the organization directs the employees to be more effective and more committed to the duty (Al-Homayan, 2013). Perceived organizational support defined as how much the organization values employees' contributions and concerned about them (Allen, 2008).

In addition to the perceived organizational support, emotion regulation is also touted as one of the key drivers in building work engagement of employees (Yates, 2016). Employee's emotion regulation is one of the main factors of sustainability of an organization. Emotional regulation is a complex process that involves initiating, inhibiting, or modulating one's state or behavior in a given situation for example the subjective

experience (feelings), cognitive responses (thoughts), emotion-related physiological responses (for example heart rate or hormonal activity), and emotion-related behavior (bodily actions or expressions) Loewenstein, (2017). Functionally, emotional regulation can also refer to processes such as the tendency to focus one's attention to a task and the ability to suppress inappropriate behavior under instruction. Emotional regulation is a highly significant function in human life *Wisco and Lyubomirsky (2018)*. Research on organization level emotion initiated in Affective Events Theory (AET), in which any events at work would result in employees' affective reaction, and the emotional reaction would affect employee behaviors and work engagement (Madrid, 2018, Zou & Dahling 2017).

Employees applying emotion regulation in cognitive reappraisal and cognitive changes would be more willing to work hard, present better performance at work, and full of confidence in the work abilities. Such attitudes with enthusiasm at work, being willing to work hard, unconditionally making efforts, and enjoying the work would show higher work engagement (Seppälä, 2015).

Emotion is the state constantly recalled and experienced by individuals; the recall of emotion might be conscious or unconscious. People's emotional reaction sometimes would change consistently with living environment changes, while it might appear contradiction and conflict with individual living environment and social interaction and does not adapt to specific life situations. In this case, emotion regulation is required for adapting to the living environment. Gross (2015) considered that emotion regulation was expanded in the occurrence of emotion; emotion occurred at different stages would result in distinct emotion regulation. An individual would have various emotion regulation strategies in the occurrence of emotion, and the mostly used and valuable emotion regulation strategies contained cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression. In emotional reaction, the correlation of cognitive reappraisal with positive emotion is obviously higher than it with negative emotion. Expressive suppression might appear less positive emotional reaction that it appears better correlations with negative emotion (Grandey 2003, Madrid, 2018).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In this era of globalization, there is evidence that the level of employee's engagement in the activities of organization is a major concern. Organizations are facing various challenges in running their businesses. At the same time, it has been testified that employee engagement is on the decline and there is a deepening disengagement among employees today (Bates, 2004; Richman, 2006). It has even been stated that only about 15 percent of employees worldwide are engaged in their job (Gallup, 2018) and Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi is not an exception. It has been observed that many staff of the institution are found doing their personal businesses inside town during working hours leaving their offices lock for a whole day. Some of the staff has stated that, the management of the institution is no more recognizing the staff. Therefore, they cannot kill themselves working morning till night without any reward or recognitions from the management. Others have stated that they are benefiting more from their personal businesses than the institution as it stand. However, other staff who try their possible best to come to work often feel reluctant to attain to issues brought before them by the students and others. This issue is at the increase and is seriously affecting the entire organization or the institution including the students of the University. Therefore, this has called for attention to investigate on organizational support and emotion regulation as antecedent of work engagement among staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi to fill the gap. Hence, it was hypothesized that:(i) there will be a significant antecedent of perceived organizational support on work engagement among staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi. (ii) there will be a significant antecedent of emotion regulation on work engagement among staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi. (iii) there will be a significant joint antecedent of perceived organizational support and emotion regulation on work engagement among staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi.

METHOD

Design

Cross-sectional survey design was used in this study and also standardized questionnaires were administered to elicit approach responses from participants on organisational support and emotion regulation on work engagement among staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi. Cross sectional study is a type of observational study that analyzes data

collected from a population, or a representative subset, at a specific point in time.

Setting

The setting for this study is Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi, which was established in 1989. It is located at Nyiev district, North-East of Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State. This University lies at latitude 7° 44' North and Longitude 8° 35' East of the Middle Belt region of Nigeria and it covers a land mass of 7,978 km². It is bounded on the North East by Guma Local Government Area and by River Benue in the South (Gyang, 1997). Topographically, it is located in the Middle belt region of Nigeria and is characterized by gentle hills, clay soils, and tropical climate with two main seasons (rainy and dry seasons). The establishment of this University in the middle belt region was supported by the good savannah zone found within the area.

Participants

The participants for this study were staff of the Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi. The result of descriptive statistics indicate that gender 258(84.1%) were male and 45(14.2%) were female staff of the university. Also, for tribe; 228(71.8%) were Tiv staff, 30(9.5%) were Idoma staff, 15(4.7%) were Igede staff and 44(13.9%) were other staff who did not indicate their tribal identity. For religion; 228(71.9%) were Christianity, 75(23.7%) were Islam staff, 14(4.4%) were other staff who failed to indicate their religion. For age; 228(71.9%) were between 26-30 years, 45(14.2%) were between 31-35 years, 30(9.5%) were 36-40 years and 14(4.4%) failed to indicate their age. For the marital status; 243(76.7%) were married staff and 60(18.9%) were single staff and 14(4.4%) were staff who failed to indicate their marital status.

Sampling

The study used convenient sampling method to select the respondents this study. The respondents were drawn from the population of staff of the institution. Convenience sampling is the most common form of non-probabilistic sampling, mostly because it is misused. Convenience sampling is a method of collecting samples by taking samples that are conveniently located around a location or Internet service.

Instruments

The study used validated questionnaire for data collection from the respondents. The questionnaire was structured into sections which include; section “A” for demographic variables of the respondents such as age, ethnicity, marital status and religion. Work engagement scale was developed by Utrecht (2003), Organizational Support Scale: Organizational support scale developed by (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson & Sowa, 1986) and Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ). This questionnaire was developed by Gross and John (2003).

Procedure

Before the researcher proceeded for data collection in the study area, the researcher first obtained an official introductory letter of approval from the Department of Psychology. After granting the permission, the researcher officially and personally visited the staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi, Benue State. Considering the nature of their work processes among the University staff, the researcher did not take much of their time but went straight and obtained permission from the institution authority to allow the staff provides the needed information for this study. After the permission was granted, the contents of the questionnaire was carefully and clearly read with well explanation before the participants, the researcher briefly states the purpose of the research and also assured the respondents of their confidentiality. The staff who were available in the offices and also accept to participate in providing information were allowed to respond to the questionnaires by filling them properly for data analysis. Furthermore, they were informed that participation is voluntary. After responding to the questionnaires, all the copies were retrieved from them for analysis.

Data Analysis

Data analysis for this study was done using frequencies, and percentages count, while simple and multiple regression analyses was used to test hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 at 0.05 alpha level of significance using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20.

RESULTS

Table 4.1 Regression analysis summary table showing that there will be a significant antecedent of perceived organizational support on work engagement among staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi

Variables	R	R ²	F	β	t	P	Remark
Constant	.663	.440	247.035		1.825	.069	Not
Significant							
Perceived Organizational Support				.663	15.717		

Table 4.1 shows the result of a regression analysis indicating that there is no significant antecedent of perceived organizational support on work engagement ($f(1, 312) = .247.035$; $P < .05$, $R = .663$ and $R^2 = .440$). Therefore, hypothesis one was not confirmed.

Table 4.2 Regression analysis summary table showing that there will be a significant antecedent of emotion regulation on work engagement among staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi

Variables	R	R ²	F	β	t	P	Remark
Constant	.815	.714	778.878		1.825	.457	Not
Significant							
Emotion Regulation				.815	27.508		

Table 4.2 shows the result of a regression analysis indicating that there is no significant antecedent of emotion regulation on work engagement ($f(1, 312) = .778.878$; $P < .05$, $R = .815$ and $R^2 = .714$). Therefore, hypothesis two was not confirmed.

Table 4.3 Regression analysis summary table showing that there will be a significant joint antecedent of perceived organizational support and emotion regulation on work engagement among staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi

Variables	R	R ²	F	β	t	P	Remark
Constant	.846	.716	391.125		-1.192	.457	Not
Perceived Significant Organizational Support				.059	1.295	.196	
Emotion Regulation				.800	17.470	.006	

Table 4.3 shows the result of a regression analysis indicating that there is no significant joint antecedent of perceived organization support and emotion regulation on work engagement ($f(2, 311)=391.125$; $P<.05$, $R=.846$ and $R^2=.716$). Therefore, hypothesis three was not confirmed.

DISCUSSION

The discussion of findings was done according to the tested and verified hypotheses. This first hypothesis of the study which states that there will be a significant antecedent of perceived organizational support on work engagement among staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi. This hypothesis was tested using regression analysis and the result indicate that perceived organizational support has no significant antecedent on work engagement among staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi. This implies that perceived organizational support is not a criterion for work engagement among of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi.

The result of this finding is in contrast with that of Sylviz (2012) who examined the relationship between psychological empowerment and work engagement among employees in the construction sector in Kota Kinabalu area and revealed that when the construction employees feel empowered by giving them autonomy, freedom and opportunity in determining how they do their job, they will be more committed to their organization and put the best effort to ensure the sustainability of the organization. The result of this study further contradict with the work of Mehrdad and Roohoallah (2013)who examined the relationship between organizational support and work engagement of Guilan University and

Islamic Azad University, Rasht branch staffs, Iran and revealed that there is a significant and direct relationship between the components of organizational support and work engagement of Guilan University and Rasht Branch, Islamic Azad University staffs, with the increasing organizational support of the staffs their work engagement will also increase.

The result of this study is in disagreement with the findings of Nouf (2017) who also examined the validity of organizational support in improving the commitment levels among institutions and found out that the average of organizational support and the dimensions relating to it with work engagement were on the higher side. Notably, work engagement relied heavily on the level of autonomy given to the employee in decision making at the workplace. The result of this study further contradicts with that of Ravindranath (2017) who examined the relationship between perceived organizational support and work engagement among employees and revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between perceived organizational support and work engagement.

Findings of this study disagree with the literature review by Hassan and Anal (2014) who study the levels of perceived organizational support and work engagement, relationship between these two, and the demographic factors relationship with both of them and revealed that there is a strong relationship between perceived organizational support and work engagement. The result of this study extends to dispute the findings of Muhammad and Natasha (2020) who examined the indirect influence of perception of organizational support on employee work engagement with the mediating influence of flourishing and thriving at work and revealed that perceived organizational support was positively associated with employee flourishing, thriving, and work engagement. The findings of this study also did not support the research finding done by Friyanka (2017) whose aim was to explore the influence of perceived organizational support and on work engagement and later revealed that perceived organizational support has a significant positive influence on work engagement. It means the higher level of work engagement the stronger organizational support perceived by the employees.

The result of this study is not in line with the findings of Sadiya and Maimunah (2017) who addressed the impacts of organizational support on work engagement of the employees of Malaysian private Telecommunication companies and revealed that organizational support antecedents including organizational rewards and job conditions have significant relationship with organizational support. The result of this study extends to dispute with the findings of Akif (2016) who examined the relationship between work engagement and organizational support and organizational climate and found out that there is a positive and significant relationship between work engagement behaviors of teachers and organizational support and organizational climate and that organizational climate and organizational support had a positive and highly significant relationship. The result of this study disagrees with that of Azzam (2019) who examine the role of organizational support through its dimensions: (organizational equity, leader's behavior supporting subordinates, and participation in decision making), in improving employees' performance and revealed that there is statistical significant role at the level of (5%) for organizational support in improving employees' performance.

Also, hypothesis two stated that, there will be a significant antecedent of emotion regulation on work engagement among staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi. This hypothesis was tested using regression analysis and the result indicate that emotion regulation has no significant antecedent on work engagement among staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi. This implies that the emotion regulation of staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi has no impact on their work engagement. Going on other findings, the result of this contradict with the findings of Tung-Ju and Ching-Fang (2019) who examined effect of emotion regulation on work engagement and apply the environmental service companies of spiritual leadership as the moderator and revealed that the environmental service companies of spiritual leadership would weaken the negative effect of emotion regulation in expressive suppression on work engagement. The result of this study further disagrees with that of Sindy (2015) who investigated the relationship between emotional regulation and work engagement and found out that there was a significant positive relationship between emotional regulations on work engagement. Emotional regulation was reported to be a significant predictor of work engagement.

The findings of this study also dispute the result of the literature review by Shengxian and Xiaoxiao (2020) who examined the relationship between emotional response and employee engagement, and provide suggestions for improving employee engagement and found a positive relationship between emotion response and work engagement. The result of this study further disagree with the work of Derrick (2015) who determined if there is a statistically significant correlation between frontline managers and supervisors' emotion regulation and the degree of engagement of their direct reports and found out that there is a favorable, moderate correlation among the study variables. The result of this study also contradict with that of Esin and Ozlem (2018) who also examined the impact of emotional regulation dimensions, which are self-management, self-awareness, social-awareness and relationship management on employee engagement with the moderating role of gender. In this study, three dimensions of employee engagement are taken into consideration, which is physical, emotion regulation and cognitive engagement and revealed that there is a significant relationship between emotion regulation and employee engagement among professionals.

In addition, hypothesis three stated that, there will be a significant joint antecedent of perceived organizational support and emotion regulation on work engagement among staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi. This hypothesis was tested using multiple regression analysis and the result indicates that organizational support and emotion regulation has no significant joint antecedent on work engagement among staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi. This implies that when organizational support and emotion regulation interact, there is no impact on work engagement among staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, the following conclusions were made: There was no significant antecedent of perceived organizational support on work engagement among staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi. There was no significant antecedent of emotion regulation on work engagement among staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi. There was no significant joint antecedent of perceived organizational support and emotion regulation on work engagement among staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the result of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- i. This study recommended that the management staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi should at least provide the needed support by the staff to enhance their work engagement.
- ii. The study further encourage both the state and Federal Government to ensure that the staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi has a stable emotion since it can also contributes to work engagement by chance.
- iii. The study also encouraged and recommended that the staff of the University should also as a matter of urgency work on their emotions and other means of supporting themselves to help heighten their work engagement in the University.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations experienced by the researcher include lack of finance and time. The researcher was hindered by lack of funds to carry out the research smoothly. Also, many staff feel is a taboo to expose their identity but the researcher was able to explain to their understanding to administer the questionnaire appropriately since it was only for this research work. Attending lectures, writing exams at the same time carrying out the study was another challenge faced by the researcher.

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