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Legal Responsibility and Workers Commitment within the OIL SECTOR in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between legal responsibility and employee commitment in oil companies. Literature was reviewed based on the variables (legal responsibility and workers commitment). The theoretical foundation was based on shareholders theory. Data were obtained from 189 employees drawn from 5 oil companies (SPDC, Desicon, Cameroon, Halliburton and Agip) in Nigeria. After careful analysis of the data generated from the respondents, the findings revealed that there is positive and significant relationship between legal responsibility and employee commitment.

Keywords: Legal Responsibility, Workers Commitment, Normative Commitment, Affective Commitment.

Introduction

Work organizations because of its focused on results oriented has always been seen as an entity established for the sole arm of profit making. The interest of organizational scientists and practitioners to employee commitment is owing to the immense benefits to be derived from qualified committed workforce. This has propelled scholars to un-relentlessly proffer definitions to describe the concept. Meyer *et'al.* (2001) cited in John *et'al.* (2004) defined employee commitment as the force that binds someone to a course of action that is of importance to a particular target. Commitment is seen as a propelled actions geared towards goals achievement (Hart, 2019). The conscious attempts by an individual to start and continue in a path or action in order to actualize pre-determine goals best describes employee commitment. Numerous factors enhances employee commitment; ranging from financial motivation (Johnson; Fred and Orusa 2017), favorable workplace climate (Johnson *et al* 2019), however Allen et al (1990) opined that commitment is birthed once there is a positive psychological disposition by the worker towards the organization. (O'Reilly *et'al:* 1986) cited in Madeeha & Imran (2016) stresses that imput by the employee to a greater extend determined the level of commitment of such employee in the organization. Literatures on activities of workers within the organization with respect to commitment have assumed multiple dimensions (Mathien & Zajac, 1990; Johnson & Ossia 2019) had seen increased performance as results of committed workforce. Cohan (1991) noted that decrease in employee commitment is caused by unfavorable workforce, decrease in absenteeism (Cohen, 1993, Barber *et'al* 1999) amongst others. The level of commitment employees give to their organization can be said to be largely dependent on the organizational practices because organizational practices that promotes the welfare of stakeholders can be considered as key to enjoying a committed workforce as employees are proud to identify and commit to organizations that are considered to be socially responsible (Brammer *et'al*., 2007) cited in Chia-Chun (2010).

The sensitivity of the subject matter has made it a widely debated issue between organization practitioners, employees, governments and scholars alike. The perception of the concept by different classes of individuals and corporate bodies has made it difficult to arrive at a generally accepted definition. The difficulty to reach a consensus as to what corporate social responsibility (CRS) is really about has either been as a result of varying views of the concept due to regional differences or inability to grasp the concept in its entirety. The concept of corporate social responsibility started in the 1950's and has evolved overtime, phase one is termed the pre-corporate social responsibility phase (1960-1990), phase two is the corporate social responsibility initiation phase (1990-2000), phase three is the early corporate social responsibility mainstreaming (2000-tilldate) Katsoulakos *et'al*. (2004).

There is hardly empirical literatures established in relation to employee commitment as it affect corporate social responsibility, and this has resulted in the increased knowledge gap and understanding of the relationship between the constructs as management of organizations often engage in the adoption and implementation of corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices solely as a give back measure to the society and a strategy to create and maintain a positive image in the mind of the society. The influence of corporate social responsibility (CSR) on employee commitment has been vaguely researched as researchers have often paid attention to how corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices by organizations contributes to the wellbeing of the society and improves the corporate image of the organization. Maigan *et'al*. (2001) cited in Oloko *et'al.* (2013) affirms that a large number of empirical studies focus on the limited issues of corporate philanthropy thereby resulting in the little understanding of the impact of corporate social responsibility on the employees commitment. Increase in employee turnover which is the degree to which the employment of an organization's workforce is terminated and replacement required. Nugent (2009) posit that employee turnover is the percentage figure which indicates the rate at which employees move in and out of an organization. It is a truism that new employees inject fresh blood into an organization based on their new ideas, methods of doing things and innovativeness but most times excessive turnover indicates an unstable workforce and increases Human Resource (HR) cost and may result in loss of skilled workforce. The purpose of this study is to examine how legal responsibility influences employee commitment and the relationship that exists between the two variables.

The following hypotheses are stated to guide the study:

$H0_1$: There is no significant relationship between legal responsibility and affective commitment of employees in oil companies.

$H0_2$: There is no significant relationship between legal responsibility and normative commitment of employees in oil companies.

Review of Literature

Shareholder Theory

The purpose of business according to Greenwood (2001) is to ensure that return on investment is provided for shareholders; implying that organizations are perceived as means of creating economic value for those who invest capital into the organization. This theory supports the view that the sole purpose of the business (organization) is to concern themselves with how to maximize profit for shareholders (Cochran, 1994). Friedman (1998) a major proponent of the "Constrained profit making view" argued that irrespective of the need to maximize profit, business activities should be carried out with all form of honesty; their operations should be devoid of fraud and deception. In reaction to Friedman's view, the shareholders theory further argues that managers as agents of shareholders are responsible for protecting the interest of the shareholders, and as such are bound to channel the resources of the organization to activities that portends increase in profit for the organization though it should be done within the rules of the game. The theory further asserts that managers who invest in corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities have stolen money from the shareholders to do so.

Legal Responsibility

Organizations are expected to carry out their business operation in line with laws and standards that regulate the market and society that they have become a part of (Akanbi *et'al.*, 2012). Organizations are responsible to the government; hence business activities must be carried out within the ambits of the law. These laws include payment of taxes, royalties, fines and levies that may be imposed by the government from time to time, CIPMN (2013). Societies are governed by laws, organization as a subsystem of the society, must stay within legal boundaries in its business operations. Carroll (1991) posits that it is important for organizations to carry out their business activities in ways that reflects consistency with the expectations of government and laws. They must ensure compliance with laws promulgated by the federal, state and local government so as to be perceived as law-abiding corporate citizen; the goods and services that is produced must meet legal requirement as a successful organization is defined as one that fulfills its legal obligations. Law represents a codification of the society's good or bad, right or wrong. Organizations must play by the rules of the game they must perform their business activities according to the stipulated laws promulgated by the various levels of government.

Affective Commitment

Affective commitment is the emotional attachment an employee has towards an organization that causes a deep involvement and identification with the organization, Agba *et'al*. (2010). Jaros (1993) states that emotional responsibility is the degree to which a worker is intellectually connected to an association through sentiment of steadfastness, love, belongingness, delight and worth. The term responsibility is depicted by different examinations as a feeling demeanor of the worker to an organisation. Doorman *et'al*. (1979) sets that emotional responsibility is the overall quality of a worker to recognize and stay with an association. Mowday et' al. (1982) accepts a representative that is emotionally dedicated to an organisation will have faith in the objectives and estimations of the organisation, buckle down for the orgnisation and want to remain with the association. Beck *et'al*. (2000) asserts that recognizing the work of an organization and internalizing the principles and standards of the organization births the development of affective commitment. This is the most important form of commitment as it carries the most potential benefits for organizations, Allen *et'al*. (1991). Affective commitment influences how employees perform their assigned tasks hence it is also called engagement. Engagement is the degree of employees' commitment, work effort and longing to stay in an organization. Employees who are affectively committed to an organization are employees who go beyond their assigned duties for the good of the organization.

Legal Responsibility and Employee Commitment

Carroll (1991) stresses that it is imperative for organization to do their business exercises in manners that reflects consistency with the desires for government and laws. Lawful obligation involves the requirement for an organization to exist inside the lawful limits of the general public where they complete their business exercises. Representatives anticipate that their organization should act inside the ambits of the law by guaranteeing that the exercises of the organization are as per the laws and gauges that manage the market and the general public of which they structure a section as social orders are administered by laws, association as a subsystem of the general public, must remain inside legitimate limits in its business activities.

Government expects organization to conform to laws made by the bureaucratic, state and governments, for example, charges, fines, tolls and the lowest pay permitted by law and so forth. Laws and models that direct the market, for example, the lowest pay permitted by law and other work laws are regularly for the representative, accordingly workers anticipate severe consistence from their bosses. Okparaji (2018) set that work laws in Nigeria favors the representatives as it guarantees that obligations of a business is unmistakably expressed in an agreement of work. A portion of these obligations are:

1. Payment of Remuneration: the employer is not just obligated to pay the employee for work done but must also pay his employee the agreed remuneration. This implies that remuneration is payable as long as it has been agreed whether expressly or implied. The employer is also obligated to make payment of wages during illness; this means the contract service may contain express provisions as to the effects of illness particularly as far as employee's right to payment is concerned.
2. Duty to Provide Work: Section 17 (1) of the labour act (2004) stipulates the duties to provide work but allows wages to be paid as an alternative where the master fails to provide work though there are exceptional cases where the master must provide work:
    a. The work is needed to maintain the employee's publicity and reputation.
    b. The work is needed to enable the employee to earn the wage especially the commission-only basis kind of work
    c. If the nature of the job requires that the employee work to develop or maintain his skills, the employer will be in breach of contract if he fails to provide it.
3. Duty of Mutual Respect/Trust and Confidence: the law imposes a duty on the employer to treat the employee with respect. It is often referred to as a duty of mutual respect because the word mutual demonstrates that the duty applies to both parties and not just the employee, Okene (2012).
4. Duty to Ensure the Safety of Employees; to a great extent, the employer is responsible for the provision of safety in the workplace. This responsibility is made up of:
    a. The employer's duty to provide safe premises: it is a truism that the duty is not absolute but to a large extent, it is expected that the employer will take reasonable care in ensuring that the workplace is safe.
    b. Tools and materials: the employer must provide reasonably safe plant, tools, equipment and materials.
    c. Safe system of work; the employer must ensure safe system of work by providing reasonably safe fellow-workers, making arrangement for employees to choose correct equipment for a particular task and ensuring effective co-ordination.

When employees perceive that their welfare especially those captured in law promulgated by the government at various levels (laws that promote employees' welfare) are strictly complied with, they are often obligated to remain committed to the organization.

Research methodology

Population of the Study

For this study, a population of 480 employees was drawn from five oil companies in Nigeria

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Table 1.Population of five oil companies

S/No	Name of Bank	No of Branches	Average No of Staff Per Branch	Population	Percentage
1.	SPDC	5	28	140	29.16
2.	Desicon Oil	5	15	75	15.63
3.	Cameroon Oil	5	18	90	18.75
4.	Halliburton Oil	5	20	100	20.83
5.	Agip Oil	5	15	75	15.63
Total				480	100

Source: Desk Research (2020)

Consequently, from the 5 branches of the oil companies, an average number of employees were obtained which gave rise to the population of 480 employees as shown in table 1.

Reliability of the research instruments

Mugenda & Mugenda (1999) assert that reliability of research instrument refers to the extent to which a research instrument maintains consistency in result after it has been tried frequently. To this end, the researcher will use the Cronbach's (1951) coefficient alpha to carry out test of internal consistency. Also, a reliability coefficient of .70 or more will be considered as it is the standard acceptable range in most social science research scenarios, Nunnally (1978).

Therefore, for this study we relied on certain research standards to ascertain the validity of the content of the measure (Johnson *et al*, 2019). Consequently, since the reliability alpha values of 0.60 and above are acceptable Sekaran (2003). The ranges of scales for the research instrument were tested to determine their individual reliabilities and overall reliability of the research instrument. The legal responsibility subscale also is made up of 4 items (α = .60), Affective Commitment subscale made up of 4 item (α = .71) Normative Commitment subscale is made up of 4 items (α = .75), Continuance Commitment subscale is made up of 4 items (α = .69). The research instrument for this study was found to be very reliable (28 items; α = .85).This suggests that the research instrument and its constituent subscales were sufficient for use. This is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2.Cronbach's Alphas of the Study Variables (N=189)

No. of Items	Variables	Alpha (α)
4	Legal Responsibility	0.60
4	Affective Commitment	0.71
4	Normative Commitment	0.75
4	Continuance Commitment	0.69

Source: SPSS Output based on 2020 field survey data

Table 3.Questionnaire Distribution and Response Rate

S/No	Name of Bank	No of Employees	Questionnaire administered/ sample size	Questionnaire not Retrieved	Questionnaire Retrieved	Questionnaire discarded as unfit
1.	SPDC	140	64	9	55	2
2.	Desicon Oil	75	34	7	27	-
3.	Cameroon Oil	90	41	3	38	-
4.	Halliburton Oil	100	45	4	41	1
5.	Agip Oil	75	34	2	32	1
Total		480	218	25	193	4

Source: Desk Research (2020)

The above table shows the rate of responses derived from the distributed questionnaire. According to Burns and Grove, (2011) data collection is the precise, systematic gathering of information relevant to the research purpose or specific objectives and questions. To achieve this data were derived from respondents with a self-administered survey instrument. Two hundred and eighteen (218) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to employees of oil companies in Nigeria. Out of which, twenty-five (25) copies of the questionnaire, representing eleven percent (11%) of the sample size, were not returned. A total of one hundred and ninety-three (193) copies of the questionnaire were returned, representing eighty-nine percent (89%) of the sample size which is the response rate of this study.

With the intent of actualizing accuracy and wholeness, the returned copies of the questionnaire were sorted before being coded and ensured to be error free. The outcome of the sorting from the returned one hundred and ninety-three (193) copies of the questionnaire, one hundred and eighty-nine (189) responses representing eighty-seven percent (87%) of the sample size were found suitable for analysis while four (4) copies representing two percent (2%) of the sample size were discarded because they were wrongly filled. This is represented above in Table 4.1.

Legal Responsibility and Affective Commitment

From Hypothesis 1, it was suggested that there is no significant relationship between legal responsibility and affective commitment.

Table 4a.Correlation Matrix for the Relationship between Legal Responsibility and Affective Commitment

Correlations			
		Legal Responsibility	**Affective Commitment**
Legal Responsibility	Pearson Correlation	1	.667**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	189	189
Affective Commitment	Pearson Correlation	.667**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	189	189
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Source: SPSS Output based on 2020 field survey data.

Table 4b.Model Summary for the Relationship between Legal Responsibility and Affective Commitment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.667[a]	.445	.442	2.86291
a. Predictors: (Constant), LEGALRESPONSIBILITY				

Source: SPSS Output based on 2020 field survey data

The results presented in the table 4a and 4b above showed the correlation and model summary of legal responsibility and affective commitment. It revealed that legal responsibility was strong and positively correlated with affective commitment with a correlation of r= .667 (p< 0.000). Specifically, the result (R^2 = .445; p< 0.000) suggest that legal responsibility for 44.5% variance in affective commitment. This suggests that an increase in legal responsibility is associated with increase in affective commitment. Similarly, the null hypothesis one (Ho_1); "***There is no significant relationship between legal responsibility and affective commitment"*** *was rejected.*

Legal responsibility and normative commitment

From Hypothesis 2, it was suggested that there is no significant relationship between legal responsibility and normative commitment.

Table 5a.Correlation Matrix for the Relationship between legal responsibility and normative commitment

		Legal Responsibility	Normative Commitment
Legal Responsibility	Pearson Correlation	1	.395**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	189	189
Normative Commitment	Pearson Correlation	.395**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	189	189
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Source: SPSS Output based on 2020 field survey data

Table 5b.Model Summary for the relationship between legal responsibility and normative commitment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.395[a]	.156	.151	2.26531
a. Predictors: (Constant), LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY				

Source: SPSS Output based on 2020 field survey data

The results presented in the table 5a and 5b above showed the correlation and model summary of legal responsibility and normative commitment. It revealed that legal responsibility was weak and positively correlated with normative commitment with a correlation of r= .395 (p< 0.000). Specifically, the result (R^2 = .156; p< 0.000) suggest that legal responsibility accounts for 15.6% variance in normative commitment. This suggests that an increase in legal responsibility is associated with increase in normative commitment. Similarly, the null hypothesis two (Ho_2); "***There is no significant relationship between legal responsibility and normative commitment"*** *was rejected.*

Discussion of findings

Legal Responsibility and Employee Commitment

The descriptive statistics as displayed in Table 4/5 showed that the organizations understudy have a high sense of legal responsibility towards their business environment. The correlation analyses stipulated in Table 4a and b and 5a and b showed that legal responsibility has a significant and positive relationship with employee commitment (r = .667, p = .000; r = .395; r = .106, p = .000;). Particularly, with a correlation (r) value of .667, .395 and .106, the relationship between legal responsibility and normative commitment is strong, but weak relationship exist between legal responsibility and affective commitment while the relationship between legal responsibility and continuance commitment is very weak. The study also revealed that the relationship between corporate social responsibility and employee

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commitment is significant at p-values of .000 for all the variables which is not up to .01. This made the hypothesis ($Ho_{1,}$ and $Ho_{2,}$) to be rejected.

To establish the degree of influence, legal responsibility was regressed on affective commitment, normative commitment and continuous commitment. The result of the regression as presented in Tables 4b, 4.b and 5a and b, revealed R^2 values of .445, .156 and .011 respectively. This indicates that legal responsibility predict employee commitment. The study found out that 1 unit increase in legal responsibility of the organisation accounts for a .445 unit increase in affective commitment, a .156 unit increase in normative commitment and .011 unit increase in continuance commitment. In other words, since legal responsibility is positively related to the three measures of employee commitment, any improvement in the organization's delivery of its legal responsibility will cause their employee affective commitment to improve by 44.5%, their normative commitment to improve by 15.6% and their continuance commitment will improve by 1.1%.

These findings is consistent with Carroll (1991) who posited that it is important for organizations to carry out their business activities in ways that reflects consistency with the expectations of government and laws. Legal responsibility entails the need for an organization to exist within the legal boundaries of the society where they carry out their business activities. And Okene (2012) who also posited that labour laws in Nigeria favours the employees as it ensures that duties of an employer is clearly stated in a contract of employment.

Summary and Conclusion

A few researchers have opined that representatives are significant resources organization possess. Organization with submitted workforce will in general appreciate expanded occupation execution (Mathien and Zajac, 1990), diminished representative turnover (Cohen, 1991), decline in truancy (Cohen, 1993, Barber et'al 1999) among others. The degree of duty bound employee provide for their organization can be said to be to a great extent subject to the authoritative practices in light of the fact that hierarchical practices that advances the welfare of employee can be considered as key to getting a charge out of a submitted workforce as workers are pleased to distinguish and focus on organizations that are viewed as socially dependable (Brammer et'al., 2007) refered to in Chia-Chun (2010). Interestingly organizations who have benefitted from the contributions of committed workforce provide necessary modalities that will attract and retain them. This is because with the globalization of the world every industry requires quality human capital to be able to stay competitive. Therefore, when one organization fail to meet-up with its corporate social responsibility such an organization stand a risk of losing their man power to other organizations within and outside the oil companies.

In cognizance of the purpose of the study, which is to examine the relationship between legal responsibility and employee's commitment in the oil sector in Nigeria, literature on legal responsibility and employee commitment was reviewed, then (2) hypothetical statements were formulated and tested. Data was collected from a sample of 189 employees who work in the oil companies. It revealed that majority of the staff of the organizations understudy possess minimum of 1-10 years work experience and the greater number of the respondents holds minimum of a Bachelor's degree. This demographic profile implies that the respondents have the professional and academic qualification necessary to understand and remark on the concerns raised in the research instrument using their personal experiences. Collected data was then analyzed using the SPSS software.

Hypotheses were tested using Pearson's coefficient of correlation (*r*) and regression analysis. Based on their results and study findings, it can be concluded that the research questions and objectives were addressed as stated below: Legal Responsibility has a significant and positive impact on employee commitment. It influences the affective and normative commitment of employees.

Recommendation

Based on the findings and subsequent drawn conclusions, the influence of corporate social responsibility on employee commitment was established. Consequently, the following recommendations were made:

i. Decision makers in the oil companies should ensure compliance with the law that concerns their activities and in the cause of decision making. This implies that organization must adopt the habit of paying necessary charges like tax, royalties, fines and levies imposed by the government at when due and they should make decision with the understanding that they constitute the sub-system of the society.
ii. Decision makers in the oil companies should promote corporate culture that will enhance employee's commitment towards actualizing the organizational goals. This simply means that decision makers should adopt corporate norms and values that will be shared and promote strong convictions about the organization. This is because corporate culture moderates the relationship between corporate social responsibility and employee commitment.

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