

A Study of Effect of Employment Relationships Quality on Affective Commitment of Employees Working in Chinese, French and Guinean Companies Operating in the Republic of Guinea (West Africa)

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Abstract: *Recent years have witnessed fierce competition in today's business landscape triggered by both advancement of technology and the effect of globalization. Which in fact have compelled companies to seek for competitive advantage by embracing strategic approaches such as expanding business overseas. The employment relationship quality in foreign companies operating overseas has been subject of many criticisms due to its huge effect on both organizational commitment and company sustainability. This paper provides an overview of employment relationship quality and its effects on affective commitment of employees working in Chinese, French and Guinean companies operating in the Republic of Guinea (West Africa) across three industries namely: hotel, mining and telecom. The paper helps understand which nationality has the best employment relationship quality and which one has the worse quality as well. The paper also studies the extent to which employees of the concerned industries are committed to their organizations.*

Keywords: employment relationship quality, affective commitment, correlation

1. Introduction

The concept relating to employment relationship quality (ERQ) has gained huge popularity in the last few years and has been recognized as an important part of organizational studies literature. It has emerged as a chief discourse in organizational studies mainly because of its effect on organizational affective commitment (OAC). But also because of the new trend in the relationship of employee - organization which characterizes today's business environment. The relationship of employee - organization is a chief term to describe the relationship between the employees and the employer " (Schoore and colleagues, 2004, p.292). Managing employment relationship has become a critical challenge for both researchers and practitioners. Thus, some researchers have been done to investigate the impact of employment relationship quality on organizational affective commitment due to the tremendous cost directly linked with actual turnover and costs pertaining to recruitment, training and development of new employees (Haque et al., 2017) The competitive nature of today's business environment is one of the major drivers to raise the concern about the quality of employment relationship and its effect on affective commitment of employees. Employment relationship quality is therefore defined as the extent to which parties of the given relationship experience exchanges, interactions and various mediators pertaining to a work relationship as either positive or negative. Good employment relationship quality will definitely be appreciated when both economic and social exchanges between participants (employees and employers) are regarded as positive and harmonious from the perspective of both participants (De la Rosa Navarro and Cabrera 2009).

The notion of affective commitment has been described as employee's identification with, involvement in, and sentiment attachment to the organizational (Meyer et al., 2002). Several researches have suggested that the high level of affective commitment leads to employees' positive behavioral and performance outcomes (Rhoades et al., 2001). The impact between employment relationship quality and affective commitment has been studied by plenty of scholars in the field of organizational behavior. But the scope and the accurate extent to which that impact influence employee affective commitment still need to be deeply understood mainly when it comes to foreign companies operating in the lower income countries like in Guinea where foreign companies are suspected to bribe the local authorities including labor union to breach some basic right of employees working for them. Employee relationship quality in such suspect world is subject to many debates amongst academicians and business practitioners.

The raising overseas investment strategies engendered by globalization has made it possible for powerful and stronger economic countries to invest in foreign countries, mostly in lower income countries seeking to explore investment favors offered by host countries. So, after it has obtained its independence on October 02, 1959, Guinea has favored foreign investment as an avenue to help the country to be connected with the rest of the world and then to be developed. This foreign investment attracting strategy took a wider turn when the second president of Guinea independent General Lansana Conte came on power after the death of the first president of independent Guinea. Thus, the economy and trade were fully liberalized which allured investors much specially the mining, telecom and Hotel sectors. Therefore, the tremendous business opportunities that offers Guinea with regards to the richness of its land in mining and

in others raw material has been subject to several trade/investment agreements amongst Guinea and many international investors mainly France, china and somehow Russia who aimed at exploring the untapped potential resources/business. But the relationship amongst these foreign investors/employers and local employees turn out often with unsatisfaction as many employees believe that employers are much more concerned about maximizing of their than wealth than taking care of basic needs of employees. The high rate of unemployment in Guinea, the cross - cultural dimension, the lower incomes of the majority of population and the bribe used by investors to corrupt local authorities are known to be chief factors that fueled this issue.

The historic and colonial character of Guinea - French relationship has favored the set - up of many French companies in Guinea. There are about 801¹ French companies that are now operating in Guinea across several sectors. Companies like Bolloré, Air France, Orange, Société Générale, BNP Paribas are some of the chief French companies respectively operating in air transportation, telecom and Bank sectors and are almost said to be the leader in their industries.

On the other hand, the raised of china as a super powerful nation has given rise to the entrance of so many Chinese companies in Guinea over last two decades. Thus, the rate of Chinese investment/projects has considerably intensified over last 15 years in Guinea. On September 06, 2017 the both countries have signed a funding agreement of 202\$² billion that china will have to gradually invest (2017 to 2036) to construct infrastructures in Guinea in exchange of mining resources that Guinea will provide with Chinese firms to pay back the same loan. The massive presence of these foreign companies in Guinea have drawn attention of researchers and practitioners towards the quality of their employment relationship as this remains little known hence too criticized. Although some few previous studies about employment relationship quality and its impact on affective commitment exist in Guinea context. But the need to deeper the research concerning the same phenomenon is still there specially when it comes to do it across different sectors in order to study the level of employees' commitment but also to identify the quality of employment relationship quality in these three different nationalities.

2. Literature Review

Employment relationship and affective commitment

Job Demands - resources model describes that both organization hierarchy and style of management relating to jobs affect individual employment since the same influence job demands and resources (Demerouti et al.2001). Therefore, the aspect pertaining to job level is referred to as

¹[https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/dossiers-pays/guinee/relations-bilaterales/](https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/dossiers-pays/guinee/rerelations-bilaterales/)

²<https://afrique.latribune.fr/finances/investissement/2017-09-08/guinee-un-deal-chinois-a-20-milliards-de-dollars-contre-des-ressources-minieres-749504.html>

job demand and job resources (Demerouti and Bakker 2011) such as the job's employment relationship. Job contribution and job motivation are proportional, the higher is the former, the bigger is the latter since job demands place the individual in a motivated energized state, with stimulates efforts (Karasek1979, p - 287). Jobs that provides high demands and resources are particularly motivational, that is mostly the case with mutual investment. The main hypothesis in JD - R theory (Bakker et al 2007) proposes that the job resources signaled by expected contribution are higher. Job resources get their motivating potential mainly when employees face high job demands. In another words, the coping hypothesis suggest that under frustrated conditions individuals will be more likely to use resources as copying mechanism' (Demerouti and Bakker 2011, p.3). The gist of this reasoning is that the balance of a job's offered inducements and expected contribution influences employees (Tsui et al 1997). In a word, employee working in mutual investment is likely to be more committed than the one in an overdemanding, job - focused or overinvestment orientation. With regard to the aforementioned reasoning, research shows that job resources involved in offered inducements are fully motivated (e. g., Gould - William et al.2014, Mostafa et al.2015). Moreover, the best results for affective commitment are obtained in employment relationship literature when offered inducement and expected contributions are both high (Tsui et al.1997. Hom et al.2009, Jiwen Song et al.2009).

Employment relationship quality and its Primary determinants

The concept of employment relationship quality describes the level to which parties of a particular relationship experience interactions, exchanges and numerous mediators associated with a professional relationship as positive or negative. Employment relationship will be evident when both economic and social exchanges between employer and employee are balanced and harmonious from the perspective of both employer and employee.

The supervisory relationship is broadly known as a prominent relationship in all sort of organization (Nelson and Friendlander 2001; Wallace, Hunt and Richards 1999; Whitener, Brodt, Korsgaard and Werner 2014) Numerous authors have confirmed the relationship between the high levels of job satisfaction and positive supervisory behavior. And the adverse impact of negative supervisory on job satisfaction levels has also been outlined (Coyle - Shapiro and Shore2007, Gould - William 2003, Kickul, Gundry and Posig 2005, Robbins and Judge 2011. Searle and Skinner 1011). Unfortunately, there are no universally application generic guidelines for positive treatment of subordinates because of the fact that supervisory relationship is situation - specific. Various unintended organizational outcomes can be caused by negative supervisory behavior such as deviant employee behavior, destructive workplace conflict, employee grievances, labor disputes and the resignation of employees (Robbins and Judge2011: 64. Teppet et al., 2009). While describing a theory of perceived organizational support, Shanock and Eisenberger (2006) explained that employees assigned anthropomorphic to their employer's organizational hierarchies, systems and behavior and tended to regard the organization as single interactive

living entity that interacted with employees via their direct supervisors. Hence, the direct supervisor is viewed as the first representative of an entire organization in which they are employed (Bendix 2010b) >. Therefore, it is pointed out that the relationship behavior of an immediate supervisor will be the primary, and although not the only, determinant of the perception of employment relationship quality that a subordinate employee will make. So, once the importance of the employment relationship has been established, it must be managed effectively. As with any relationship, be it social (marriage) and economics (work), there are certain factors that will determine the characteristics of the relationship. The aspects that determine the quality of the relationship are referred to as mediators of the relationship.

Affective organizational commitment

Defining Organizational commitment differs from one scholar to another. Meyer and Allen 1997 described it as the feeling or attachment an employee makes for his /her organization. They further pointed out that the concept (organizational commitment) is a multidimensional construct with three components: affective commitment (emotional attachment, pride and involvement with an organization), continuance commitment (intention for turnover) and normative commitment (loyalty and or feeling of obligation to an organization). Out of these three elements, affective commitment was found to be the most regular predictor of an organizational positive outcomes. Consistent organizational commitment is tied to employee's turnover intention decrease, employee experience burnout, and absenteeism as well as increase extra - role behavior, acceptance of change, innovation and flexibility (Iverson 1996, Iverson and Buttigieg 1999, Mathieu and Zajac 1990, Morris, Lydka, and O'Creedy 1998, Sommers, Bae, and Luthans 1996, Wasti 2003). Organization's high commitment is a great determinant of its productivity and competitiveness (Deery and Iverson 1996, Morris, Lydka and O'Creedy 1998).

Three types of antecedents associated to organizational commitment were found by Iverson and Buttigieg (1999): personal (job expectation, job values, organizational tenure and work motivation), job related (coworker support, job security, promotional opportunities, pay and management receptiveness), and environment (job opportunities). There are other important influences on organizational commitment were identified as follows: job satisfaction (Deery and Iverson 1996) and personal values (Elizur and Koslowsky 2001, Putti, Aryee, and Liang 1989, Wasti 2001). Alternatively, to US studies, Korean employees' position, position tenure and age were all found positively related to organizational commitment by Sommers, Bae and Luthans (1996). Organizational commitment of employees can be augmented when the value of employee is first committed by giving them good compensation, promotion, training, fringe benefits etc. And also, by making it to employees the organizational mission, vision and objectives, clear grievance process provides for extensive two - way communication, support employee development, security etc. (Fred Luthans, 2002). All these predict a clear and attract a job career growth for employees. Which also is reciprocated by commitment (Robert J. Vans.2006). The high committed employees are those who usually have

good attendance records, hence, less absenteeism records. They demonstrate a willing to adhere company policies, and have lower turnover rates which is correlated to employee's retention.

The aspect of organizational climate and its relationship with organizational affective commitment have been subject of many researches. Hence, researchers have suggested that autonomy (Wallace, Hunt, and Richards, 1996), supervisor support (Benson, 1996), and cohesiveness (Beuchanan, 1974) - organizational climate variables - relate positively to organizational commitment. Further, Steers (1977) found a relationship between the autonomy and trust dimension of organizational climate, and commitment. According to Loi (1995), trust is also associated with other organizational activities such as organizational change and development (Golembewski, 1986) and organizational effectiveness (Culbert) and Mc Donough, 1986).

Employee engagement and affective commitment

Organizational commitment has been subjects of numerous studies from scholars of different theoretical background (Macedo et al., 2016). Organizational commitment is considered as one of the most critical phenomenon managers face with today at workplace. (Lo et al., 2010, Reade and Lee, 2012). Organizational commitment is the level to which employee is willing to serve and be loyal to his/her organization (Mowday et al, 1979). In another words, an individual identification (Mowday et al., 1979) and regard (Powell and Meyer, 2004) for his organization is organization commitment. Literature defines three forms of organizational commitment: affective commitment, normative commitment and calculative commitment (Thomsen et al, 2016). Following Mowday et al.'s (1979) conceptualization of employees' personal attachment to, involvement in, and identification with the employing organization. Affective commitment has gained less attention in education context than in other fields of research (Chan et al., 2008). Affective commitment has been associated with favorable employee behavior, such as being less likely to quit job and putting and extra effort into work (Powell and Meyer, 2004).

Consequence of affective commitment

Tett and Meyer (1993) argued that turnover desire should be considered as conscious and deliberate willfulness to leave the organization. That is measured by referring to a length of time and has been regarded as last of in sequence of withdrawal cognitions, consisting of a set of thinking of leaving with intention for to look for an alternative employment. The turnover literature suggests that organizational commitment mediates the relationship between perceived job security and turnover intention. Steers and Mowday (1981) for instance, suggested that work - related expectation mainly job security directly affect psychological responses (e. g. Organizational commitment), and reduction in organizational commitment can be presented as attempts to psychologically withdraw (Davy et al, 1991) Previous research findings demonstrated that turnover intention is negatively, significantly, and consistently related to affective commitment (Allen and Lee, 1993; Konovsky and Cropanzano, 1991). There is also ample evidence that

job security is negatively correlated with the intention to quit (Arnold and Feldman, 1982).

Research Objective

- 1) To identify the difference in Chinese, French and Guinea employment relationships quality throughout the select industries (Hotel, Mining and Telecom.).
- 2) To show the effect of employment relationship quality on employee affective commitment (correlation).
- 3) To study the different level of employee affective commitment in the concerned organizations

Research Hypothesis

- 1) There will be a significant impact of employment relationship quality on employee affective commitment,
- 2) There will be no significant differences in the respondents' answers regarding the employment relationship quality and affective commitment based on companies' nationalities.

The need for the study

Employees plays a pivotal role in keeping an organization on the right path towards attainment of its set objective like high productivity, better profitability and sustainability etc. Thus, dealing with people within an organization is a very crucial managerial task that entails a profound understanding of all the aspects involved in this. But evidence from several companies has showed that employees basic needs are yet to be satisfied by many employers running business mostly in lower incomes and or poor countries like in the republic of Guinea. Conversely, there is a common believe across Africa mainly in Guinea that Chinese employment relationship is very poorer than others. Many employees who have worked with Chinese believe that Chinese bosses principally care about the performing of their tasks while ignoring the basic social and professional aspects that foster the affective commitment of employees. (Barry Sautman and Yan Hairong 2009). But there is no such study research conducted specially in Guinean (Republic of Guinea) context to prove or deny this perception. This is why conducting this study was needful to assess the employment relationship quality and its effects on affective commitment of employees working for Chinese companies in contrast with other employees working for French and Guinean companies, all operating in Guinea. The different level of affective commitment of employees working with these three different nationalities is also addressed by the study. In a word, the study helped to understand which of these three different nationalities has the best employment relationship quality and which one has the worst one as well.

3. Methodology

With an aim to analyze the quality of employment relationship and its impact on affective commitment. This

research is based on primary data as well as secondary data. Secondary data was collected from various sources like: national institute of Guinea, books, magazines, journals, research papers etc. A survey method was employed to collect primary data. The questionnaire model developed by (Willem et al., 201) to measure employment relationship quality was modifies and adapted in this study. Fifteen questionnaires covering four dimensions (Justice, Fairness, Good - faith and Trust) of employment relationship quality were then sent to respondents with a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study. To measure affective commitment part of the study, six additional questionnaires adapted to the model of (Mowday et al., 1997) were also modified and sent to collect data.

4. Results and Discussion

The study aims at testing the effect of employment relationship quality on affective commitment. In view of respondents' profile, 35 % from sector sample was Hotel, and merely 33% of the same sector sample was Mining, and 32% was telecom. Most of the respondents based on companies' nationality were from French companies, merely 41%, 32% of them came from Chinese firms and 27% were employees of local companies (Guinean companies). The large majority of respondents was male (70%) while 30% was female. Which is due to inequal education rate between both genders in Guinea which is consistent with 2017 report from national institute of statistic of Guinean [https://www.stat-uinee.org/images/Documents/Publications/INS/annuelles/annuaire/La%20Guine%20en%20chiffre%20V5.pdf] and that justifies the tendency for companies to recruit more male over female. Respondents' age profile revealed that 38% was in the age group of 35–45 - year - old whereas 24% was 45 - 55 years old and age group varying between 18 - 35 represented 16%. Both master and bachelor's degree holders amongst respondents were almost 22% respectively. Whereas 24% of the same profile holds diploma and 8% has vocational school level. Further, the majority of respondents has 10 to 15 years working experiences (67%). Almost 32% of respondents has been working for less than 5 years with their organizations. With regard to job title aspect, the top - level employees comprised of executive director, head of department, Middle level ones included of supervisors, head of unit while low level employees consisted of workers.

Multiple regression analysis was done to test hypotheses and to study the linear relationship between the dependent variable (Affective commitment) and the independent variables: (employment relationship quality).

The following table summarizes the correlation matrix between the employee relationship quality and the affective commitment

Correlations			
		Employment relationship quality	Affective commitment
Employment relationship quality	Pearson Correlation	1	.789**
	Sig. (2 - tailed)		.000
Affective commitment	Pearson Correlation	.789**	1
	Sig. (2 - tailed)	.000	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 - tailed).

The below table summarizes the correlation matrix between the employee relationship quality sub variables which are justice, fairness, good faith, trust and the affective commitment

		Justice	Fairness	Good Faith	Trust	Affective commitment
Justice	Pearson Correlation	1	.597**	.582**	.622**	.584**
	Sig. (2 - tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
Fairness	Pearson Correlation	.597**	1	.492**	.659**	.582**
	Sig. (2 - tailed)	.000		.002	.000	.000
Good Faith	Pearson Correlation	.582**	.492**	1	.782**	.686**
	Sig. (2 - tailed)	.000	.002		.000	.000
Trust	Pearson Correlation	.622**	.659**	.782**	1	.821**
	Sig. (2 - tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
Affective commitment	Pearson Correlation	.584**	.582**	.686**	.821**	1
	Sig. (2 - tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 - tailed).

It's clear from the first above table that employment relationship quality is significantly correlated with affective commitment (Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 - tailed)). The second first table shows that trust and good faith have a strong positive correlation with affective commitment, while justice and fairness have a medium correlation. These results can be interpreted by the fact that trust is the result or the outcome of the three other sub variables even in real life. In other words, if the relation between the employee and their employer didn't reach a good level of trust, there may be no commitment to the work.

This result is in congruent with the findings of the following researchers (Demerouti et al., 2001; Demerouti and Bakker, 2011).

To test the second hypothesis, the linear regression analysis with stepwise method has been utilized.

Regression Statistics			
Multiple R	0.821		
R Square	0.674		
Adjusted R	.664		
F	72.26		
Df	36		
Regression	1		
Residual	35		
Sig	0.000		
Coefficients			
	t Stat	P - value	
Intercept	.774	1.836	0.001
Trust	0.817	8.501	0.000

The following table summarizes the result of the regression analysis test.

It is obvious based on the above analysis that affective commitment is highly correlated with employee relationship quality. Regarding the effect of employment relationships quality on affective commitment, the test result shows that only "Trust" can affect the affective commitment with adjusted R² equal to 66.4% at significance level $\alpha < .05\%$. This means that 66.4% of the change in affective commitment is due to the effect of employee trust. While the rest 33.6% of the change is due to other three sub variables (Justice, Fairness and Good faith).

This result is consistent with the findings of previous findings by many researchers (McLeod and Erwin, 1995; Ehlers, 2013; Kickul, Gundry and Posig, 20005).

The one - way ANOVA test and independent T – Test was used to study the differences regarding the statistical differences amongst the nationalities of the companies in regard to both independent and dependent variables.

One Way ANOVA, T - Test

B According to the results in the above table, there are no significant differences between the participants' views regarding both the employment relationship quality factors and affective commitment in terms of the company nationality.

Regarding employment relationship quality

The finding revealed that the level of employment relationship quality among the companies under the investigation is higher by 87% and the sub factors of employment relationship quality ranked as follows: The first one is the good faith by 89.7% followed by the trust by 87.2%. Justice game as third by 86.8% and finally the fairness by 84.7%, It is clear from the above result that these companies have a good quality of employment relationship and almost at the same level.

Regarding Affective commitment

The finding showed that the level of affective commitment of the select companies in this study is high by 86.7%. According this result, employees are highly committed to their organizations, hence a good level of loyalty. Additionally, the result showed that there are no statistical differences in the respondents' answers concerning affective commitment. This means that all the companies regardless of their nationalities have almost the same quality of employment relationship. This result is supported by the finding of Chen and Francesco (2000) which central idea claims that the appreciation of organizational commitment also depends upon demographic and geographic aspect. Since these three companies (though different nationalities) are operating in the same geographical areas, hence it can be understood why there is no significant difference amongst these three nationalities in terms of both employment relationship quality and affective commitment.

5. Conclusion

The study highlighted the quality of employment relationship within Chinese, French and Guinea companies operating in the republic of Guinea (west Africa). It was found that there is no significant different amongst these three nationalities (Chinese, French and Guinea) regarding their both employment management quality and organizational commitment. The regression analysis of the hypotheses has outlined that the affective commitment is affected by the quality of employment relationship regardless the nationalities of the company. The result of the study also indicated that amongst the four sub variables (Justice, Fairness, Good - faith and trust) of dependent variable (employment relationship quality), it is only "Trust" that tremendously affects employee affective commitment.

6. Recommendations

After analyzing the finding of the study and considering the reviews and comments from respondents, the researcher wishes to recommend the reinforcement of importance of trust perception between employees and managers. This is consistent with the result of test analysis of second hypothesis which shows that only "trust" amongst four sub variables can highly affect the affective commitment with adjusted R^2 equal to 66.4% at significance level $\alpha < .05\%$. This means that 66.4% of the change in affective commitment is due to the effect of employee perception of trust. Thus, manager should be made aware of organizational trust. They should be trained to promote a sentiment of trust amongst employees because it reinforces employee's commitment the organization. The evidence of this argument is also supported by the study conducted by Iverson, McLeod and Erwin (1995) in a public hospital where they found that "organizational commitment and trust appeared to be significant determinants of organizational performance". Which means trust and organizational commitment go hand in hand at work.

Acknowledgement

I wish to thank my supervisor Dr Thakur Mahima, assistant professor at FMS, Delhi university for her invaluable assistance and guidance without which this research would have not been completed. A sincere thank goes to all respondents and HR managers of the different companies for their collaboration.

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