



Change Management Strategies and Organisational Commitment: A Study of Selected Private Road Transport Companies in Imo State

Duru Maxwell Ifeanyichukwu¹ and Emerole, Gideon, A. (Ph.D)²

¹Department of Industrial Relations & Personnel Management, College of Management Sciences, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Nigeria.

²Department of Business Administration, College of Management Sciences, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Nigeria.

Abstract: *This study examines the relationship between change management strategies and organisational commitment of road private transport companies in Imo State. It adopted a cross-sectional research survey. Target population is all registered private road transport companies in Imo State. Accessible population includes ten selected private road transport companies in Imo State using a simple random sampling. Face and content validity was used. Cronbach alpha was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient was used to test the hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed that change management strategies have a positive significance relationship with organisational commitment. The study concludes that change management strategies measured in terms of employee participation and education enhances organisational commitment of selected private road transport companies and other businesses alike. One of the recommendations is that; managers of transport companies should continue to engage their employees through participation on change management to enhance their commitment.*

Keywords: *change management, organisational commitment, employee participation, education, affective commitment, continuance commitment*

Introduction

The objective of every organization is to make profit and deliver quality service to customers. Thus, in order to achieve the above objective all the stakeholders that make up the organization must be committed in one way or the other. Commitment of workers as well as managers has over the year's enhanced organisational effectiveness and promotes customer satisfaction.

McNeese-Smith (1996) asserts that organizational commitment is a strength measure of an organization's identity. Organisational commitment encourages employees to free their creativity and to add towards organizational development initiatives (Walton, 1985). Morrow (1993) argue that employees that are committed are usually achievement and innovative oriented and have the ultimate goal of improving performance. Williams and Anderson (1991) went further to assert that organizational commitment is associated with feelings of affiliation, attachment and citizenship behaviour on organisation performance. Organisational commitment is the bedrock for organisational performance. This implies that commitment results to performance. Organisational growth is stimulated by the commitment of organisational members who work tirelessly to ensure that every activity in the workplace is followed from the beginning to the end. Therefore, organisational commitment is a measure of organisational health and wellness of employees in the workplace. When workers are commitment to their respective departments by ensuring that everything that is needed to move the organization forward is duly followed, then collectivism has prevailed in such enterprise. The collective efforts of all organisational members are what constitute organisational commitment because every member of the organization is important. There is no organization that would anchor their success to one particular individual without mentioning the efforts of every other member of the organization. Therefore, organization is a collection of individual's effort geared towards achieving a common objective that will benefit every stakeholder at the end of the day.

However, while organisational commitment is significant to organisational growth, change is equally in line with it. Change is the renewal of organisational life. Change occurs in the workplace as a result of the alterations in the former ways of doing things in the organization so as to meet up with other competitors. It could be that demands of goods and services requires certain additional methods or ingredients that will stimulates customers' appetite to purchase goods being produced or services rendered. In other words, change is constant and any well-meaning and serious organizations cannot see change as a threat but as a necessity.

Objective of the study

The main objective of this study is to examine the relationship between change management strategies and organisational commitment of selected private road transport companies in Imo State. However, the specific objective of this study is to:

1. Ascertain the relationship between employee participation and affective commitment
2. Ascertain the relationship between education and continuance commitment

Research Hypotheses

Drawing from the specific objectives, the following null hypotheses were formulated.

HO₁: There is no significant relationship between employee participation and affective commitment

HO₂: There is no significant relationship between education and continuance commitment

Review of related literature

The concept of change management

Change management is very important in both private and public organization as it transforms people's behaviour as well as brings new methods of carrying out business activities. Bashir and Afzal (2011) contended that change management makes it easier for businesses to achieve success in meeting demand and face internal and external challenges. Change management help organisational members to accept change and adapt to newly introduced behaviours that will take the organization to where they want to be in the future (Fernandez and Rainey, 2006; Kunze *et al.*, 2013). Change management has been defined as the process of continually renewing an organization's direction, structure, and capabilities to serve the ever-changing needs of external and internal customers (Moran and Brightman, 2001). Walmsley (2009) perceived change management as the process of continually renewing an organization's direction, structure, and capabilities to serve the ever-changing needs of external and internal customers. Change management is the process, tools and techniques to manage the people side of change to achieve the required business outcome (www.prosci.com). Change management is a systematic approach to dealing with change both from the perspective of an organization and the individual (www.searchcio.techtarget.com). Change management is a structured approach for ensuring that changes are thoroughly and smoothly implemented, and that the lasting benefits of change are achieved (www.mindtools.com). In this study the authors perceive change management as the process of handling the process of implementing change in the workplace.

Strategies for overcoming resistance to change

There are several strategies for overcoming resistance to change but this study is limited to employee participation and education.

Employee participation: Employee participation here refers to a process whereby employees are allowed to be part of change introduction and implementation. In other to overcome resistance to change; initiators of change or change agents engages the employees through the various stages of alteration of work procedures. Kinicki and Kreitner (2003) argued that, the advantage of adopting employee participation strategy is that people who participate will be committed to implementing change, and any relevant information they have will be integrated into the change plan.

Education: Education here does not refer to learning in the classroom; rather it refers to a process of awareness for the new change that is coming to the workplace. The reason why initiator or change agent adopts this strategy is because; most change resistors can claim that they were not adequately informed about the change. Thus, change initiators or change agents use this strategy to be on the safer side by creating the awareness of the new change in all the departments of the organization.

The concept of organisational commitment

Organisational commitment has been a major issue in both management and social science disciplines. It is the identification of membership with one's organization. By identification, we mean the acceptance of organisational philosophies by the subordinates. These philosophies are the products of the founding fathers of the organization which are always handed over to workers to follow. Thus, organisational commitment is a measure of how well and organization is doing in terms of profit as well as size. Porter, et al. (1974) explained that organizational commitment is the extent to which employees accept the goals and values of organization and are desirous to remain in the organization. Meyer and Allen (1990, 1996) indicate that organizational commitment is a psychological link between the employee and his/her organization that makes it less likely for the employee to voluntarily leave the organization. O'Reilly (1989) also defined organisational commitment as "an individual's psychological bond to the organization, including a sense of job involvement, loyalty and belief in the values of the organization.

Indicators of organisational commitment

Affective commitment: Meyer and Allen (1984) affective commitment is defined as the positive feelings that help employees to form a bond with and to participate in, the organization. Affective commitment is also seen as an emotional attachment with one's organization.

Continuance commitment: Meyer and Allen (1984) perceived continuance commitment as the degree to which employees feel committed to their organization by virtue of the costs that they feel are associated with leaving. Continuance commitment is also known as a calculative attempt to stick with one's organization because of the consequences of leaving to another organization. For instance, an employee can be committed in the organization just because of the training the employees receive from the organization. Thus, that employee's commitment is dependent on the benefit received from the training he/she was giving.

Normative Commitment: Allen and Meyer (1990) elucidates that normative commitment is the employee's feeling of obligation to remain attached with the organization. This type of commitment is associated with normal way of sticking with organization. It is an obligation to remain with the organization for moral and ethical reasons (Robbins, Judge and Sanghi, 2009).

Change management strategies and organisational commitment

An alteration in the organisational structure or other areas in the workplace has both negative and positive effects on the commitment of organisational members. At the initial stage of introducing new culture or work process in the workplace, workers may be skeptical about the acceptance of the change but in the long run, their commitment will diminish. This perhaps occurs as a result of the approach or strategies adopted by the change agent. A change who adopts manipulation or coercion as a strategy to overcoming change may succeed or not succeed depending on the nature of the change that is needed in the workplace. But no matter how the strategy comes, workers still need to be consulted, educated and persuaded on the

benefits of new change to them as well as the organization.

The management of change if well handled can boost the commitment of the workers but on the other hand, it can also lower the commitment of workers. Road transport companies mostly are not conscious of change hence, the old ways of doing things is what they know and want to continue doing. Even when there is e-ticketing for booking ahead of departure to different parts of the country, some of the companies still operate pay before boarding the vehicle. As it was earlier mentioned, a change agent approach will determine the behaviour of the workers towards accepting the incoming change. The strategies of overcoming change adopted in this study are participation and education. Managers that adopts participative approach to managing change will definitely succeed together with the employees since the voice of the workers were incorporated in the decision to alter certain things in the organization. Through the participation of the employees, education of change is the responsibility of the change agent. Supporting this argument, Coyle-Shapiro (1999) argued that participation of organisational members on the planning of organisational change increases their support for that change. For employees to be affectively committed in the business of the organization, change agent need to allow them to participate in the change management process to avoid turnover that will obstruct the production. In doing this, employee will be emotionally committed in the workplace thereby helping to pursue and achieve the objective of the organization.

Cameron and Green (2007) also contributed that participation and psychological support of the organisational members are important strategies for the success of organisational change. However, continuous education on change is needed, the benefits of the change quite apart from what the workers will benefits will go along way motivating the employees to exert commitment in the organization. Chang education enhances employee continuance commitment in the workplace. This implies that as employees are being educated on the positive effect of incoming change, their initial position to quitting will be a thing of the past.

Research Methodology

This study adopted a cross-sectional research survey. Target population is all registered private road transport companies in Imo State. Accessible population includes ten selected private road transport companies in Imo State using a simple random sampling. A total of one hundred and twenty eight (128) workers were surveyed. Sample size is ninety seven (97) using Taro Yamane. Questionnaire serves a method of data collection. Face and content validity was used. Eighty two (82) copies of the questionnaire were retrieved. Cronbach alpha was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient was used to test the relationship between change management strategies and organisational commitment.

Data analysis

Data collected were coded in statistical package for social sciences (20.0) and bivariate analysis was used to analysed hypothesis one and two as shown below.

Table 1.1: SPSS correlation between employee participation and affective commitment

			Employee participation	Affective commitment
Spearman's rho	Employee participation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.820**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	82	82
	Affective commitment	Correlation Coefficient	.820**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	82	82

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

The above result shows the correlation between employee participation and affective commitment. From the result, employee participation has a significant relationship with affective commitment ($p < 0.05$). This implies that as change agents allow employees' to participate in the change management process, they become more affectively committed in the business of the organization.

Table 1.2: SPSS correlation between education and continuance commitment

			Education	Continuance commitment
Spearman's rho	Education	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.782**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	82	82
	Continuance commitment	Correlation Coefficient	.782**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	82	82

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

The result above shows the correlation between education and continuance commitment. The result indicates that education has a significant relationship with continuance commitment. This means that as education of change management process increases, continuance commitment will also increase in the workplace.

Findings

Based on the results above, the following findings were deduced.

- 1) There is a positive significant relationship between employee participation and affective commitment. This implies that as employees' are engaged through participation in the change process, they will be affectively committed to achieving organisational objectives.
- 2) There is a positive significant relationship between education and continuance commitment. This means that continuous education on change by agents of change, employees' continuance commitment will increase.

Conclusion

Based on the findings above this study concludes that change management strategies measured in terms of employee participation and education enhances organisational commitment of selected private road transport companies and other businesses alike.

Recommendations

From the conclusion, the following recommendations were made.

1. Managers of transport companies should continue to engage their employees through participation on change management to enhance their commitment.
2. Human resources practitioners should always educate their workers on the positive effects of change management on their well-beings as well as to the organization to avoid prolong resistance.

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