



The Effect of Adaptive Work Systems on Compassion and Meaningful Work in Ministries of Culture and Tourism in South-South States of Nigeria

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of adaptive work system on compassion and meaningful work of civil servants in the ministries of culture and tourism in South-South States of Nigeria. The predictor variable is adaptive work system (as a dimension of work systems) and the criterion variables are punctuality and honesty as measures of workplace spirituality. The study adopted a cross-sectional research design with individual employees as the unit of analysis with structured questionnaire as the research instrument, distributed to 359 civil servants within the ministry of culture and tourism in the south-south region of Nigeria. Out of the 359 questionnaire distributed, 339 questionnaire were useful for data analysis. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation with 0.05 level of significance with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The outcome of the data analysis showed that adaptive work system has positive significant effect on compassion and meaningful work respectively.

Keywords: Adaptive Work System; Workplace Spirituality; Compassion; Meaningful Work

Introduction

Increasing workplace spirituality is critical because it has a direct impact on the behavior of employees, which in turn influences the organization's performance. Successively, the employees will have the will to make efforts and overcome difficulties for the firm's goals and solve problems with creative approaches. Additionally, Krishnakumar and Neck (2002) expressed that when employees have high workplace spirituality, their thinking would be expanded, which strengthened their intuition and creativity that enables better organizational performance. However, generally, organizations be it public or private exist in a constantly changing environments, thus, capability to build an adaptive work system has become so essential in aligning to those changes in enhancing organizational performance (Aldrich & Ruef, 2006). Increased globalization, swift advancement in technology, changing business ethical values, greater diversity within the firm, changing employment relationships, are some factors confronting organizations and challenging firm's leaders of today (Yukl & Mahsud, 2010).

In all cases, adaptation significantly requires displacing, reregulating, and rearranging old structure/culture (Heifetz, Grashow & Linsky, 2009). More so, Wildberger (2000) expressed that adaptation are two types vis-à-vis passive and active: in a passive adaptation, the organization only responds to environmental changes, while, in an active adaptation the organization influences the environment, by advancing its adaptation power via the modification of the environment. In responding to today's environmental changes, organizations must adopt work system that allow adaptation to such environmental changes in an easy and quick way (Ployhart & Turner 2014; Huber, 2011). This is because, any organizations that cannot adjust to changes in the environment will face disorder, decline, and possible death. Within dynamic environments, having a high-functioning adaptation system can provide a tool adapt to any given change. Thus, the capacity of firm to build adaptable work system have become a necessity as inflexibility and inability to learn and adjust to the environment vis-à-vis internal and external environment are dire issues hindering positive employees behaviour (spiritual behaviour) which impacts on the firm's success (Zheng, Yang & McLean, 2010; Lee, Tan & Chiu, 2008).

Furthermore, any system have to maintain decent bond with its environment for existence and growth (Argote & Miron-Spektor, 2011). This, ability of organizations to maintain decent bond with its environment and workers help to drives workers need of satisfaction and fulfilment. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the effect adaptive work system as a predictor of work system has on compassion and meaningful work as measures of workplace spirituality of civil servants in the ministries of culture and tourism in South-South States of Nigeria. consequently, managers will use the findings of this research to help them better understand how work systems can improve workplace spirituality vis-à-vis compassion and meaningful work, as well as how these systems can improve human resources' ability to perform at their best in the workplace. The work system that highlights the importance of an employee's value to the company, such as meaningful work and compassion is vital. It is thus possible to use the findings of this study to help practitioners in fostering employee attitudes like meaningful work and compassion by using the appropriate and precise work system. Thus, managers can lessen unfavorable employee behaviours, which may lead to bad outcomes like low motivation, dedication, and contentment that lack a spiritual undertone in terms of compassion and meaningful work.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are stated below:

- v. Determine the relationship between adaptive work system and compassion of civil servants within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the South-South Region of Nigeria.
- vi. Ascertain the relationship between adaptive work system and meaningful work of civil servants within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the South-South Region of Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following are the research questions that guided this study:

- v. What is the relationship between adaptive work system and compassion of civil servants within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the South-South Region of Nigeria?
- vi. What is the relationship between adaptive work system and meaningful work of civil servants within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the South-South Region of Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following are the research hypotheses for this study:

H0₁: There is no significant relationship between adaptive work system and compassion of civil servants within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the South-South Region of Nigeria.

H0₂: There is no significant relationship between adaptive work system and meaningful work of civil servants within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the South-South Region of Nigeria.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

The theory that guided this study is the social exchange theory. The theory states that a party is obligated to reciprocate a gesture gotten from another party. Thus, the exchange theory is anchored on reciprocity. Consequently, when employees feel they are supported by their employer, they are obligated to respond to that support orientation with voluntary contributions that will benefit the organization, such as displaying spiritual values like compassion and meaningful work that are essential for workers' performance. When a company's work structure encourages employee development, those workers are more likely to reciprocate by exhibiting spiritual values that benefit the company's business operations. Because of the reciprocity standard, when one party (firm with a successful work system) treats another well (workers), the return of favorable treatment (by demonstrating spiritual values) is required (Gouldner, 1960). The approach relates spirituality to organizational behavior by focusing on attitudes and commitments (Indradevi, 2020). Employee traits such as spirituality and positive worker attitudes may therefore be described as a motivating underpinning for positive behaviour. It is therefore proposed that high-quality social exchange ties may result in positive outcomes for a business in respect to workers who demonstrate workplace spirituality via an effective and suitable work systems.

Concept of Adaptive Work System

A work system is an arrangement where individuals perform work activities via information technology and possibly other technologies. It consist of workers and work equipment acting together to attain the system function, in the work environment, under the environments forced by the work tasks (Reiman & Putkonen, 2012). All work systems contain chains of factors that are interrelated, interdependent and interconnected forming the whole system; the elements include the worker, the task, the organization's structure, the organization's policies and strategies and a firm's leadership practices (Kleiner & Hendrick 2008). The worker might be

a full time worker or a contract staff. A central part in the work system are people that performs the work task through knowledge and competences. Because, workers are a valuable resource in resolving issues concerning work system (Noro & Imada, 2019). The task includes what and how the job should be accomplished. The organization's structure includes the individuals, their roles and who to execute each. More so, adaptive work system involves a work system that centered on the ability of a firm to acclimatize to the frequent changing environment. In order words, it involves collaboration between the particular system and its existing environment to enable transitions to changing states. Thus, an adaptive work system is dynamic (changing). Further, it involves environmental change recognition, realization of appropriate modifications within the system toward the environmental change, and the capacity to making the decided modification happen (Subramanian & Chung, 2001).

Organizations with effective adaptive work system are far ahead of competitors in digital design and delivery strategies, highly targeted programs, learner experience, collaboration, personalization, and better understanding of work (Heuvel, Demerouti, Schaufeli & Bakker, 2013). They further possess the capacity to sense market changes and flex learning structures, operating models, planning, and possess resources to acclimatize with changing environment quickly, capably, and successfully (Parent & Lovelace, 2015). Organizations with adaptive work system has capability to make highly relevant decisions swiftly, knowing that the initial plans can utter anytime. Therefore, when things happen, it is prepared to adjust immediately and leverage on the opportunity via its (capabilities, processes, skillsets, technologies, budgets, etc.) to acclimatize accordingly.

Workplace Spirituality (Compassion and Meaningful Work)

Workplace spirituality pertains to exhibition of values and virtues (e.g. trust, benevolence, justice, respect, humanism, meaningful work, hope, dignity and honesty), foster an atmosphere where the integration of professional and personal self is possible, thereby engaging the person as a whole in the work process (Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004). As such, workplace spirituality is considered to be both in terms of values and visions held and displayed by the workers in the establishment (Giacalone, 2009). Consequently, workplace spirituality can be expressed as qualities or capacities displayed by workers in the establishment that are in line with transcendence. An organization can be said to be spiritual if it adheres to spiritual principles like benevolence, humanism, receptivity, justice, respect, trust, self-transcendence, and mutuality (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003). Spiritual-based organizational philosophies will be characterized as nursing a deep sense of purpose, honesty and openness, mutual trust, tolerance of employee expression, and humanistic work practices (De Klerk, 2005).

Furthermore, the measures of workplace spirituality used in this study includes compassion and meaningful work (Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004): Compassion encompasses values like empathy, kindness, respect and sympathy which is set apart by the enthusiasm to act at the recognition of others pains or sufferings (Papadopoulos, Shea, Taylor, Pezzella & Foley, 2016). Thus, compassion is the act of showing kindness to those experiencing negative general human troubles. Compassion can also be to oneself (Neff, 2003). The display of compassion to oneself

occurs when one acknowledge his or her own shortcomings and deal with them objectively, with an inclination toward learning, rather than blaming others (Shepherd & Cardon, 2009). As such self-compassionate people are more likely to be calm in the edge of challenges. More so, compassion can be provided either between two persons or in a collective environment; for example, when a person is suffering and a group of colleagues join to provide one support or the other Compassion developed as a distinct affective experience whose primary function is to facilitate cooperation and defense of the weak and those who are suffering (Goetz, Keltner & Simon-Thomas, 2010). Papadopoulos et al. (2016) expressed that compassion involves the consciousness to the deep suffering of another and the eagerness to help by reducing or eliminating that suffering. Thus, compassion is a sympathetic approach to make someone suffering to feel better. Compassion has a way of influencing the focal actor and the sufferer. Furthermore, the concept of meaningful work has been described variously. It is about self-actualization, the manifestation of imagination, resourcefulness and originality, a function of personal value and a declared worth of a goal or purpose relative to personal standards to a person's work (Markow & Klenke, 2005; Locke, 1976). It has to do with performing tasks that are cognitively important and that creates a sense of fulfillment which unites workers to a larger good and to things the workers view as important in their lives. Thus, it is an employee's experience that his/her work is a noteworthy and meaningful part to his/her life which answers the query of why one is in the workplace by acknowledging that his/her work helps him/her to express his/her inner self (Ashforth & Pratt, 2003; Krishnakumar & Neck 2002). On the contrary, meaningless work is work that is alienating and disengaging.

Methodology

This study adopted a cross-sectional research design with individual employees as the unit of analysis of civil servants within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the South-South Region of Nigeria. The South-South region of Nigeria include Edo, Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa-Ibom and Cross River State. Additionally, the research used questionnaire as the research instrument which was distributed to 359 civil servants within the ministry of culture and tourism in the south-south region of Nigeria. Furthermore, the choice of respondents from each ministry was determined via cluster sampling technique with each ministry representing a cluster. Out of the 359-questionnaire distributed, 339 questionnaire were useful for data analysis. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation with 0.05 level of significance with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The research instrument consists of four respond choices with point scales ranging from 1 to 5 indicating strongly disagree, disagree, indifference, agree and strongly agree respectively. The independent variable is adaptive work systems as a dimension of work system (Alter, 2013); it is thus used as a uni-dimensional variable while the dependent variables used are compassion and meaningful work as measures of workplace spirituality (Petchsawanga & Duchon, 2009). We used face and content validity to make sure the instrument measured what it intended to measure while the reliability of the instrument was done through Cronbach Alpha and the result reveals 0.984, 0.906 and 0.963 for adaptive work system, compassion, and meaningful work respectively.

Data Analysis and Result

Adaptive Work System and Compassion

The analysis below shows the relationship between adaptive work system and compassion of civil servants within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the South-South Region of Nigeria.

Table 1: Relationship between adaptive work system and compassion of civil servants within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the South-South Region of Nigeria.

variables	n	r	df	crt.r	p-value	Remarks
Adaptive work	339	0.426	337	.1045	0.000	Significant

compassion

$P < 0.05$; significant at 0.05 level of significance

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021.

Table 1 revealed the nexus between adaptive work system and compassion of civil servants within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the South-South Region of Nigeria. The outcomes revealed a moderate and positive nexus between adaptive work system and compassion with $r(337) = 0.426$, crit. .1045, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$. It means a direct connection exist between adaptive work system and workers compassion. Consequently, stated hypothesis is rejected, thus, there is strong/significant connection between adaptive work system and compassion of civil servants within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the South-South Region of Nigeria. The corresponding scattered graph is shown below:

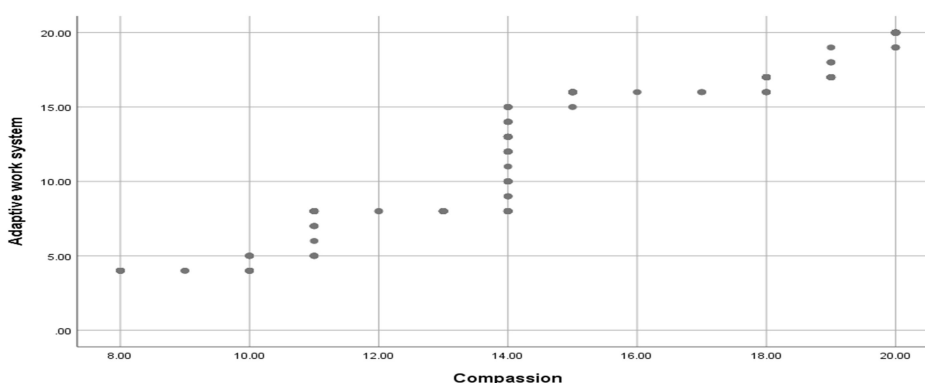


Figure 1: Scattered Graph of adaptive work system and compassion.

Adaptive Work System and Meaningful Work

The analysis below shows the relationship between adaptive work system and meaningful work of civil servants within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the South-South Region of Nigeria.

Table 2: Relationship between adaptive work system and meaningful work of civil servants within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the South-South Region of Nigeria.

variables	n	r	df	crt.r	p-value	Remarks
Adaptive work	339	0.651	337	.1045	0.000	Significant

Meaningful work

$P < 0.05$; significant at 0.05 level of significance

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021.

Table 2 revealed the nexus between adaptive work system and meaningful work of civil servants within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the South-South Region of Nigeria. The outcomes revealed a strong and positive nexus between adaptive work system and meaningful work with $r(337) = 0.651$, crit. .1045, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$. It means a direct connection exist between adaptive work system and workers meaningful work. Consequently, stated hypothesis is rejected, thus, there is strong/significant connection between adaptive work system and meaningful work of civil servants within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the South-South Region of Nigeria. The corresponding scattered graph is shown below:

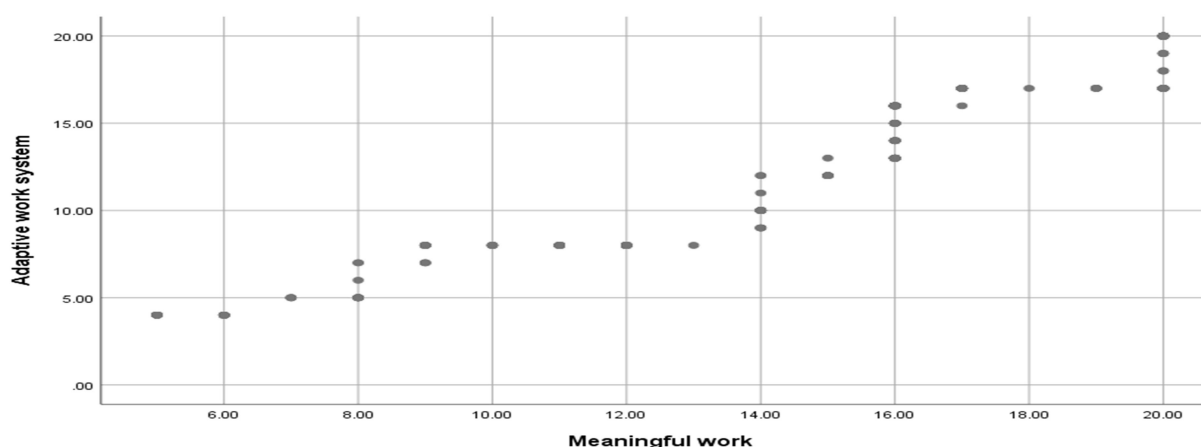


Figure 2: Scattered Graph of adaptive work system and meaningful work.

Discussion of Findings

From the empirical analysis between adaptive work system and compassion in table 1, showed that adaptive work system has a Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient (ρ) = 0.426 and a PV of 0.000 which is $P < 0.05$ on compassion meaning a moderate/positive nexus exist between adaptive work system and compassion of civil servants within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the South-South Region of Nigeria. An organization with work system that adapt easily and promotes compassion behaviour among employees has the capacity to enhance positive effects on organization performance as Lilius *et al.*, (2011) articulated that the show of compassion increase workers commitment to the firm and aid workers to recover from challenging situations, which carries a correlation with reduced employee absences due to distress and increased employee productivity. Consequently, when designing an adaptive work system, managers should design the system in a manner to attain and develop adaptive competencies among employees through recruitment, and training practices. If an organization values adaptability as an essential tool of work system, it recruit and hire persons who are, for example, innovative, creative, and with or willingness to take risks. Organization with adaptive work system understand that hiring like-minded employees leads to consistency of adaptive behaviour such as compassion in the firm (Ployhart & Turner, 2014). When organizational members have shared meaning and understandings of the firm's objectives and values, such as adaptability, they will be able to act best on the firm's interest by responding appropriately through the exhibition of compassionate behaviour to other stakeholders, thereby improving the firm's chance of survival.

Furthermore, from the empirical analysis between adaptive work system and meaningful work in table 2, showed that adaptive work system has a Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient (ρ) = 0.651 and a PV of 0.000 which is $P < 0.05$ on meaningful work meaning a strong/positive nexus exist between adaptive work system and meaningful work of civil servants within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the South-South Region of Nigeria. Consequently, Parent *et al.* (2012) expressed that, employee participation which is a part of adaptive work system enhances decision-making, motivation, communication and trust that considerably influence employees' meaningful work. Also, Wainaina *et al.* (2014) identified that training, leadership, reward and retention strategies are significant characteristic of adaptability. Consequently, Boxall & Purcell (2003) indicated that acquiring knowledge via training and development make employees more adaptive to changes; thus, an essential part of adaptive work system is training. Trainings increase employees' competency by influencing their understanding, skill and attitude (Sherwood, 2015) that is essential to meaningful work. Continuous training assist employees to be at alert and align to change process, address emerging issues, keep employees on the track and inspire them (Sherwood, 2015) to demonstrating good work behaviour vis-à-vis workplace spirituality virtues. According to Boxall & Purcell (2003), adaptive system aid in acquiring knowledge, makes employees more innovative and creative, hence, aid in experiencing meaningful work within the firm. Adaptive work system is equivalent with having adaptive behaviour and competency. Change-oriented trainings have paramount power to build these behaviour and competency.

More so, another essential aspect of adaptive work system is meaning making that is a crucial trait of change, which involves how employees understand the change (Heuvel *et al.*, 2013). It is essential to determine employee's attitude and willingness to changes, thus, helping to reduce uncertainty and resistance and help the employees not to lose self-esteem or motivation. This can play a significant part in improving workers work meaningfulness. Therefore, organizations have to build effective adaptive systems where employees can be assisted to go with changes as it can play important roles in enhancing meaningfulness in their work.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The outcome of the data analysis in this study provides a positive and significant relationship between adaptive work system and compassion and meaningful work of civil servants within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the South-South Region of Nigeria. From the findings, it is apparent to conclude that adaptive work system is very important in enhancing workplace spirituality vis-à-vis compassion, and meaningful work of civil servants within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the South-South Region of Nigeria. We therefore recommend that in order to build and sustain spiritual virtues such as compassion and other virtues among employees in the ministry of culture and tourism in the South-South, Nigeria, it is very essential to develop effective work system that encourage such behaviour such as adaptive work system. Also, there is a need for organizations especially, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the South-South Region of Nigeria to actively cultivate and develop work system that will improve the meaningfulness of work so as to keep and attract the most talented employees. This will presumably lead to greater enthusiasm, effort, sense of calling, performance and commitment, creates a feeling of joy and energy at work.

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