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An Appraisal of Organizational Citizenship Behaviour in Media Organizations and Journalism Practice in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study is an appraisal of organizational citizenship behaviour in media organizations with a focus on its effect on journalism practice in Nigeria. The paper contends that OCB is essential in fostering journalists' productivity. Again, the discourse submission is that societies and organizations stand to gain the most when they provide the needed conducive atmosphere for journalism practice to thrive. It therefore argued that, the quality of journalism practice in any clime is that which that society permits.

Introduction

At the centre of human existence is the essentiality of survival. Survival in this context is a deliberate and conscious effort by all humans to pursue happiness and self-actualization. Every condition to their

actualizing this ultimate aspiration is readily embraced by the individuals. Understandably, what is paramount in the survival quest is the individuals' convenience, interest, whether implicit or explicit, security, space to survive thrive and self-actualize.

Essentially, the crux of management is the planned and conscious galvanization of both human and material resources towards achieving organizational goals. Yet, the success or failure of any organization is largely predicated on the level of premium it places on staff and their welfare. Manpower training is a necessary work activity that makes a very significant contribution to the overall performance and effectiveness of an employee and organizational profitability at large (Nwosu, 2016).

While, the essence of management is to thrive to get the best from its employees, it is incumbent on them to continue to create an enabling environment and to improve the quality of motivation to them. The quality of every organization is a reflection of the quality of its employees. It is the developed capital of a nation that constitutes its wealth (Onuka, 2006, cited in Nwosu, 2016). The need to train and improve the productivity and effectiveness of employees is increasingly gaining prominence in contemporary management discourse.

Consequently, media organizations are very cardinal corporate members of every society. Beyond their creating jobs for the citizenry, their products make them a very sensitive component of society. Imperatively, organizations that perform such sensitive role as information dissemination require employees that are mentally, economically and emotionally stable to operate. The activities of the media are usually determined both by the media themselves and the society in which they operate. A drop in the quality of news or information distortion could have some adverse negative repercussion for society. In preventing this, the press should not only be free, but innovative, independent, original, creative and diverse (Udoakah, Senam & Udoh, 2014). Society holds journalists in high esteem. The reason for this as noted by Udoakah et al., (2014) is that 'they hold privileged positions in the society in line with the value and the trust inherent in the fiduciary relationship between them and the society' (p.2).

Several studies on mass communication had dealt chiefly on media effect and sundry emerging trends. However, not much has been done in assessing the welfare and conditions of service of journalists. The thesis of this discourse therefore is to appraise the level of organizational citizenship behaviour in media organizations. This is informed by the cautiousness of the fact the quality of manpower in media houses does not only affect their contents, but also comes with its attendant consequence for the Nigeria society. In all, the study focuses on the extent to which the internal operations (OCB) media organizations affect journalists' productivity.

The Problem

Arguments are rife on the failing state of journalism practice in Nigeria. For instance, Udoudo (2015) blames this trend among other things mainly on poor training of journalists in institutions that offer journalism. The trend is further worsened with many media organization struggling to stay afloat in this biting economic situation, how much more training their staff. Already most media organizations in Nigeria have their budgets full. They provide their electricity, pay taxes, purchase and maintain equipment, all in a bid to stay in business. To establish and own a medium sized press today is a capital project that requires staggering sum (Owolabi & O'Neill, 2013). At the moment, many media

organizations are still struggling with obsolete equipment. All of these had adversely affected the revenue of many media organizations making it difficult to pay their staff how much more training them.

The implication of this development is that many media organization are resorting to news commercialization. The situation is so bad that commercialization at the institutional level is thriving because editors, publishers and owners of the broadcast stations/print media see the organization as their investment and a profit-making venture that should yield the required financial return (Idowu, 2001). Granted that mass media need to stay afloat economically if they can stand a chance to perform whatever function they want to perform in the society, commercialization robs off on the independence of the media and by extension the quality and content of their news.

All of these further expose the journalists to being, susceptible to corruption and worse still reduce their sense of commitment not only to the tenets of the journalism profession but to society in general. Journalists are poorly paid and this could affect their jobs. Many media houses endeavour to pay fairly and this has led to the metamorphosis of the journalist into an aberration of the watchdog he ought to be to society (Olopade, 2016). The present pay of workers in most media organizations is nothing to write home about and remuneration is not commensurate with the kind of services rendered by the journalists who work in very harsh and unfriendly environment (Elumoye, 2017). The questions that come up in this situation is; what is the state of the Nigerian journalists? Are they operating in the right environment? Do they have the requisite training to meet society's demands? Can anything be done to improve their condition of service? The study hopes to address these nagging questions.

Theoretical Foundation

This discourse is anchored on three theories. They are the Human Capital Theory, the System Theory and the Social Exchange Theory starting from the rear; the social exchange theory is based on the premise that human behaviour or social interaction as an exchange of activity, tangible and intangible (Homan 1901, cited Zafirovski, 2005). In consequence, exchange theory examines the processes establishing and sustaining reciprocity in social relation, or the mutual gratifications between individuals. The basic assumption of exchange theory is that individuals establish and continue social relations on the basis of their expectation that such relations will be mutually advantageous (Zlau, 1994, cited in Zafirovski, 2005).

A succinct explanation of the social exchange theory is that which relates it with organizational citizenship behaviour. Accordingly, Organ (1988) sees social exchange theory as a type of relationship. Organizations function partially through mutually desirable relationships in which parties give and receive a variety of benefits – including socio-emotional benefits (Schroeder, n.d.). Schroeder (n.d) explains that "when trust has been developed to a critical level, employees can engage in behaviour beyond the minimum requirement, trusting that they will not be taken advantage of, but rather, their needs will be met through this ongoing relationship" (p.6). The relatedness of this theory to the discourse is that a mutual social interaction between the journalists and media organization, characterized by a convenient working condition, is only expected to result in productivity, commitment to the journalism profession, and the society. When journalists are fairly treated in the spirit of social

exchange, the ordinarily reciprocate such gestures by equally treating their organizations by and society fairly.

For the system theory, Littlejohn (1996) sees it as "a set of things that relate to one another and form a whole" (p.43). Among the components of a system are objects, attributes, internal relationships and environment (Littlejohn 1996, cited in Udoudo, 2015). In a system, the activity of one component affects the others, hence as system is said to be in a perfect state when the components are in sync and harmonious. Incidentally, the training and development of the journalist affects the whole system (society, the media are vital organs of the society's system, hence what affects it does affect society in general.

Meanwhile, the Human capital theory, purposed by Theodore Schultz in 1961 and developed by Gary Becker in 1993 submits that education through training raises the productivity of workers by imparting useful knowledge and skills, hence raising workers' future income by increasing their lifetime earnings (Becker, 1993, cited in Nwosu, 2016). Nwosu (2016) explains that "the human capital theory emphasizes the need for policy makers and management to allocate significant resources to the development of manpower training and development programmes" (p.79). Organizations are more propend to giving specific human capital development to the staff, especially as it could contribute to the productivity rate and development of the organization and employees respectively. While the return to the specific training can be realized only in an ongoing relationship with the training firm, general training increases the productivity of a worker in many firms besides those providing it (Becker 1964, cited in Kessler & Lüllessmann, 2002). Imperatively, media organizations that the engage in the training and development of journalists stand to enjoy favourable disposition from them. This disposition comes in terms of positive behaviours and attitude that have great consequences both for organization and then their individual employees Olowookere (2014). The inter-connectivity of these theories to the discourse is that human capital development of journalists, leverages on the social exchange transaction, which is guided by the fact that when employees are well treated, they will reciprocate by being committed to the organization and increase productivity. The increased productivity of employees, robs off positively on the overall wellbeing of the system.

The Media and Society

The media are a cardinal component of every society. In fact, their colouration is that which the society they find themselves give them. They have continually succeeded in directing society on what to think about. In many cases it is difficult to extricate what the media think from what societies think. In fact, the media constitute an important institution of socialization and indeed, the major cultural industry responsible for the mediation and distribution of ideas in the Nigerian society (Pate, 2012). Mass media functions of information, education, entertainment advocacy among others touch on every aspect of human endeavour. They have become an intrinsic part of human existence to the extent that in today's world, we can hardly go a day without them (Usua & Michael, 2015).

More so, the surveillance function of the media places on them the toga of society's watchdog. Through the media, societies get vital information and are alerted about happenings of events in and around them. They consistently survey the environment and convey salient or mediated messages to the audience in

order to reduce uncertainties and consequently react to conflict or change in a rational way (Tsegyu, 2015).

Arguably, the press is free and credible to the existent the society allows it. Overtime, the media tend to give in to series of socio-political and economic influences society usually exerts in them (Udoakah et al., 2015). They explain that "the strings of interaction between media and society are normally controlled by variables such as the legal, ethical, political, socio-cultural, technological and economic factors (p1). So that the media are not as powerful as often touted – they could be "bent" by these variables. But then, it is seemingly difficult to claim to have a corrupt-free press in a highly corruption infested society. It is like having a fish in the water but it is not wet. While this is not to hold brief for corrupt media, it follows that, as maintained by Njanjoh (2005); Mfumbasa (2008) and cited in Nwabueze (2012) "if media professionals in Africa operate in a context marked by the politics and culture of the larger society that are essentially dishonest and corrupt, the negative influence of the society on the media would be great" (p.101).

In his remarks on the influence of a corrupt on the media, Reuben Abati, of the *Guardian* noted that "the journalist is also a member of the society and if we agree that we are an exceptionally corrupt society, then the media cannot be innocent. The media is just as corrupt as the society" (Anyetan, 2002, cited in Nwabueze, 2012).

Accordingly, the effectiveness or otherwise of the journalists in carrying out their functions is highly predicated on their conditions of service, coupled with the quality of training their organization offer them. Organizations that fail to provide the needed organizational culture, would have to tolerate staff who are not only untrained, but remain uncommitted to their development and that of the society by extension. Improved capabilities, knowledge and skills of the talented workforce have proved to be a major source of competitive advantage in a global market. To develop the desired knowledge, skills and abilities of an employee as well as his/her commitment on the job, require effective training programmes (Nwosu, 2016). The foregoing, therefore, is to the effect that the quality of journalists in every society, is a function of the society (institution, organization etc.) if they have been seemed right, they are naturally expected to give back same to society.

Understanding Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)

The dynamics of the ever-competitive business environment, makes organizational citizenship behaviour an essential aspect of any organization that must weather the storm and still stay relevant in their industry. Organizations today (including media organizations) have to continually find new ways to grow in response to the constantly changing challenges in today's dynamic work place. Successful organizations, need employees who will do more than their role requirements (Suresh & Venkatammal, 2010). Suresh & Venkatammal (2010) defined organizational citizenship behaviour as "set of discretionary workplace behaviours that exceed one's basic job requirements. They are often described as behaviours that go beyond the call of duty" (p. 276). Meanwhile, Polatic & Cindiloglu (2003), cited in Ikinci (2014) explain that "organizational behaviour studies aim to scientifically explain why and how the workers behave in their organizations in that way" (p. 329). The effect of OCB in an organization's life include: the increase in the tendency of the workers to help each other, developing

the sense of responsibility in workers to help each other, developing the sense of responsibility in workers and increase in the work success through citizenship behaviours (Ikinci, 2014).

Recent researchers on organizational citizenship behaviour have shown that it has some positive contribution to the organization (Podsakoff & Mackenzic, 1994, 1997; Podsakoff et al., 2000; cited in Sofiah, Padmashantiri & Gengesware, 2014). For instance, Sofiah, et al., (2014) noted that "the vast majority of OCB research has focused on the effect of OCB on individual and organizational performance. Many researchers… found that OCB leads an organization to positive consequences" (p.4). Accordingly, OCB thrives on the cardinal components of empowerment, transformational leadership and competency. Newstrom & Davis (2002) cited in Sofiah et al., (2014) define empowerment "as any process that provides greater autonomy to the employees by sharing of relevant information and the provision of control over factors affecting job" (76). The empowerment of employees creates structures and opportunities for them to take more control over their tasks in the employing institution (Sofiah, et al., 2014). Competency refers to the skills and knowledge needed by the employees to perform a job (Beardwell & Holden, 2001, cited in Sofiah et al., 2014).

Moreso, Organ (1988) cited in Sofiah et al., (2014) maintained that OCB has a variety of forms including altruism, courtesy, sportsmanship, civic virtue and conscientiousness. OCB are presumably performed by intrinsic motivation mechanism (Chompokum, 2004, cited in Sofiah et al., 2014). In his submission, Schroeder (n.d) explains the link between social exchange impact and organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB). Schroeder (n.d) maintained that "the social exchange explanation for OCB was developed alongside the view that cognitions about treatment by the organization would provide a cleaner and more efficient entrance into the link between employees attitude and performance" (p.10). The social exchange thrives on the premise that organizations who treat their employees right are bound to get favourable OCB from such employees.

Unfortunately, there seems to be a dearth of materials on OCB on media organization. However, the need for OCB in the industry cannot be over-emphasized. Suffice to say, that organizational citizenship behaviour in whatever organization it is practiced is desirable from the organizational point of view because such behaviour is thought to increase the available resources and decrease the need for costly mechanism of control (organ, 1988; Podsakoff & Mackenzie, 1997, cited in Sofiah, et al., 2014). The point to note therefore is that journalists can and will be willing to give more to their organization and society in so far as they operate in an enabling work environment.

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour and Media Practice

The increasing demand for news by the public and the exigencies of currency put the journalist always on the go, almost all week, all month, even all year long. Often times, they are made to work under very precarious conditions in their quest for news events. At other times, they stand the risks of losing their lives. Very worrisome, however, is the fact that despite the hazard of the profession, many journalists are not only poorly remunerated; they also do not enjoy any form of insurance. A study done by Ehidiamen (2013), had revealed that the least amount of salary respondents claimed they earned was below N20,000 after tax while the highest was above N100,000. According to the study, majority of the

respondents; 40% of them, earned between N41,000 to N50,000. Majority of these respondents had dependents (Ehidiamen, 2013).

Unfortunately, the prevailing brown envelop syndrome, that has remained a bane of journalism practice in this clime has been severally attributed to the poor or absence of organizational citizenship behaviour in many media organizations. Poor and irregular salary for journalists is one of the basic factors responsible for the prevalence of brown envelop syndrome in Nigeria (Okoro & Ugwuanyi, 2006; Adeyemi & Okorie, 2009 cited in Nwabueze, 2012). Nwabueze (2012) explains that "what these condition do is to "force" the journalist to seek out other ways to make ends meet to the detriment of professionalism and social responsibility to the society" (p.99), citing MacBride et al., (1980) Nwabueze (2012) observed that "… the extent to which those who work in the media can help their creativity and assert their moral and professional qualities depends on the way the institution is managed, on the financial resources made available, on the editorial policy and on many other concrete conditions" (p.99-100).. let me be quick to add that among the "many other concrete conditions" is the existence of a robust organizational citizenship behaviour.

Journalists who observe good organizational citizenship behaviour, might not be easily vulnerable to the prevailing order of corruption and news commercialization. Eventually, Reuben Abati, former Special Adviser (Media and Publicity) to President Goodluck Jonathan had observed that the poor working conditions of journalists was making them vulnerable (Adekunle, 2017). Abati had noted that "poorly paid journalists that arrive assignments with empty stomach were vulnerable to being influenced which could affect the quality of news content" (p.1). He challenged owners of media outfits to ensure good working conditions for journalists to make them independent in their news judgments (Adekunle, 2017).

Understandably, media organizations must first get it right with journalists for society to benefit from the social responsibility function of the media. It is most likely that the more robust the organizational citizenship behaviour of a media organization is, the less likely society will have to endure disgruntled and corrupt journalists. Nwabueze (2012) argued that the focus in this instance is a situation where the society is first responsible to the press. Noting that "society (media organizations) should understand its role in creating the atmosphere for a socially responsive and responsible press before having high expectation from the press" (p.102). The above statement is apt to say the least. What does the society expect from a journalist who can barely get the basic necessities of life? There are certain common circumstances in developing nations that make it difficult to apply the normative theories of the press… such problems as corruption in the society, value system that glorifies corruption, media mismanagement, poor remuneration of journalists are among problems that need to be addressed (Folarin, 2002, cited in Nwabueze, 2012).

Need to Improve Journalists' Condition of Service: In Whose Interest?

For the better part of this discourse, we have severally drawn our attention to the poor condition of service of journalists, especially in Nigeria and its attendant consequence for society. Understandably, the society is the end user in the journalism value chain. If this is the case, then an improved condition of service for journalists in society is ultimately in the interest of that society. The society here includes

mass media owners, news sources and other stakeholders involved in influencing the remuneration of journalists or enticing them with gratification in the line of duty (Nwabueze, 2012).

Beyond remuneration for journalists, other conditions of service include career development and manpower training. Manpower training not only develops employees' knowledge and skills on the job but also, helps an organization (a component of the society) to make the best use of their human resource in favour of gaining competitive advantage in a globalised economy (Nwosu, 2016). The more employees are trained the more they are satisfied with their jobs, hence increasing the firms' productivity and profitability. It plays a vital role in building and maintaining capabilities both on individual and organization level and thus engenders the process of organizational change (Champathes, 2006, cited in Nwosu, 2016). The implication of training the journalist robs off on the stakeholders in the value chain; the journalist, media organization and society. Making a case for the training of journalists especially in crises prone area like ours, Udoudo & Kodu (2012), cited in Udoudo (2015) noted that

> …journalists need to be trained and equipped to protect themselves first and foremost; protection from external or international organization would then more or less provide ethical frameworks for the treatment of journalist… This kind of training is better done in journalism training institution through the expansion of curriculums to include courses in safety and security techniques (p.102).

The above indicates that there is still much to do with regards to the holistic training of the journalists. Yet it further justifies the need for media organizations to improve on the knowledge journalist employees have acquired in institutions of learning. More so, the training of journalists will end the derogatory reference to journalists by news-makers as media boys instead of media professionals (Amadi, 2006). The lack of training of journalists by media organization is that it could breed charlatans - a situation where the unprofessionals lord it over the professionals. Amadi (2006) explaining the consequence of this ugly trend, noted that it will foster "a continuation of demoralized journalists and journalism. Demoralized because a manager/editor who does not share same professional aspiration because of inappropriate education will instead of inspiring their staff, boss them roughly instead" (p.202).

Consequently, organizational citizenship behaviour could be enhanced through career development of journalists which in the long run profits society. The career management is the process which helps individuals to get information about their skills (strength & weakness), identify their career goals (an employee's dream and desire) and involve themselves in career activities and techniques in order to achieve career goals (Gutteridge, 1986; Mayo, 1991, Greenhaus & Callanan, 1999, cited in Younis, Akram & Naseeb, 2013). Career development is borne out of the fact that employees are the real assets and their skills, abilities and knowledge are the important issues for the organization (Shaw, 2006; Mayo, 2000, cited in Younis et al., 2013). Arguably, knowledge acquired by young journalist at the institutional level might not be adequate in the face of real-life journalism practice, hence the need to keep them abreast with recent development and information in the journalism career. Same can also be said of experienced journalism – who need to be continually assured of the safety and prospects of their chosen career.

Expectedly, journalists that are motivated tend to more committed to their jobs and the tenet of their profession. The level of performance of employees relies not only on their actual skills but also on the level of motivation each person exhibits (Shadare & Hammed 2009, cited in Ehidiamen (2013). Although it is difficult to measure productivity in the newsroom (Giles, n.d. cited in Ehidiamen, 2013), there is the need to motivate journalist for enhanced productivity. Journalists can be motivated by giving them insurance, improved remuneration, oversea vacation, granting sick leave with salary, granting of sabbatical leave, reducing the hours of work and giving journalists equipment that enhance the job (Nwaeze, 2009, cited in Ehidiamen, 2013). Overall, journalists who are motivated are morally obligated to do their jobs with utmost sense of responsibility and commitment. This assertion leverages on the proposition of the social exchange theory used in this discourse. This bothers on some form of reciprocity between and among parties. Essentially, society is better-off with journalists that are motivated to do their jobs.

Conclusion/Suggestions

This article had attempted an appraisal of OCB in media organization and its effect on journalism practice. The salience and sensitive role the media and other practitioners play in society requires that they maintain a reasonable sense of mental, economic and emotional stability. All these, must be provided by society. Society cannot be expecting much more from the journalist and the media in term of their cardinal responsibility of information, education, entertainment and advocacy when in actual sense they have stifled them. So far, the social exchange between the media (journalists) and the society had been detective, hence the need for a paradigm shift. In correcting it, society and of course media organizations much strive to look out for the various motivating factors that will foster productivity and positive attitude of journalist towards the organizations, the journalism tenets and indeed the society. It is therefore incontrovertible to submit that society stands to benefit most in the campaign for improved remuneration and better condition of service for journalists.

Consequently, media organizations should begin to improve on the hygiene component of the journalism career. For instance, the training of journalists on latest reporting techniques that could help improve their productivity and news quality, could be a morale booster. More so, other factors like provision of insurance/HMO, housing scheme, scholarship for children/wards among others for journalists could be far reaching in earning their commitment to their jobs. Granted that all of these is cost intensive, media organizations, must begin to diversify their sources of revenue. Alternative sources of revenue for media organizations, will not only help stem the tide of news commercialization, but will inoculate them from the overbearing influence of external forces – forces that can derail the quality and content of news. A media organization that is economically virile cannot be easily swayed. The continuous credibility of the media remains their unique selling proposition, therefore, frantic efforts must be made to protect them from "media scavengers". Meanwhile, the media must continue to make a case for improved staff welfare. What is going in the journalism profession is a criminal spiral of silence by the media who themselves are direct victims of poor and hazardous condition of service. Yet, much is equally expected of the Nigerian union of journalists (NUJ) in this direction.

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