



AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT: AN ANTECEDENT FOR MITIGATING RESISTANCE TO CHANGE IN NIGERIAN FINANCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

***Okundalaiye Henry¹, Odujoko Adenike Adesola²**

¹Faculty of Management Sciences, Department of Business Administration, University of Lagos, Akoka –Lagos (NIGERIA)
E-mail: henryokundalaiye@gmail.com

²Faculty of Management Sciences, Department of Business Administration, University of Lagos, Akoka –Lagos (NIGERIA)
E-mail: desola9june@yahoo.com

Abstract

The study explores the relationship between employee affective commitment and resistance to changes in an organization using FBNQuest Merchant Bank Ltd as a study. For resistance to changes, the study focused on routine seeking, emotional reaction, short-term focus and cognitive rigidity, and how they relate to employee affective commitment. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire. Simple random sampling technique was used to select one hundred and eighty-five respondents out of which one hundred and fifty-three responses were valid for the data analysis. The data obtained were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Pearson Correlation analysis was used to predict the relationship between independent and dependent variables. The findings indicated on employee affective commitment has a negative and significant relationship with routine seeking and short-term focus only. In conclusion, affective commitment fosters acceptance of the change, which in turn fosters a commitment to the change. The study recommended that FBNQuest Merchant Bank Ltd should periodically conduct a survey to determine the commitment level of employees. This helps to understand and explain certain behaviours of employees towards the organizational commitment.

Keywords: Affective commitment, Routine seeking, Emotional reaction, Short-term focus, Cognitive rigidity, Resistance to change, Organizational commitment

Introduction

No organization is impervious to change (Visagie & Steyn, 2011). As globalization continues to call into question the suitability of present organizational strategies, procedures, and structures, organizations must continuously weigh the costs and advantages of change. Recently, the globe has experienced a tremendous surge in organizational transformation, owing to the

CoronaVirus (Covid-19) pandemic (Akkermans, Richardson, & Kraimer, 2020), with companies struggling for their survival. Some of the changes include company mergers, organizational restructuring, strategy changes, the adoption of new technology, outsourcing, downsizing, leadership changes, and geographic changes (Fedor, Caldwell & Herold, 2006).

Organizational commitment is a well-studied characteristic in the field of organizational studies (Visagie & Steyn, 2011). Affective commitment is one of the dimensions of organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Affective commitment is defined as “the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization” (Meyer & Allen, 1991). It stems from an individual’s intrinsic factors, which may be summarized as professional and personal growth, a sense of accomplishment, recognition, and short-term focus (Kuvaas, Buch, Weibel, Dysvik & Nerstad, 2017).

According to Sasikala and Anthonyraj (2015), organizational commitment is a necessary precondition for the effective implementation of organizational change. When executing organizational change, change managers frequently rely on the commitment of their workers (Aujla & Mclarney, 2020), however, these levels of organizational commitment may drop in reaction to the change process (Battistelli, Montani, Odoardi, Vandenberghe & Picci, 2014). This reaction to change by employees can be either negative or positive (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999).

Employees who are affectively committed to a company and connect with its values and objectives are more likely to participate in in-role and discretionary behaviours that benefit the company (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Many organizational change programs fail despite the time and money invested in making them effective. Due to a fear of uncertainty, many people reject change because they associate it with shock (Srivastava & Agrawal, 2020). The human dimension, as shown in employee response to change, is the most critical factor

in the effective implementation of change (Srivastava & Agrawal, 2020).

During the past years, several organizations have gone through a long-term organizational restructuring program marked by a series of mergers, acquisitions, and outsourcing activities. The start of these adjustments created significant worry and anxiety among the company's employees. This was met with some employee resistance; some workers were sceptical of the new process, changing technology, and business environment. Many were comfortable with the former process and lacked the excitement for the change. More specifically, some employees were concerned about the inconveniences and pain that change brings, and were not prepared to think flexibly.

The responses to the organizational change contributed to the change resistance experienced in the organization. This had a detrimental effect on the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organizations. This also had a detrimental effect on employee engagement, as shown by a decrease in quality service provided and other employee behaviors such as increased absenteeism, presenteeism, and workplace incivilities.

Organizational change itself is a complex process that requires simultaneous effort on many different tracks. The company's failure to guarantee seamless navigation through resistance to change affected the effectiveness of the change project and workers' commitment to the organization. Workers, for example, were not given enough opportunities to engage in the change process; employees did not trust or feel confident in the individual implementing the change, and the company failed to instil

confidence in the employees about the process and probable results.

Organizational change initiatives that are not well-managed result in feelings of dread and uncertainty (Ylmaz & Klçolu, 2013), diminishing levels of organizational commitment, decreased levels of trust between employees and management, and higher stress (Visagie & Steyn, 2011). There is a scarcity of research on the mechanism of the affective commitment-resistance to change relationship in this growing area.

Literature Review

Kotter Change Management Theory

Harvard Business School professor, John P. Kotter, is well regarded as a leader and change specialist. He is well-known for his numerous publications in the subject of change. His first book, "Leading Change," was published in 1996 and quickly became the bible of change management for managers across the world. Eight phases of change implementation were created by him, which he believes may explain why some firms succeed and others fail. He drew on his knowledge of a hundred firms, including large enterprises like Ford and General Motors, as well as smaller businesses. For this reason, he studied organizations' strategies for boosting their competitiveness, such as comprehensive quality management, re-engineering and proper sizing. Using these eight steps, he highlighted the need for patience in the change management process and the importance of not missing any phases.

Step 1: Increase the Level of Urgency

If businesses want to do this, they must teach staff members that going beyond their comfort zones is necessary to get immediate results. Making plans and carrying them out in a short

amount of time inspires a high sense of urgency and motivation. By ensuring that each work is done with a positive consequence, leadership can discern between faux and true urgency (Kotter, 1995). Leaders that tie their workers' beliefs to the company's principles are exceptional (Hundekar, 2009).

Step 2: Forming a Guiding Coalition

An effective team is well-trained and adaptable. There are a lot of changes that can't be accomplished by one individual; thus the work is done in teams. Having the "right people" in a team leads to success in the workplace (Collins, 2001). This strategy saves time in the decision-making process since people work together, resulting in faster changes (Kotter, 1995).

Several factors must be taken into account while putting up a team. The players in the teams that are formed must have a leader to guide them. All members' views must be taken into account to arrive at accurate interpretations and informed decisions. The team must create a trust for its decisions to be accepted and implemented by the rest of the business. An agile team should be able to adjust to changes as they happen. A team must have an open flow of communication in both directions and a rapid response to any difficulties that may occur (Kotter, 1995).

Step 3: Create a Change Vision

There are three ways that a clear change vision may be used: 'stimulating individuals to go in the desired direction, coordinating people's efforts and clarifying comprehensive alternatives.' Organizational beliefs, strategies and plans are supported by an unobstructed vision that takes into consideration present-day conditions and

responds to them with realistic objectives. A robust master plan is then developed by leadership to help accomplish the objectives set. It is essential for a transformation vision to be focused, adaptive, and communicating at the same time (Kotter, 1995).

Step 4: Presenting the Vision for Buy-In

Visionary leaders must make sure that everyone understands and accepts their goals (Kotter, 1995). Carelessness and a lack of reaction to the vision are the results of poor communication (Tatikonda & Mitter, 2004). It is thus necessary to use the information in several contexts, such as emails, meetings, and presentations, to make it stick. Employees should be able to quickly grasp and understand a company's mission statement.

Step 5: Enabling Broad-Reaching Action

For Kotter (1995), the practice of eliminating obstacles so that employees may succeed in their jobs is what he meant by this term. Structural and cumbersome supervision procedures are among the challenges referred to in the article. Problems inside an organization that one has no control over are known as structural barriers. In many cases, a lack of resources or bureaucratic red tape prevents workers from completing their tasks. Thus, they may have an adverse effect on the change objective. Using an information system, for example, a company may keep up to date on its competition. A company's marketing department may benefit from this information since it will have an impact on how they carry out their duties.

In order to change the vision, managers and executives that demonstrate unpleasant conduct toward the rest of the workforce are

an obstacle. They may not be as disruptive as some of the individuals that bring about change, but they aren't the same. In the short term, focused team members may choose to ignore these behaviours, but in the long run, they must be discussed and a solution found (Kotter, 1995).

Step 6: Obtaining Short-Term Gains

Prioritizing short-term goals before long-term ones is essential. There is a sense of accomplishment when these short-term goals are achieved in a certain time frame. In order to overcome procrastination, they are achievable and realistic goals (Mehta, 2013). Kotter (1995) argues that these goals must be explicit, unequivocal, and connected with the change effort to be successful. This allows individuals to recognize and appreciate the results of their labour. When hard work pays off, people tend to put in twice as much effort because their morale is improved (Tolentino, 2015). It is possible for short-term triumphs to 'generate momentum that may change non-partisan individuals into supporters, and unenthusiastic volunteers into active supporters,' according to Kotter (1995).

Step 7: Don't Give Up!

That which has been accomplished thus far should not be ignored, but rather included in the entire transformation process. People tend to get complacent after a win and fall into a lethargic mindset that prevents them from "leaping" back into action. As a consequence, the project's impetus will wane, and transformation will go backwards (Kotter, 1995). When it comes to CEOs, transformational ones are well-known for launching several initiatives aimed at furthering the company's transformation rather than just celebrating its successes

(Bass, 2005). This is what sets leaders apart from their subordinates (Williams, 1999).

Step 8: Ensure It Sticks

When running a business, new methods may likely arise. It's up to corporate executives to make sure that excellent practices are implemented and integrated into the organization's culture. Incorporate the new way of doing business into the company's culture to persuade employees and subordinates that it is preferable to the old (Kotter, 1995).

Affective Commitment

An employee's commitment to his or her employer is a common study's work-related result (Holt, Armenakis, Feild & Harris, 2007). There is a lack of research on the role of organizational commitment as an antecedent to change, even though commitment has been suggested to play an important role in organizational change acceptance (Yousef, 2000; Iverson & Czajka, 1993; Cordery, Sevastos, Mueller, & Parker, 1993). All definitions and assessments of organizational commitment share the idea that there is a form of connection or bond that an employee has with an organization, regardless of how it is measured (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). According to Allen and Meyer (1990), there are three forms of organizational commitment -affective, continuance, and normative organizational commitments.

According to Allen and Meyer (1990), an employee's emotional connection to, identification with, and engagement in the company is called affective commitment. It has been shown that the affective component of commitment has a considerable impact on important organizational variables, including as turnover, absences, productivity and

organizational citizenship behaviours (Iverson, 1996; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnytsky, 2002; Somers, 1995). There is also a strong correlation between the level of affective commitment and different forms of organizational justice (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnytsky, 2002). More loyal workers are more probable if they sense they are being treated honestly by a firm. A study on affective commitment suggests that employees who identify with the organization's values and objectives are more likely to participate in in-role and discretionary actions that benefit the company (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Iverson (1996) found that, after union management, organizational commitment was the second most important predictor of organizational change attitudes, where those employees were more emotionally involved in the organization and their aims were more congruent with the organization's goals. According to Begley and Czajka (1993), employees who had higher levels of commitment before a major transition in the company were able to better manage their stress levels thereafter. This implies that employees may be shielded from the stress of organizational change if they are committed to the company (Begley & Czajka, 1993). It has been shown that organizational commitment and positive change attitudes are linked. This is predicated on the premise that the change is beneficial to the company and has no impact on its core values (Yousef, 2000; Bennett & Durkin, 2000).

Resistance to Change

Workers' retaliation against organizational change is known as "resistance" (Folger & Skarlicki 1999). One of the main reasons why most reforms fail or are not implemented is because of this (Egan & Fjermestad, 2005).

Organizational change programs must take employee resistance into account because it has distinct ramifications for management and because people are so important to the success of a firm's transformation. There are several forms of employee resistance, ranging from indifference, a bad image and a strong opposition to boycotts and violent strikes (Coetsee, 1999).

In the 1940s, Kurt Lewin is said to have coined the phrase "change resistance. Initially, he focused on the aspects of human conduct necessary for effective organizational change (Kurt, 1945). Lester Coach and John R. P. French conducted the first research on resistance to change in 1948 at Harwood Manufacturing Co. in Virginia. On the subject of employee engagement in decision-making, their research focused. Preliminary findings suggest that "resistance to change is a combination of an individual reaction to dissatisfaction and major group-induced pressures," they write.

The most important ingredient in the successful implementation of change is the human component, manifested in the attitude of employees to change. Organizational change has been defined in the literature as a transition from the known to the unknown, which typically does not win employee support unless compelling reasons for change have been adequately expressed to employees (Cummings & Worley, 2009). Employees' resistance to change may be demonstrated in their behaviour and conduct to maintain the status quo, even though the change process is focused on altering the status quo (Amarantou, Kazakopoulou, Chatzoudes, & Chatzoglou, 2018). (Aslam, Ilyas & Imran, 2016). Resistance from employees to change is a common cause of failure in change initiatives (Bovey & Hede,

2001). An employee's action that challenges disrupts or alters current assumptions, discourses, and power relations is described as "resisting change," according to Collinson (1994). Employees who lack flexibility are more likely to oppose change because they are frightened of failing to adjust to new surroundings after a process modification, says Barak (2018). Resistance to change is exacerbated by a lack of adaptability (Barak, 2018) and a fear of the unknown (Ali et al., 2019).

Lewin (1945) viewpoint was that resistance to change was a systemic problem. Organizations as a system maintain equilibrium because of equal and opposing stresses (Burnes & Bargal, 2017). When a system moves away from equilibrium and toward desired states, it encounters resistance because of an imbalance of driving and restraining forces, according to Lewin (1945). The term "resistance" has evolved through time to include more people's negative reactions to the emerging situation, which is a psychological response (Piderit, 2000). While evaluating prior studies on change, Piderit (2000) identified three types of resistance to change. Individual reactions to change may be complex and unpleasant, but they can also be characterized by a combination of behavioural, cognitive, and emotional dimensions, all of which contribute to a complex individual psychological response to change. The current globalized world has made it imperative for firms to manage change, and managing change has become one of the most important management skills (Ali et al., 2019).

Identifying the root of resistance to change is very challenging since opposition to change may take many forms (Burke, 2008). Even

though change is necessary for positive reasons, such as adapting to changing external conditions and remaining competitive, individuals in organizations frequently react negatively to and reject change efforts (Boohene & Williams, 2012). For the most part, organizational resistance to change may be traced back to any one of the following factors, as outlined by Zafar and Naveed (2014):

- Lack of communication

As a result, people are resistant to change in the workplace because they don't understand why it's happening and how it will affect their jobs. Lack of communication causes employees to assume that change will affect their current status quo. 20% of initiatives fail because of a lack of communication.

- Unaware of the goals of change

Workers begin to resist when they don't understand or if management doesn't communicate the purpose of the change. 17 per cent of project failures may be attributed to employees' lack of knowledge of the project's objectives.

- Obsolescence of knowledge and skills

When employees lack the requisite information or abilities to implement a change, they are more likely to reject it. Initiatives fail to achieve their planned goals because they lack competence in dealing with the degree of change and complexity of the situation at hand.

- Structure of the organization

As a consequence of an unsupportive organizational structure and management challenges, employees are reluctant to

change. It's difficult for management to figure out where in the organizational structure to execute change. A lack of management is the most common reason for project failure.

- Scarcity of resources

Organizations with limited resources tend to retain the status quo since implementing a new policy or process requires resources such as money and personnel with the necessary skills and time. Due to a lack of resources, planned additions may have to be scrapped (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2008).

According to Oreg (2003), resistance to changes has four (4) sub-scales which are routine seeking, emotional reaction, short-term focus, and cognitive rigidity. This study tends to address the gap in lack of research on the resistance to change phenomenon with a focus on Oreg (2003) concept, and how it related to affective commitment.

Routine seeking: This refers to how much people favour traditional and highly predictable jobs, processes, and surroundings.

H₀₁: Affective commitment has no significant influence on routine seeking

Emotional reaction: This focuses on how much discomfort, lack of excitement, and worry people feel when changes are forced on them.

H₀₂: Affective commitment has no significant influence on emotional reaction

Short-term focus: This refers to how much people worry about all of the hassles and pain that change brings, rather than concentrating on the possible advantages and comfort that it may offer in the long run.

H₀₃: Affective commitment has no significant influence on short-term focus

Cognitive rigidity: This refers to an individual's inability to think in a flexible manner and difficulties embracing different ideas, viewpoints, and techniques.

H₀₄: Affective commitment has no significant influence on cognitive rigidity

Empirical Literature

A group of organizational employees were the subjects of research by Gori and Topino (2020) that looked at the influence of several psychological elements on promoting job satisfaction. The findings demonstrated that workplace relationship civility (others with me) strongly mediated the association between a propensity for change and job happiness, but the influence of insight, when taken alone, was not significant. According to Aslam, Muqadas, and Imran's (2018) research, employees in public sector organizations are resisting organizational change because they aren't involved as much in decision-making, there is poor communication, and there are other barriers of political, structural, social, and cultural nature.

Ahmad, Ismail, Rani, and Wahab (2017) conducted a literature review and discovered that change management is a structured approach for ensuring that changes are thoroughly and smoothly implemented to transition people, teams, and organizations to a desired future state by focusing on the broader impacts of change, particularly on people, where change does not happen in isolation and affects the entire organization. According to Ján and Veronika's (2017) research, the methods used to plan changes, monitor changes, and determine how long it will take to execute changes all have a

significant impact on whether a change ultimately succeeds or fails in an organization.

As a moderator, organizational commitment was used by Ardalan and Erfanizadeh (2017) to examine the relationship between attitudes toward organizational change and work stress. Regarding job stress and organizational commitment, there was evidence of a large, opposite, and opposite direct influence of attitude toward organizational change. Geneviit-Janonien and Endriulaitien's (2014) research found that affective commitment was the most beneficial part of organizational commitment, while continuation commitment mostly had negative effects on the organization. Employee performance, work satisfaction, and perceptions of uncertainty connected to change were all evaluated by Cullen, Edwards, Casper, and Gue (2014) along with the employees' capacity for adaptation and their views of this uncertainty. Results from both samples support the notion that perceived organizational support mediates the link between workers' perceptions of change-related uncertainty and their capacity to adapt, as well as their satisfaction and performance.

Methodology

For this study, a descriptive (survey) research approach was used. It is to collect precise and reliable information that depicts an existent occurrence (Ezeani, 1998). The population of the study comprised all categories and departments, as well as the full broader personnel of FBNQuest Merchant Bank Ltd. However, due to convenience and ease of accessibility, the researcher concentrated solely on Lagos. The targeted population size is 311 employees which comprised 198

employees in Merchant bank, 52 in asset Management, 8 in Securities business, 25 in Capital business, 24 in Trustees business, and 4 in Funds business.

For this study, Yamane (1976) formula was adopted to calculate the sample size. The formula is given below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$
$$n = \frac{311}{1 + 311 \times 0.05^2}$$
$$n = \frac{311}{1.7775}$$
$$n = 175$$

Where: n = sample size
 N = total population size
 e = significant level (0.05)

The simple random sampling technique was adopted for this study, this technique gives every unit in the population an equal chance of being selected (without replacement) in the sample. To collect data, permission needed to be given, mostly from the Human Resource manager. The questionnaires were distributed personally with supervision from the head of each unit. Through a cover letter, the HR department and the respondents were reminded of the anonymity and confidentiality of the information acquired through surveys.

A structured questionnaire was adopted as means of data collection. The structured questions prompted respondents to check or sign their replies depending on personal differences and dispositions. The items for each construct were adapted from previous studies.

For Affective commitment, an 8-item scale was adapted from Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993). It is rated on a 5-point Likert scale of Strongly agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1). An example of the items is “I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization”. It has a Cronbach alpha (α) value of 0.83.

For Resistance to Changes, the study adopted the scale by Oreg (2003). The scale has 4 sub-scales which are Routine seeking, Emotional reaction, Short-term focus, and Cognitive rigidity. Each of the sub-scales; Routine seeking, Emotional reaction, Short-term focus, and Cognitive rigidity has 5, 4, 5, and 5 items respectively. The scale is rated on a 5-point Likert scale - strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Table 1 shows the Cronbach Alpha values as measured by the researchers. Cronbach's alpha of less than 0.6, according to Sekaran (2005), suggests that the instrument is reliable (and thus opens for some errors). The instrument is deemed reliable if the alpha value is between 0.7 and 0.8. The instrument is regarded as highly reliable if the alpha value is greater than 0.8

Table 1: Reliability Cronbach Alpha coefficient (α)

Constructs	α
Routine seeking	0.707
Emotional reaction	0.773
Short-term focus	0.745
Cognitive rigidity	0.774

Analysis and Results

To test the hypotheses, Pearson correlation was employed for inferential statistics.

Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (version 20) was adopted the statistical program to analyse the data collected.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix for All Variables (N = 153)

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
Affective commitment	3.5196	.33783	1				
Routine seeking	2.7725	.78474	-.242**	1			
Emotional reaction	2.8415	.87629	-.129	.278**	1		
Short-term focus	2.9438	.86768	-.259**	.164*	.356**	1	
Cognitive rigidity	3.1356	.72149	-.123	.172*	.179*	.321**	1

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

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

Hypothesis One:

H₀: There is no significant relationship between affective commitment and routine seeking

The hypothesis was tested using a Pearson correlation analysis, which looked at the connection between affective commitment and routine seeking. The results are presented in Table 2, and they indicate that affective commitment has a negative correlation coefficient (r) of -0.242 with routine seeking, and that it is significantly related ($p < 0.01$). This implies that the more employees get emotionally attached to, and participated in the company, the lesser they favour traditional and highly predictable jobs, processes, and surroundings, and vice versa. As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. The finding is consistent with previously with Fogs (2015) study which found that routine seeking has a low negative and significant relationship with affective commitment.

Hypothesis Two:

H₀: There is no significant relationship between affective commitment and emotional reaction

The hypothesis was tested using a Pearson correlation analysis, which looked at the connection between affective commitment and emotional reaction. The results are presented in Table 2, and they indicate that affective commitment has a negative correlation coefficient (r) of -0.129 with emotional reaction, and that it is non-significantly related ($p > 0.05$). This implies that irrespective of how employees get emotionally attached to and participated more in the company, it has no impact on how they feel discomfort, lack of excitement, and worry people feel when changes are forced on them. As a result, the null hypothesis is accepted, and the alternative hypothesis is rejected. The finding is in contrast to Mangundjaya (2020) study that emotional reaction has a significant impact on affective commitment.

Hypothesis Three:

H₀: There is no significant relationship between affective commitment on short-term focus

The hypothesis was tested using a Pearson correlation analysis, which looked at the connection between affective commitment and short-term focus. The results are presented in Table 2, and they indicate that affective commitment has a negative correlation coefficient (r) of -0.259 with short-term focus, and that it is significantly related ($p < 0.01$). This implies that the more employees get emotionally attached to, and participated more in the company, the lesser they people worry about all of the hassles and pain that change brings, and vice versa. As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. The finding is similar to Oreg (2003) study who found that the tendency for short-term focus was negatively associated with affective commitment.

Hypothesis Four:

H₀: There is no significant relationship between affective commitment on cognitive rigidity

The hypothesis was tested using a Pearson correlation analysis, which looked at the connection between affective commitment and cognitive rigidity. The results are presented in Table 2, and they indicate that affective commitment has a negative correlation coefficient (r) of -0.123 with cognitive rigidity, and that it is non-significantly related ($p > 0.05$). This implies that irrespective of how employees get emotionally attached to and participated more in the company, it has no impact on their inability to think in a flexible manner and difficulties embracing different ideas, viewpoints, and techniques. As a result, the

null hypothesis is accepted, and the alternative hypothesis is rejected. The finding is similar to Oreg (2003) study who found that the tendency of cognitive rigidity focus was associated with affective commitment.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between employee affective commitment and resistance to changes in an organization, with emphasis on FBNQuest Merchant Bank Ltd as a case study. On the resistance to change, the study focused on routine seeking, emotional reaction, short-term focus and cognitive rigidity. The study showed that affective commitment has a negative and significant relationship with routine seeking and short-term focus only.

As employees get more committed to the organization, they feel less geared toward traditional and highly predictable jobs, processes, and surroundings. When employees get more attached emotionally to the company, the lesser they worried about all of the hassles and pain that change brings. Employees' feelings of discomfort and lack of excitement when changes are imposed on them, however, are unaffected by their affective commitment to the organization. This is also evident in their incapacity to think creatively and in their struggles to accept other concepts, methods, and opinions.

Conclusively, affective commitment fosters acceptance of the change, which in turn fosters commitment to the change. The study indicates that employees are more likely to embrace change when they believe they have an affective commitment to the change process. Individuals with a strong feeling of affective commitment are more apt to behave pleasantly and think creatively, resulting in

employees who are comparably more devoted and satisfied with their jobs.

Recommendation

As the strength of the organization dwells much on the moderate affective commitment from the employee, it is recommended that the management of the organization continues to employ more initiatives and foster this, such as having career growth plan mapped out with the employee, promoting team-building exercises that should be conducted informally and outside of business hours, and creating clear employee engagement strategies. Also, it is recommended that the organization should periodically conduct a survey to determine the commitment level of employees. This helps to understand and explain certain behaviours of employees towards organizational commitment. Since there is no “one size fits all” technique to reduce resistance to change, especially routine seeking and short-term focus, it is recommended that management communicate the intended changes early, and get key stakeholders involved in the process as listed by Kotter's change approaches. Ongoing support and feedback from employees should be encouraged across all levels, and employees should be educated on the value of the change.

Suggestions for Further Study

This study work focused on the impact of affective commitment on resistance to change among employees of FBNQuest Merchant Bank Ltd in the Lagos office. Further studies can expand the scope to include FBNQuest Merchant Bank Ltd operations in additional states. More so, the study may be expanded to include other organizations both locally and globally, and a comparison study on the relationship

between affective commitment and resistance to change can also be conducted. This would result in an increase in the sample size as well as a greater generality of the results, which would shed more light on the subject under investigation. The study focused on the dimensions of resistance to change which included routine seeking, emotional reaction, short-term focus and cognitive rigidity. Further studies can concentrate on the causes of resistance to change.

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