

Autonomy and Employee Job Satisfaction of Hotels in Port Harcourt, Nigeria

Patrick Oyaregba Aigboje

B.Sc. MBA. M/Phil. PhD in View

*Department of Business Administration/Marketing School of Management
Sciences, Babcock University Ogun State Nigeria*

ABSTRACT: Autonomy and employee job satisfaction of hotels in Port Harcourt. The population of this study was 1,764 from fifty (50) indigenous hotels in Port Harcourt metropolis. The sample size of 326 employees of hotels in Port Harcourt metropolis was obtained using the Taro Yamane's formula for sample size determination. The study adopted the cross-sectional survey in its investigation of the variables and applied both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The hypothesis was tested using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance. The reliability of the instrument was achieved through the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with autonomy having 0.776 and organizational profitability having 0.891. The result of the findings revealed that autonomy has a significant positive relationship with employee job satisfaction of hotels in Port Harcourt. Based on empirical findings, the study concludes autonomy has a significantly influences organizational profitability. The study thus recommended that hotels should build on their distinctive competitive advantage so to sharpen their competitive aggression in the industry.

KEY WORDS: *Autonomy, employee job satisfaction, Hotels*

I. INTRODUCTION

Job satisfaction is an elusive and complex concept that has been a subject of intense research since the appearance of organizational studies (Duong, 2013). Veitch et al. (2007) defined job satisfaction "is a particular view of the work with which employees view their job and this view is affected by favorable and unfavorable feelings and attachments of one's work." On the other hand, Gurinder and Gursharan (2010) indicate that job satisfaction "is the positive emotional response to the job situation resulting from attaining what the employee wants from the job". One of the ways through which this can be achieved is allowing employees to enjoy autonomy in the job they perform.

It has been shown that autonomy at work has a favorable impact on the well-being of workers (Knudsen et al., 2011, Bauer, 2004, Ryan and Deci, 2000), as well as their performance and creativity (Gagné and Deci, 2005). Increasing work autonomy would provide a win-win situation with benefits for both employers and employees. On the contrary, the intensification of work, which is also known to improve performance and productivity, is associated with negative health outcomes (Danna and Griffin, 1999) and the decrease in job satisfaction (Green, 2006).

However, the impact of work autonomy and labor intensity on workers' welfare can only be assessed clearly after taking into account the combined levels of both factors. In fact, Karasek (1979) showed that specific combinations of work autonomy and work intensity can have welfare effects that go beyond the isolated effect of each factor. Its Demand-Control model, developed in Karasek and Theorell (1990) and tested by hundreds of studies, is based on two hypotheses. The hypothesis of tension postulates that jobs defined by high demand (high workload and time constraints) and under control, little freedom of decision on how to satisfy these demands, produce mental tension, stress and health problems. The activation hypothesis postulates that jobs with high demands and high control provide workers with learning and development opportunities, which results in good indicators of health and job satisfaction. This is explained by the fact that the high latitude of decision "dampens" the stress-inducing effect of high work demands (De Jonge and Kompier, 1997: 239; Van der Doef and Maes, 2010).

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between autonomy and employee job satisfaction of hotels in Port Harcourt. The study would also seek to answer the research question: What is the relationship between autonomy and employee job satisfaction of hotels in Port Harcourt in Port Harcourt?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Autonomy

The success of firm will be determined by the level of autonomy exhibited by the Entrepreneurs. Autonomy refers to independent action in terms of bringing forth an idea or a vision and carrying it through to accomplishment, including the concept of free and independent action and decisions taken (Lumpkin & Dess, 2001). Entrepreneurs are associated with more of a degree of freedom in combining and organizing resources (Bird, 1988). With reference to entrepreneurship in the context of strategy formulation, two types of autonomy are referred to by scholars (Lumpkin & Dess, 2001). The first type of autonomy refers to decisive decision making where a dream is driven to implementation through individual control while the second type of autonomy refers to the individual autonomy that enables entrepreneurial events and decision making at junior levels of an enterprise. These types of autonomy are dependable with the concept of Entrepreneurial Orientation, according to Lumpkin & Dess (2001). Individuals with a need for autonomy might not necessarily be associated with positive associations in certain contexts. In terms of potentially negative conceptions around autonomy, research has indicated that individuals with a high need for autonomy are also associated with certain negative behaviors (Deakins & Freel, 2012; Callaghan (2009). Individuals with a high need for autonomy are associated with a preference for working alone, control over the workplace, and tend to be opposed to excessive rules and procedures. According to Porter (2003), research shows that performance for individuals with a high level of need for autonomy is contingent on participation in the determination of tasks.

Job Satisfaction

It is a general understanding that job satisfaction is an attitude towards job. In other words job satisfaction is an affective or emotional response toward various facets of one's job. A person with a high level of job satisfaction holds positive attitudes towards his or her job, while a person who is dissatisfied with his or her job holds negative attitudes about the job. A pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job and job experience. Job satisfaction is a result of employees' perception of how well their job provides those things which are viewed as important. Job satisfaction is also defined as reintegration of affect produced by individual's perception of fulfilment of his needs in relation to his work and the surrounding it (Saiyaden, 1993). Organ and Hammer (1991) pointed out that job satisfaction represents a complex assemblage of cognition, emotion and tendencies.

Brief and Weiss (2002) suggested that employee reports of affect at work can be used to measure job satisfaction and that affective experiences while on the job are also a cause of job satisfaction. In other words, employee job satisfaction is the affective state of employees regarding multiple facets of their jobs (Brown & Peterson, 1993); so job satisfaction comprises employee feelings regarding multiple aspects of the job. There is also a cognitive component to job satisfaction (Organ & Near, 1985).

Autonomy and Job Satisfaction

Previous researchers have well established the relationship between autonomy and job satisfaction and their measuring alignment. In this article the researcher having evaluated the measuring relationship between autonomy and job satisfaction discovered that both variables significantly relates and measured each other. This finding is similar with the study of scholars such as Nguyen, Steven, Jim and Anh (2003) and (2006) respectively who conducted a study on job autonomy and job satisfaction: New evidence in England. The results as enshrined in the study revealed that the degree of job autonomy is high as it related to general job satisfaction. It was recorded that job autonomy increases from lower significant level to higher significant level. For instance, the likelihood of a worker being satisfied with his or her job task will continued to increase due to the satisfaction derived from autonomy been enjoyed by the employee. On employees, the study focused on the genders circle, that is both the males and females. In a study conducted by Almdar, Mustrat, in Pakistan in (2011) on the impact of job satisfaction on employee performance: empirical study of autonomous medical institutions in Pakistan. Findings revealed that some facets of job satisfaction such as pay, promotion, job safety and security, working conditions, job autonomy, relationship with co-workers, relationship with supervisor, and nature of the work significantly affect the level of job satisfaction among autonomous medical institutions of Pakistan. Another research conducted by (Waymer, 1995; Nguyen et al., 2003) on the relationship between job satisfaction and job autonomy. The result has been mostly consistent, concluding that job autonomy leads to job satisfaction. The scholar Nguyen conducted another research on high school dropout and job satisfaction as it relates to autonomy. Result revealed that the two concepts positively relates to the other to effect performance. Elise (2017) conducted a researcher in China on the relationship between job autonomy, job satisfaction and the mediating role crafting in. The result shows that autonomy and job satisfaction are inseparable. This is to say

that job autonomy significantly relates to job satisfaction. Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006; Nguyen et al., 2003) carried out a study on the relationship between job satisfaction and autonomy it was discovered that job autonomy is as a result of the satisfaction derived from the job operations. Many factors can affect the level of job satisfaction. One of these factors influencing job satisfaction is job autonomy. Therefore job autonomy and job satisfaction can be identified as indices measuring one another.

The foregoing argument gave rise to the null hypothesis:

H₀: There is no significant relationship between autonomy and employee job satisfaction of hotels in Port Harcourt.

III. METHODOLOGY

The population of this study was 1,764 from fifty (50) indigenous hotels in Port Harcourt metropolis. The sample size of 326 employees of hotels in Port Harcourt metropolis was obtained using the Taro Yamane's formula for sample size determination. The study adopted the cross-sectional survey in its investigation of the variables and applied both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The hypothesis was tested using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance. The reliability of the instrument was achieved through the Crombach Alpha coefficient with competitive aggressiveness having 0.776 and organizational profitability having 0.891.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Test of Hypothesis

The secondary data analysis was carried out using the Spearman rank order correlation tool at a 95% confidence interval. Specifically, the tests cover hypothesis which was bivariate and stated in the null form. We have relied on the Spearman Rank (*rho*) statistic to undertake the analysis. The 0.05 significance level is adopted as criterion for the probability of either accepting the null hypotheses at ($p > 0.05$) or rejecting the null hypotheses at ($p < 0.05$).

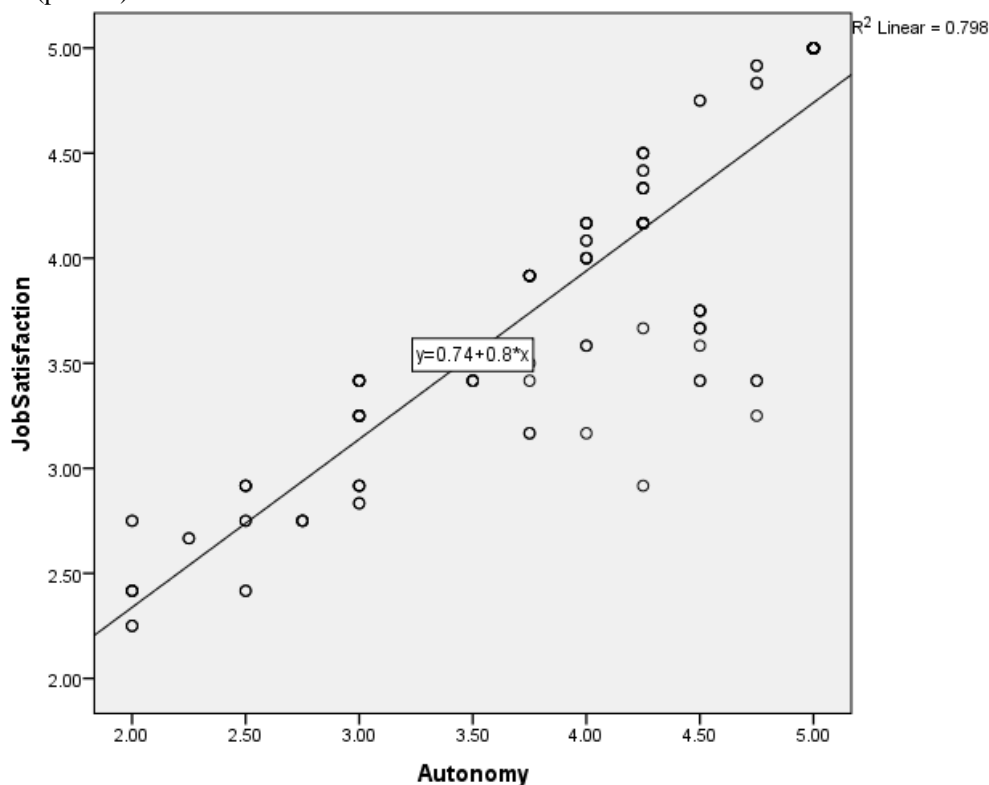


Fig.1 scatter plot of the relationship between autonomy and employee job satisfaction

Scatter graph is one of the techniques used in deciding whether a bivariate relationship does exist between interval scaled variables. In the bid to determine the existence and trend of this relationship, a scatter diagram was plotted as presented. Autonomy as a predictor variable was plotted on the X axis whereas employee job satisfaction as the criterion variable was plotted on the Y axis. The apparent pattern of the cases in the scatter plot sloping upwards from left to right is an indication of existing linear and positive relationship between autonomy and employee job satisfaction.

Test of Research Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant relationship between autonomy and employee job satisfaction of hotels in Port Harcourt.

Table 1: Correlation Result for autonomy and employee job satisfaction

		Autonomy	Job satisfaction
Autonomy	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.812
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	312	312
Job satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	.812	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	312	312

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

Source: SPSS 23.0 Data Output, 2018

From the result in the table above, the correlation coefficient (rho) shows that there is a positive relationship between autonomy and employee job satisfaction. The *correlation coefficient* 0.812 confirms the magnitude and strength of this relationship and it is statistically significant at $p\ 0.000 < 0.05$. The correlation coefficient represents a very strong correlation between the variables. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between autonomy and employee job satisfaction of hotels in Port Harcourt.

Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed a strong and positive significant relationship between autonomy and employee job satisfaction of hotels in Port Harcourt using the Spearman's rank order correlation tool and at a 95% confidence interval. The current finding corroborates the results from a study conducted by Almdar, Mustrat, in Pakistan in (2011) on the impact of job satisfaction on employee performance: empirical study of autonomous medical institutions in Pakistan. Findings revealed that some facets of job satisfaction such as pay, promotion, job safety and security, working conditions, job autonomy, relationship with co-workers, relationship with supervisor, and nature of the work significantly affect the level of job satisfaction among autonomous medical institutions of Pakistan. Another research conducted by (Waymer, 1995; Nguyen et al., 2003) on the relationship between job satisfaction and job autonomy. The result has been mostly consistent, concluding that job autonomy leads to job satisfaction. The scholar Nguyen conducted another research on high school dropout and job satisfaction as it relates to autonomy. Result revealed that the two concepts positively relates to the other to effect performance.

Elise (2017) conducted a researcher in China on the relationship between job autonomy, job satisfaction and the mediating role crafting in. The result shows that autonomy and job satisfaction are inseparable. This is to say that job autonomy significantly relates to job satisfaction. Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006; Nguyen et al., 2003) carried out a study on the relationship between job satisfaction and autonomy it was discovered that job autonomy is as a result of the satisfaction derived from the job operations. Many factors can affect the level of job satisfaction. One of these factors influencing job satisfaction is job autonomy. Therefore job autonomy and job satisfaction can be identified as indices measuring one another.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Extant literature indicates that there are several factors that could impact job satisfaction of employees including work autonomy. Castillo and Cano (2004) found that work autonomy was the most motivating aspect for universities faculty member job satisfaction and also highlighted that 'work itself' was the characteristic most satisfying, and 'working conditions' being the least satisfying characteristic of their jobs. Studies such as Parker and Wall (1998) and Neuman et al. (1989), state that employee satisfaction is consistently linked with the job autonomy. In addition, in terms of professional development, research (Hart and Rotem, 1995, Manley, 1995) also has indicated that work autonomy could be considered as an essential element. In indicating the importance of work autonomy, Yunki (1999) in his research emphasizes that such autonomy is the most significant predictor of employee job satisfaction. The study concludes that there is autonomy significantly influences employee job satisfaction. Based on the findings of this study, the study recommends that hotels should endeavour to use work autonomy as an important factor to enhance overall job satisfaction among the staff members.

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