

## WHISTLE BLOWING AND OFFICE MANAGER'S COMMITMENT IN CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES IN RIVERS STATE

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### ABSTRACT

*The focused of this study was whistle blowing and office manager's commitment in selected construction companies in Port Harcourt. The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between workplace politics and office manager's commitment. In line with the specific objectives of the study; seven (7) research questions and hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The study employed explanatory research design and the population of the study was 320 staff from the selected construction companies in Port Harcourt. The sample size of 177 was determined using the simple random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection is a self structure questionnaire. Pearson Product Moment Correlational Coefficient (PPMC) was used to test the research hypotheses at 0.05 level of significant. This study revealed that the level of overall office manager's commitment and the three components were experienced from moderate to high levels. This augurs well with literature that office manager's commitment is closely related to many factors such as organization justice, job insecurity, employees' trust in management, perceived organizational support and as well as organizational prestige. Thus, the findings suggest that relevant approaches related to the above practices should be considered by the construction firm's management in their effort to boost the office manager's commitment. The study recommended amongst others that; office manager's should concentrate on their occupational duties and avoid being carried away by the thirst for power and promotion. Also, disciplinary committee should be set up and defaulters should be apprehended to serve as a deterrent for others to follow.*

**Key words:** *Whistle Blowing, Office Manager, Commitment, Construction Company*

### INTRODUCTION

The workforce domiciled in every organization are the greatest assets of every organization. This is because the workforce aids in the achievement of the firm's goals and objectives. When the performances of these firms are low and inefficient, the workforce are mostly held responsible for such performances forgetting that office managers/supervisors are mostly responsible for staffs low performance and inefficiencies. When supervisors/office managers applauds or favours staff based on personal liking/gains or based on caucus instead of performance proper, this will bring about dissatisfaction, low performance, increase turnover and low office manager's commitment in the organizations. All this form of attitudes displayed have made workplace politics prevalent in our workplace. In achieving workplace success and competitive advantage, office manager's commitment is a key to achieving workplace success (Sah-nawaz & Juyal, 2016). Therefore, office managers strive to achieve success and competitive advantage in

the highly political work environment because considerations or rewards are influenced by groups or are given based on personal interest.

Rather than concentrating on the job they were employed to do, many workers have switched their effort to tussle for power and allocation of resources in the organization. Workplace politics has made office manager's to channel their efforts to their selfish ends instead of being committed to the organization. In order to gain popularity or promotion, office manager's spend more of their working hours in propaganda, lobbying, and whistle blowing and this scenario has resulted to negligence of duty, undue delay in completion of tasks, violation of rules and regulations, absenteeism and lateness to work. Studies by Bakalis (2016); Kacmar, et al., (2019); Vigoda-Gadot (2017); Meyer (1997), have revealed correlation between these variable but there are scarcely empirical inquiry on the area of workplace politics and office manager's commitment especially in construction companies in Port Harcourt, therefore, creating a gap in literature. With regard to this gap, this study is navigated towards ascertaining the nexus between workplace politics and office manager's commitment especially in construction companies in Port Harcourt.

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were articulated in line with the objectives of this study and also stated in null form:

- Ho<sub>1</sub>:** Whistle blowing does not significantly relate to office managers obedience to rules and regulations in construction firms in Rivers State.
- Ho<sub>2</sub>:** Whistle blowing does not significantly relate to office managers punctuality to work in construction firms in Rivers State.

### **Relationship between Whistle Blowing and Office Manager's Punctuality**

Whistle blowing as the disclosure by a person, usually a office manager's in a government agency or private enterprise, to the public or to those in authority, of mismanagement, corruption, illegality, or some other wrongdoing. There are politically motivated individuals in organizations whether public or private enterprise who are ready to report any form of illegality in the system especially those committed by individuals who do not share their interest. Whistle blowers either report perceived wrongdoings to authorities within the organization or expose such acts to the general public via the media order to stop future occurrence or champion a cause and to present themselves as good people.

Office manager's may sometimes attempt to seek for another white polar job outside his/her jurisdiction, if office manager's bring information about a wrongdoing to the attention of their employers or a relevant organization, they are protected in certain circumstances under the Public Disclosure Act of 1998 (Acas.com, 2015). This is commonly referred to as blowing the whistle. The law that protects whistleblowers is for the public interest – so people can speak out if they find malpractice in an organization. Whistle blowing is more officially known as "making a disclosure in the public interest" (Acas.com, 2015). Qualifying disclosures are disclosures of information where the worker reasonably believes (and in the public interest) that one or more of the following matters is either happening, has taken place, or is likely to happen in the future.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Cultural Dimension Theory by Hofstede (1983)**

The Hofstede's cultural dimension theory (1983), to understand the effect of culture and cultural change on workplace politics and motivation of U.S. and Lebanese employees. Furthermore, Mallol et al., (2017), job embeddedness theory is utilized to understand voluntary turnover and how it relates to job satisfaction. Hofstede (1983), cultural dimensions issues are labelled as power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, long term orientation, and indulgence. Hofstede's Index has compared the cultural dimensions between the U.S. and Lebanon and findings from these comparisons leads to believe that Lebanon is much more unfair when it comes to distributing power and its society is less individualistic than that of the U.S. When comparing power and individualism, such differences in society lead to the belief that managers in Lebanon could be practicing power over employees at a much higher level than the managers in the U.S. According to the Hofstede's Index (The Hofstede Center, 2015) the following are the collected data from both countries for each of the dimensions compared.

Power distance refers to the extent of which power is distributed or expected to be distributed among organizational members. Less-power members in power distance expect power to be distributed unevenly and unfairly. Cultures differ in their practices of power distance, for example, the U.S. scores a 40 on the power distance index where Lebanon has a score of 75. Such score ranging from 1 to 100 means with 1 being the least power distance observed and 100 referring to very high power distance observed. U.S. employees scoring 40 meant that employees of less power in an organization or society expects and accepts the inequality of power distribution. Lebanon, on the other hand, has a score of 75. The higher the index score for power distance the more unevenly and unfairly power is distributed based on social and cultural norms. Uncertainty avoidance in the Hofstede Index the U.S. scored a 46, while Lebanon scored a 50. This index refers to the degree of which society believes that they may have control over the future. While the average is 50/100, Americans are said to perceive the future as more ambiguous, and they may have no control over it. In cultures with lower uncertainty avoidance scores, there is a higher degree of new ideas and innovations.

### **Social Exchange Theory**

The theory suggests that social behaviour or human relationships are the outcome of the exchange process (Blau, 1964). It is a relationship that involves unspecified obligations where favoured that bring about future obligations which are not specific or defined and the return of such favour cannot be bargained but left to the discretion of the one who makes it. Such exchanged resources can be impersonal (such as financial) or socio-emotional such as care, respect, and loyalty (Aselage & Eisenberger, 2003 cited from Wajda & Angela, 2012). This in essence means that such relationship is based on the norm of reciprocity as posited by Gouldner (1960). Where an exchange starts with one party giving a benefit to another, if the recipient reciprocates, and consequently a series of beneficial exchanges occurs, feelings of mutual obligation between the parties are created (Coyle-Shapiro & Shore, 2007).

The social exchange theory helps to make people understand relationships well; it explains why a few relationships work while others fail, why we begin and continue some certain relationship and demonstrates that communication and interaction are components governing interaction in people (Riley, 1993). It says that people base their behaviour on rational calculations designed to make individual profit. In that most people value acceptance, loyalty, financial support, affection and companionship and so we might find it rewarding to be in a relation ship with a person who enhances our social status (Riley, 1993).

### Research Design

A research design is a plan or blue print, which specifies the procedures for collection and analyses of data, in order to ensure success and control of unnecessary influences (Wali, 2016). The researcher adopted the explanatory research design for the study. Explanatory research design refers to a type of research design that is interested in generating data to answer research question or to explain the relationship between variables (Nwekeala & Abadam, 2018).

### Population of the Study

Population refers to all conceivable elements, traits, events, and people subjects relating to a particular phenomenon of interest to the researcher (Wikipedia, 2015). The target population of the study consists of all construction companies in Rivers State. In this study, 320 staff of will be selected from three (3) companies, namely; Saipen Construction Company, Julius Berger Construction Company, Multinational Construction Company (MCC), all in Port Harcourt. The population comprises management and staff of the organizations.

### Population Distribution

S/N	FIRMS	OFFICE MANAGERS' POPULATION
1	Saipen Construction Company	109
2	Julius Berger Construction Company	138
3	Multinational Construction Company (MCC)	73
	<b>Total</b>	<b>320</b>

### Sample and Sampling Technique

A portion of the population used for the study is called sample. The procedure was used by the researcher to draw samples from a population used by the researcher was known as sampling technique. The researcher adopted simple random sampling to give equal chance to every member of the population. For the purpose of individual firms sharing, Bowley (1960) was adopted.

### Sample Size for the Study

S/N	FIRMS	POPULATION	SAMPLE SIZE	No. of Questionnaire Distributed	No. of Questionnaire Retrieved	Percentage %
1.	Saipen Construction Company	109	$\frac{177 \times 109}{320} = 60$	60	58	36%
2.	Julius Berger Construction Company	138	$\frac{177 \times 138}{320} = 76$	76	70	52%
3.	Multinational Construction Company (MCC)	73	$\frac{177 \times 72}{320} = 26$	26	20	12%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source:** Researcher's Survey Activities, 2021

### Research Instrument

Research instrument is a measurement tool (questionnaires) designed to obtain data on a topic of interest from research subjects. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire entitled "Effect of Workplace Politics on Office Manager's Commitment Questionnaire" (EWPOMCQ), which was structured in five (5) point Scale of Very Great Extent (VGE – 500 - 400), Great Extent (GE – 400 - 300), Moderate Extent (ME – 300 - 200), Low Extent (LE – 200 - 100) and Very Low Extent (VLE – 100 - 0). The questionnaire items were designed in relation to the research questions. The questionnaire is divided into two sections: Section A contained bio-data of the respondent while Section B contains questionnaire items designed to elicit response.

### Showing the Rating Scale

S/N	RESPONSE	RATING SCALE
1	Very Great Extent	500 - 400
2	Great Extent	400 - 300
3	Moderate Extent	300 - 200
4	Low Extent	200 - 100
5	Very Low Extent	100 - 0

### Validity of the Instrument

Validity of instrument refers to the capacity of an instrument to measure what it was designed to measure. Content validity was used for the study to measure the instrument. Content validity refers to the extent to which the elements within a measurement procedure are relevant and representative of the construct that they were used to measure (Wikipedia, 2015). The instrument use for the study was validated by the project supervisor and two other experts in the field of measurement and evaluation.

### Reliability of the Instrument

Reliability refers to the consistency with which an instrument measures what it was designed to measure. The test-retest method was use to ascertain the reliability of the

instrument use for the study. The test-retest is a situation where the researcher administers the instrument twice to the same sample unit. The Pearson Moment Correlation Co-efficient (r) was used to determine the reliability coefficient. The reliability coefficient score obtained is 0.85 which showed an acceptable level of reliability.

### Administration of the Instrument

Copies of the instrument were administered directly to the respondents by the researcher and three research assistants that were trained by the researcher. The researcher and the assistants identify the study group before administering the instrument. Copies of the instrument were collected by the researcher and her assistant on the spot and in some case after an interval of few days. Out of the total number of one hundred and six two (162) instrument distributed and the researcher retrieve one hundred and forty eight (148) instrument which represents 79% of the total number of questionnaire distributed.

### Method of Data Analysis

This refers to the statistical tools to be utilized in the analyses and interpretation of collected data as regards the stated hypotheses. Analysis included the use of descriptive statistics to portray the univariate characteristics of each variable. The Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient with the aids of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) within a significance level of 0.05 were used to analyzed the data obtained from the questionnaire to enable the researcher examine the relationship between workplace politics and office managers commitment. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions. The reason for choosing Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was because it is a measure of the strength of the association between the two variables. It can also be used in a causal as well as an associative research hypotheses. Descriptive statistics was used to determine mean scores, standard deviations and percentages of respondents.

$$\text{Spearman rank order correlation coefficient} = \rho = 1 - \frac{6 \sum d_i^2}{n(n^2-1)}$$

$\rho$  = Spearman's rank correlation coefficient

$d_i$  = difference between the two ranks of each observation

$n$  = number of observations

### Hypothesis 1

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** Whistle blowing does not significantly relate to office managers obedience to rules and regulations in construction firms in Rivers State

Correlation analysis on the extent and direction of the relationship between whistle blowing and office manager's obedience to rules and regulations

		Correlations		
		Whistle blowing	Obedience to rules and regulations	Decision
Whistle Blowing	Pearson Correlation	1	.738**	Accepted
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	
	N	148	148	

Office managers	Pearson Correlation	.738**	1
obedience to rules and	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
regulations	N	148	148

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

Table above shows the correlation analysis on the extent and direction of the relationship between whistle blowing and office manager's obedience to rules and regulations. The table showed a correlation coefficient of  $r = 0.738^{**}$  with a correspondent significant/probability value of 0.000, from the classification of r value in table 4.11, the value is moderate. Also the correlation coefficient is positive which indicate that an increase in office manager's obedience to rules and regulations is associated with an increase in whistle blowing. Thus, the analysis from table 4.15 shows that there is a significant relationship between whistle blowing and office manager's obedience to rules and regulations in construction firms in Rivers State. This means that the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate is accepted.

## Hypothesis 2

**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** Whistle blowing does not significantly relate to office managers punctuality to work in construction firms in Rivers State.

Correlation analysis on the extent and direction of the relationship between whistle blowing and office managers punctuality to work

		Correlations		
		Whistle Blowing	Punctuality to work	Decision
Whistle Blowing	Pearson Correlation	1	.683**	Accepted
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	
	N	148	148	
Office managers punctuality to work	Pearson Correlation	.683**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	148	148	

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

Source: Survey data, 2022

Table above shows the correlation analysis on the extent and direction of the relationship between whistle blowing and office managers punctuality to work. The table showed a correlation coefficient of  $r = 0.683^{**}$  with a correspondent significant/probability value of 0.000, from the classification of r value in table 4.11, the value is strong. Also the correlation coefficient is positive which indicate that an increase in office managers punctuality to work is associated with an increase in whistle blowing. Thus the analysis from table 4.16 show that there is a significant relationship between whistle blowing and office managers punctuality to work. This therefore mean that the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate is acceted.

## **DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

The result of research question one revealed that whistle blowing does not significantly relate to office managers obedience to rules and regulations in construction firms in Rivers State to a high extent. This consolidates the finding of Ogbonna (2018) which revealed among other things that whistle blowing as the disclosure by a person, usually a office manager's in a government agency or private enterprise, to the public or to those in authority, of mismanagement, corruption, illegality, or some other wrongdoing. There are politically motivated individuals in organizations whether public or private enterprise who are ready to report any form of illegality in the system especially those committed by individuals who do not share their interest. Whistle blowers either report perceived wrongdoings to authorities within the organization or expose such acts to the general public via the media order to stop future occurrence or champion a cause and to present themselves as good people.

The result of research question two revealed that whistle blowing does not significantly relate to office managers punctuality to work in construction firms in Rivers State to a high extent. This result is in line with the finding of Leo (2020) which revealed among other things that whistle blowing as the disclosure by a person, usually a office manager's in a government agency or private enterprise, to the public or to those in authority, of mismanagement, corruption, illegality, or some other wrongdoing. There are politically motivated individuals in organizations whether public or private enterprise who are ready to report any form of illegality in the system especially those committed by individuals who do not share their interest. Whistle blowers either report perceived wrongdoings to authorities within the organization or expose such acts to the general public via the media order to stop future occurrence or champion a cause and to present themselves as good people.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study concluded that workplace politics has a negative effect on office manager's commitment. When office manager's indulge in workplace politics excessively, they become more committed to their selfish interests and put in all their effort in propaganda, lobbying and whistle blowing which results to late coming non-compliance to rules and regulations, and low productivity. Every office manager was employed to work for the organization; that is the more reason why they are paid. Human resource is the most important asset of any organization and without their commitment, it is nearly impossible for the organization to achieve its goals. A committed office manager does not wait for the manager or supervisor to pressure him into doing his duties; he obeys the rules and regulations of the organization and does not absent from work unnecessarily. He is often punctual and regular. He or she is internally motivated to accomplish tasks on time, continues to work faithfully for the organization no matter the circumstance. Office manager's that are truly committed to the organization do not trivialize their duties; committed office manager's concentrate on their jobs, and complete them on time. A committed office manager's will do everything even close late just to get tasks completed within stipulated time.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Office manager's should concentrate on their occupational duties and avoid being carried away by the thirst for power and promotion. Also, disciplinary committee should be set up and defaulters should be apprehended to serve as a deterrent for others to follow.
- ii. Screen out exceedingly every political individuals during recruitment period; create an open-book management system; make sure every employee knows how the business works and has a personal line of sight to key results with corresponding measurable objectives for individual accountability;
- iii. Periodic financial and accounting statements for all employees should not be politicized; establish formal conflict resolution and grievance processes;
- iv. Publicly recognize and reward people who get real results without political games; organization should adopt sensitive analysis approach to track and monitor any strange behavior of workers in the work environment.
- v. Management should be objective during promotions and other privileges in the workplace.
- vi. Office managers who fail in the dispense of their duties and are fond of not being able to complete their primary tasks on time should be sanctioned. This will make them to concentrate on their job.

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