

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DIGITAL COMPETENCE BUILDING AND EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT IN ORGANIZATION

Dr Nna-Emmanuel Sarah W.

Department of office Technology and Management, Ken-Saro Wiwa polytechnic, Bori

ABSTRACT

This paper examine the relationship between digital competence building and employee commitment in organization. The objective of this paper is to examine how different dimensions of digital competence building such as digital education and training, social support for digital skill development and stakeholders collaboration, how they influence employee commitment in terms of affective commitment, normative, commitment and continuance commitment. This paper revealed the following: that digital education and training increases employee commitment as it expose employee of digital experience, new social support for digital skill development increases employee commitment as it makes employee to have access to digital infrastructure. This paper further shows that stakeholders collaboration increases employee commitment and expose them to more advanced digital knowledge both national and international. This paper finally concludes that digital competence building in 21st century organizations is the way forward to encourage and sustain employees in organization.

Keywords: *Digital competence building, employee commitment, Digital skill development, Digital education and training, stakeholders collaboration.*

INTRODUCTION

Employees constitute one of the most important assets of every organization. This is because, it takes employees to run an organization. Organizations therefore provides employee with necessary digital training to build their competency since employee who receives necessary training is more committed and able to perform their duties better.

Digital competence are set of skills, knowledge and attitude that enable the confident, creative and critical use of technologies and system, it is generally used to describe the ability of an individual or employee to use information technologies in a specific context (Ananiadou et al., 2009). The 21st century organizations have gone increasingly digital, therefore organizations that wants to embrace change and gain competitive advantage over competitors build their employees digitally to encourage them to be committed because digital technology has revolutionized the way we work and employee can use digital technology to become more productive at work. This paper refers employee commitment as the passion, willingness, enthusiasm, and wholehearted dedication to remain and contribute sacrificially to the achievement of organizational goals. Committed employees often do not give excuses rather they show love for the organization and are willing to put in extra effort to support the organization. (Okpara, 2004; Okpu et al (2014) Agada et al., (2018). This paper therefore examine how digital competence building influences employee commitment.

Objective of the Study

The purpose of this paper therefore is to examine how digital competence building influences employee commitment in organization.

The objectives are to:

1. determine how digital education and training influences employee commitment in organizations.
2. determine how social support for digital skill development influences employee commitment in organizations.

3. determine how stakeholders collaboration influences employee commitment in organizations.

Concept of Digital Competence Building

Digital competence building in this paper refers to the act of organization creating opportunity or organizing digital competency training to develop their employees. It has to do with a situation where organizations provides all necessary facilities needed to train their employees digitally, it is the attitude and ability that enables employees to embrace technology, collaborate with others and work effectively in a modern digital environment.

Digital Education and Training

Digital education and training is the ingenious use of digital technologies and tools throughout teaching, learning and training. It also known as Technology Enhancing Learning (TEL) (Ajays, 2020). Digital education and training in organization therefore is the act of managers of business organization providing online education and training to employees in form of incentives. Presently digital learning and training is gradually replacing traditional education procedure where employees meets one-on-one to be trained, rather it has created opportunity of employees gaining access to digital gadgets connects them in education and training for competence building. Most organizations provides digital education and training as incentive to their employees which in turns improve efficiency and productivity not just that, when organization provide employees with digital training, it makes the employees to be more committed in their tasks and organization benefit increased productivity and performance, uniformity of work process, reduced supervision [www.management help.org](http://www.managementhelp.org). Digital competence building can come in form of digital education and training, social support for digital skill acquisition, and stakeholders collaboration.

Digital Education and Training

Digital education is the innovation whereby organizations make use of digital tools and technologies during teaching and learning, it's also referred to as technology enhanced learning or e-learning (www.ed.ac.uk staff digital ed)

Organizations that understand and pursue the 21st century digital trend sometimes grant educational opportunities to their skilled workers (employees) to improve their digital performance, this comes in form of scholarship incentive. Also such organizations can equally organize digital training for unskilled workers (employees) that does not have degree qualifications for them to be familiar with the present digital trend, all comes in form of incentives to the employees. When employees are provided with digital education and training it makes them feel belonged in the organization and become more committed to the organizational objectives.

Stakeholder

A stakeholder is a party that has interest in a company and can either affect or be affected by the business. In business, stakeholder is any individual, group, party that has an interest in an organization and the outcomes of its action, ([corporate finance institute.com](http://corporatefinanceinstitute.com))

Digital Skill Acquisition

Digital skill acquisition is the ability of an individual or employee to understand, interpret and use information in different formats on digital device (purplepearlsng.org). It is the awareness and attitude of individual to use digital devices and facilities meaningfully to identify, access, manage, integrate, evaluate, analyse and synthesize digital resources, construct new knowledge and create media when an individual or employee is digitally literate it helps to know the digital right of others.

Social Support for Digital Skill Acquisition

Organisations that provides social support for digital skill acquisition by organizing digital skill acquisition for employees stand a better chance to benefit more than those that do not provide because digital literacy boosts employee commitment it improves job performance, it helps organization to stand out from their competitors also promotes employees commitment (Adobe, 2017).

Also, employees that are provided with necessary social support like free accommodation and free transportation to acquire digital skills tends to be more serious in training process and feel happier and thereby desire to remain committed to the organization. The availability of these facilities for employees reduce the economic burden and also go a long way in making training more convenient and enjoyable. (Zeb-Obip, 2018)

Stakeholder collaboration training is one of the ways by which organization uses to outsmart their competitors. In this organization that understand the digital needs of 21st century collaborate with other organizations that have more technological experience from national and international to engage their employees in digital training. Sometimes they offer in partnership by a consortium of organizations with long-time experience in leading consultation and engage programs for private companies, government agencies and non-governmental organization around the world, employees that participate in such digital innovative training are proven more successful and becomes more committed to the organization. As it was written that collaboration is key to create great learning experience (Ruchi, 2018)

The concept of employee commitment employee commitment refers to the willingness of an individual or social actor to give their energy and loyalty to organization, it is what bind the individual or social actor to the organization. (Dixit and Bhat, 2012). It is the willingness and readiness of employee to remain and be dedicated to the objective of the organization. Employee commitment is of a critical importance for the success of an organisation.

Affective Commitment: Affectively committed employees out of their emotional attachment for the organization regularly perform assigned tasks to the best of their ability and make an extra effort to help out beyond the realms of their specified job roles and form an attachment to the goals and values. Affective commitment refers to the bond an employee has with an organization due to an affinity with or affection for the goals and values of the organization. Meyer and Allen in Zeb-Obipi and Agada (2018) described affective commitment as how much an individual 'wants' to remain in the organization. Affective commitment encapsulates the extent or degree of employee's identification with goals, acceptance of goals, and pursuance of goals. It entails an affective orientation of the employees towards the organization. Employees with affective commitment continue service with an organization because they want to do so and not to return a favour or for some benefits and opportunity costs.

Affective commitment typifies the emotional association of an employee with his organization and its objectives. It is based on (1) "faith of the employees in the organization's objectives, (2) their readiness to put forth effort in order to achieve organizational objectives, and (3) a strong wish to be a part of the organization" (Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian, 1974 in Zeb-Obipi and Agada, 2018),

Out of the love and passion an employee has for the organization he is working for, he is proud enough to identify with, accept, and pursue organizational goals (Zeb-Obipi and Agada, 2018). Employees who are affectively committed align themselves with policies, procedures and the achievement of set targets of an organization. Such an employee heartily accepts the culture and values of the organization. He does not allow his personal feelings or goals to interfere with organizational goals. Acceptance of corporate goal as a measure of affective commitment underlines the extent to which an employee loves his organization and willingly welcomes and personalizes the goals of the organization. Pursuance of organizational goals here talks about the extent to which an employee puts in extra effort just to ensure that organizational or departmental targets are met no matter how inconvenient it might be for him.

Normative Commitment: Employees can also be normatively committed. Employees who are normatively committed remain with the organization as a responsive appreciation for benefits enjoyed by them in the organization. This type of commitment typifies a feeling of indebtedness towards an organization considering what the organization has given to the employee. It can also be described as a reciprocal commitment (Ogadimma, 2010).

The normatively committed employee feels thankful for the benefits offered by the organization such that he feels duty bound to continue working for the organization. Jaja and Okpu (2013) reports that normative commitment has to do with feelings of obligations employees have to continue with the organization. McDonald and Makin (2014) posit that society's norms and a feeling that employees ought to remain with the organization influence this commitment. Normative commitment manifests in the form of the employee feeling an obligation to stay, reciprocates and abides by the rules and regulations of the workplace. Obligation to stay here captures the psychological contract or responsibility which an employee feels he has for an organization. Judging from the number areas or achievement they have recorded as a result of their association with the organization, the employee feels he is indebted to the organization. He feels it is not nice for him to quit having enjoyed certain privileges like trainings, career advancement, etc.

Continuance Commitment: Continuance commitment refers to the bond an employee has for an organization based on the calculated losses or consequence of leaving the organization considering the personal investment made so far by employee in the system. Employees in the organizations who show continuance commitment choose to remain on the job based on the calculated losses or negative consequences of leaving the organization considering the personal investment made so far by employee in the system and/or perceived limited alternative opportunities they have outside that organization (Ogadimma, 2010). An aging driver, security officer, or other employee of an organization may wish to remain with his employer on the ground that he may not be able to secure a more lucrative job in another transportation firm considering his age and other circumstances.

Allen and Meyer in Okpu and Jaja (2014) opined that continuance commitment is a calculative form of commitment. Employees who portray this kind of commitment remain with the organization because they need to and are aware of the cost associated with their leaving. Continuance commitment captures the idea of the extent to which employee decides to stay in an organization due to absence of alternative employment opportunities, investments made, and cost of leaving. Continuance commitment entails behaviours that are initiated and maintained in order to satisfy external constraints, such as obtaining a reward or avoiding a loss. It is succinctly defined by Meyer and Allen (1997) as an awareness of the costs associated with leaving the Organization. It is predicated on employees' perceptions regarding their alternative job prospects and the cost associated with leaving their current. Thus, the employee feels has no other choice than to continue working with the organization. Continuance commitment is predicated on three elements: no alternative, investment made in terms of efforts, and cost of leaving.

Continuance commitment might be based on employee's perceived lack of employment alternatives. When an employee has few alternatives, he fears to lose an employment and feels being trapped in the organization. Saygan (2011) noted that the lack of perceived better alternatives is one of the factors affecting the continuance commitment.

Theoretical Framework

This work is anchored on the social exchange theory of George Casper Homans of 1958. The social exchange theory posits that "give and take" forms the basis of almost all relationships though their proportions might vary as per the intensity of the relationships.

Pfeffer in Ahiauzu and Asuquo (2016) posits that social exchange theory is a behavioural compliance on the part of the individual in exchange for something which is perceived to be contingent on the individual's behaviour. Thus, the social exchange theory is about giving something of more value to others than what has been given to you and also receiving something of higher value than you have given out (Agada, 2019). The main assumptions of the theory are as follows:

- i. In a relationship, every individual has expectations from his/her partners. A relationship without expectations is meaningless;
- ii. Good relationships are mutually beneficial and not suppose to be one sided. An individual invests his time and energy in relationship only when he gets something out of corresponding or higher value from it (Olannye, 2014).

According to the social exchange theory, all forms of human contractual relationships as in the case of employer-employee relationship, there is always a cost-benefit analysis. Employees constantly evaluate what they get from their employer or management in the form of rewards visa vice their inputs in the organizational system. At a point in time where employers are expecting their workers to become more committed to their job and make extensive use of technology in enhancing their performance, employees on their part are also expecting some form of digital incentives (digital gadgets provision) to boost and sustain their commitment level as workers in a digital age.

CONCLUSION

Digital competence building is no doubt one of the cardinal ways employees can be developed and also be committed to their work. When employees are given adequate and standard digital training, they feel happy and have sense of fulfillment in the organization. Social support for employees digital acquisition relieves the employees of financial expenses they would have made in acquiring digital skills and such inspire employees to be more committed. Digital education and training improves employee competency in his or her area of job in the organization stakeholders collaboration takes the employees to higher level of exposure in digital skill and promotes employees quality of digital life. When organization gives digital competency training as incentive to employees, it makes them feel highly appreciated which results to increased level of commitment by employees and leads to high productivity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the influence of digital competence building on employee commitment in organization the following recommendations were made:

1. Management of organizations should invest more in giving employees digital education and training scholarship order to achieve maximum flow of work and job competency.
2. Management should organise digital skill acquisition training for their employees and also make available free transportation and accommodation where necessary.
3. Management should collaborate with stakeholders that have more digital experience where they can send their employees regularly for digital training update. And I believe that if the above recommendations are implemented, it will ignite employees commitment.

REFERENCES

- Ananiadou, K., & Claro, M. (2009). 21st century skills and competence for new millennium Learners.
- Diego, Martinez (2017). How to build a digitally competent workforce HR Tech Talk HR Transformation www.personnel today.com

- Jaja, N. & Okpu, B. (2013). *Benefits to workplace celebrations*. <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/benefits-workplace-celebrations-36274.html>.
- Lisa, S. Stanley (2019). Building digital competence: Transformation for competitive advantage.
- McDonald, S. & Makin, P. (2014). *Compensation, organizational strategy and firm performance*. Cincinnati, OH: South Western Publishing Co.
- Ogadimma, C. (2010). Impact of employee commitment on organizational performance. *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*, 1(2), 87-102.
- Okpara, J.O. (2004). Job satisfaction and organizational commitment: Are there differences between American and Nigerian Managers employed in the US MNCs in Nigeria? *The Academy of Business and Administrative Sciences (ABAS) International Conference, Monteux*, 12-14.
- Okpu, C. & Jaja, T. (2014). The role of celebrations on organizational commitment. *Journal of Management Science*, 9(4), 55-69.
- The Asian School, Digital education system and its advantages by Ajay Singh, September 7, 2020.
- Zeb-Obipi, I. & Agada, J.T. (2018). Workplace social programmes and employee commitment: A literary reflection. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management*, 10(10), 20-29.
- Zoltan Nyikes, (2018). Contemporary Digital Competency.