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Organizational Politics: Scarcity of Resources, Employee's Personality & Employee's Diversity

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ABSTRACT: Employees of different backgrounds are employed to help achieve corporate objectives. The complexities that exist among these employees are expected to be effectively managed through proper organizational political practices. As such, this study examines the relationship between organizational politics and employee's diversity in Akwa Ibom State Local Government Service Commission. Using a survey research design, 118 employees of the commission were examined and the findings revealed that scarcity of resources has positive and significant relationship with employees' diversity in Akwa Ibom State Local Government Service Commission (r = 0.614, p < 0.000); and employee's Personality has positive and significant relationship with employees' diversity in Akwa Ibom State Local Government Service Commission (r = 0.662, p < 0.000). It was concluded that organizational politics has positive and significant relationship with employees' diversity in Akwa Ibom State Local Government Service Commission. It was recommended that top level managers in the commission should encourage fair and equitable practices in the organization as this would help to lessen high political practices among the employees.

KEYWORDS: organizational politics, employee's diversity, employee's personality, scarcity of resources, organization

INTRODUCTION

As corporate organizations strive to achieve their corporate goals by employing different employees to help facilitate such aim, the social structures of corporate organizations are increasingly becoming complex. Such complexities and the continuous struggle to achieve predetermined corporate goals have affected all employees, as they strive to be heard and addressed. Though organizations vary in their sizes, goals and the type of employee they

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Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK recruit, yet, all organizations are structured to facilitate the management of diversity related issues (Akaegbu and Edema, 2018). This is because differences in religion, ethnicity, cultural values, and individual personalities are highly exhibited among employees in a typical organizational setting, directly or indirectly. Given these concerns, studies on organizational politics and employee's diversity have gained increased attention (Edewor and Aluko, 2007; Green, López, Wysocki, Kepner and Clark, 2015).

Organizational Politics (OP) is defined as the active or passive use of power to influence activities or actions in order to maximize personal interest (Amit and Bar-Lev, 2012). Ferris and Hochwarter (2011) conceived organizational politics as a self-serving behaviour that is focused on securing advantage over others and is considered as a burdening stressor clearly observed in uncertain working environments. Elsewhere, Organizational politics (OP) has been conceptualized as actions which affect activities, behaviours, and most importantly decision making through the use of power (Tlaiss, 2013). Zhonghua and Chen (2014) submit that organizational politics is a process of social influence in which the members of the organization engage in different opportunistic behaviors for the sole purpose of maximizing self-interest. Altogether, organizational politics are the activities and behaviors practiced by individuals in power to alter or affect a decision-making process.

Generally, no organization is perfect about its resources. Organizations must face scarcity of resources, at least, in one area. When such situations occur in an organization, employees as well as organizations do not just compete for the limited resources, they fight for it. This triggers other political behaviours, both from management as well as the employees. For instance, scarcity of career development opportunities lead to higher politics in an organization because some employee perceives that their lack of promotion and career development opportunities is due to not being involve in playing the political games on-going in the organization (Ferris and Buckley, 1990 as cited in Ahmed, 2018). Such political behaviour could as well be seen in an organization from management side as they try to effect decisions that relate with resource allocation; thus, promoting the political games in workplace environment (Gotsis and Kortezi, 2010).

Phares (1991 as cited in Delima, 2019) conceive employee's personality as thoughts, feelings and behavioural patterns that distinguish an employee from another over a period of time and situation. Employee's personality traits can be seen as an employee's way of perceiving, thinking, feeling, and reacting to situations. Elsewhere, Robbin (2001) further asserted that employee's personality entails the manner with which an employee responds and cooperates with one another. In sum, employee's personality gives idea of specific or general characters that predicts an employee's behaviour over a period of time. When it is effectively demonstrated, personality traits could be used to assess employee's qualities, moral values and abilities, as well as personal efforts towards the achievement of specific goals and objectives. In this study, type A employee personality type was only assessed.

Accordingly, employee's diversity explains any and all differences amongst people, a subjective phenomenon created by group of members who on the basis of their different social

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Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK identities categorize others as similar or dissimilar (Mazur, 2010). The overriding emphasis on workforce diversity as an important variable of organizational politics stem from the fact that, individuals at workplace tends to form close ties with fellow employees they share common identities with. In the long run, this breeds favoritism between and among employees. For instance, due to common ties with employees of the same background, organization executives could give special privilege to an employee over others. With time, such behavioural disposition creates stress among employees and the committed and loyal employee start to think of leaving the organization. As championed by Kwon (2006), the other bad image of favoritism is that employees fight for power. Thus, such kind of favoritism due to close ties devastates the organizational harmony and prosperity (Arasli and Tumer, 2008). Hence, when employee fine themselves in such organization, they may leave the organization or engage themselves in organizational politics.

Organizations are established to achieve certain pre-determined goals and objectives. Achievement of the aforementioned goals and objectives, in most cases, enables an organization to remain in operation for the foreseeable future. A significant part of how these business goals and objectives are effectively and efficiently achieved depends on the quality and quantity of employees at their disposal. In corporate work environments, organizational politics studies have repeatedly emphasized that employees come from different backgrounds (Daft, 2008). Each of these employees regularly feel that they have interests, ideas and opinions that must be heard and protected. Therefore, the degree to which politics in an organization are properly exercised, proportionally affect employee's attitudes and behaviours, which in turn, affects the diversity management of employees within a given establishment.

Statement of the Problem

In a contemporary organization, employees of different backgrounds are employed to help achieve corporate objectives. The complexities that exist among these employees are expected to be effectively managed through proper organizational politics practices. However, due to scarcity of resources among functional units and employee's personality, politics in the studied area has been used for personal interest rather than circumscribe individual differences for the interest of the organization. Overtime, the consequences have been poor team work approach, high level of individualism, hatred and extreme conversion of organizational resources.

Studies in this direction have been carried out but with different outcomes. For instance, organizational politics within organizations is seen to be more prominent within countries that are labeled as being linked to individualism, femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and low power distance (Shao, Rupp, Skarlicki and Jones, 2013). Elsewhere, emergence of organizational politics could also trigger different negative and adverse outcomes such as lowered organizational commitment, decreased task performance, lessened organizational citizenship behavior and job satisfaction (Perrewé, Rosen and Maslach, 2012; Elkhalil, 2017). However, it remains to be seen whether organizational politics contributes to employee's diversity at workplaces. This concern underscores the need for this study.

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Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to assess the relationship between organizational politics and employee's diversity in Akwa Ibom State Local Government Service Commission. The specific objectives are to:

- i. Assess the relationship between scarcity of resources and employee's diversity in Akwa Ibom State Local Government Service Commission; and
- ii. Find out the relationship between employee's personality and employee's diversity in Akwa Ibom State Local Government Service Commission.

Research Questions

To achieve the objectives of this study, the following research questions will be raised:

- i. What is the relationship between scarcity of resources and employee's diversity in Akwa Ibom State Local Government Service Commission?
- ii. What is the relationship between employee's personality and employee's diversity in Akwa Ibom State Local Government Service Commission?

Hypotheses of the Study

The following null hypotheses were formulated for this study:

- i. **H**₀₁: There is no significant relationship between scarcity of resources and employee's diversity in Akwa Ibom State Local Government Service Commission;
- ii. **H**₀₂: There is no significant relationship between employee's personality and employee's diversity in Akwa Ibom State Local Government Service Commission

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Organizational Politics

Ferris, Russ and Fandt (1989) as cited in Elkhalil (2017) defined organizational politics as a process of social impact, which involves a behavior that is directed towards maximizing long-term or short-term self-interest or benefit, which maybe either at the expense of other person's interests or consistent in nature. Bouckenooghe, Zafar and Raja (2015) conceived it as the premeditated use of power by individuals to satisfy personal interests and goals within their workplace. Organizational politics refers to behaviors that occur on an informal basis within an organization and involve intentional acts of influence that are designed to protect or enhance individuals' professional careers when conflicting courses of action are possible (Drory, 1993 as cited in Aronow, 2004). Dubrin (2001 as cited in Angasisye, 2019) further defined organizational politics as informal ways one seeks to gain influence other than virtue or hard work. Based on the stylized facts above, organizational politics is an important function that results from differences in the self-interests of individuals. It is the art of creative compromise or bargain amongst competing interests. It is equally the use of power to develop socially acceptable ends and means that balance individual and collective interests.

Organizational politics is about shaping a perception of the organizational reality and creating legitimate perception as well as imposing that perception on others (Voronov, 2008). Organizational politics is not typically recognized by the rules, regulations, and policies

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Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK formalized within an organization, but is quite obvious in organizations. Whenever it occurs in an organization, as argued by Elbanna (2016), it shows that there is something significant at risk for people, who have either lost or gained from the consequences, either in terms of reputation or something materialistic. Furthermore, as argued by Gotsis and Kortezi (2010), organizational politics is individuals seeking self-interests in a firm, without considering the impact it would have on the ability of an organization to acquire its goals and meet its objectives. Within organizational culture, assumptions of bounded self-interest is far better representation of actual human behaviors. There are some selfish members of the organization, who mainly promote self-interests and at times even at the expense of organization's objectives.

Naturally, politics occur due to diverse workforce within an organization, along with the differences between employees' knowledge, agendas, skills, and views. As emphasized by Khalid and Ishaq (2015) that political tactics and behaviors are widely observed in every organization. In the same vein, Marques (2010) further emphasized that all organizations have some degree of politics mainly as a result of varied ideas and interests within the organization. In fact, organizational politics is considered as a portion of organization's social framework. Nevertheless, in a typical organizational setting, the challenge is never the occurrence of organizational politics, but what is important is to understand the degree to which it governs the organization. It is important to note that studies focused on organizational politics have examined the concept from various perspectives. Precisely, the term has been used as a mediator, a moderator, an outcome and an antecedent because the construct is measured on the basis of perceptions of employees.

Scarcity of Resources: Rose, Abdullah and Ismad (2010) posit that organizational resources are the tangible and intangible assets a firm uses to choose and implement its strategies. Schmitt, Den Hartog, and Belschak (2016) defined organizational resources as characteristics, objects, conditions, or energies that are valued by the individual or form a means to reach valued goals. Venz and Sonnentag (2015) defined organizational resources as those aspects of a job or person that are instrumental to accomplish work-related goals, to deal with job demands, and to achieve personal development. Bakker and Xanthopoulou (2013) further defined organizational resources as those characteristics of the job that have the potential to reduce job demands and the associated costs. When properly conceptualized, the basic features of resources includes all assets, capabilities, organizational processes, firm attributes, information, and knowledge that are controlled by a firm to enable it conceive of and implement strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness (Hofer and Schendel, 2006).

Resource availability and utilization has a positive influence on strategic plan implementation of an organization. Organizational resources-whether tangible or intangible-could help an organization to structure and manage the diversity that exist among the employees. Human resource constitute an important aspect of organizational resources. Plant, offices, computer, automated equipment and all inputs that an institution uses are unproductive except for human effort and direction (Dangara, 2016). Human resources is responsible for planning, organizing, coordinating, controlling, manipulating and maintaining other forms of organizational

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Employee's Personality: Employee's personality refers to a combination of behavioral, physical and mental characteristics that are unique for the individuals. Kinicki (2008) submit that employee's personality represents a stable set of characteristics that are responsible for a person's identity. Personality traits are the structures and propensities that explain individual's characteristic patterns of thought, emotion and behavior and recurring regularities or trends in him/her trait (Colquitt, Le-Pine and Wesson, 2009). As opined by Julie (2012), employee's personality are the enduring patterns of actions or behaviours. Employee's personality is further conceived as tendencies of individuals to behave in similar ways across settings and situations (Ones, Viswesvaran and Dilchert, 2005). Furthermore, Ryckman (2004) maintained that employee's personality as a dynamic and organized set or characteristics possessed by an individual that uniquely influences his or her behaviors, cognitions and motivations in various situations.

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Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK In sum, employee's personality represent perceptions, attitudes, thoughts, values and behaviors of people that are apparent and consistent. Personality traits form the foundation of behavioral system. They are important and influential in determining and predicting organizational behavior of employees. In organizational behavior studies, individual personality is important because it can predict, not only how employees behave in diversified group, but also how they behave as regards leaving the job, negligence, delay in performing work, absenteeism, their organizational commitment levels and all processes related to recruitment and job transfers. However, due to its competitive trait that facilitates organizational politics, this study rather assess type A form of employee's personality. In 1959, Friedman published a book in 1996 titled, Type A Behaviour: Its diagnosis and treatment. In recent time, positive use of organizational politics in an organization has been very challenging due to different personality characteristics among employees. This strengthens the assertion that personality traits are responsible for determining individuals' beliefs, attitudes and behaviour, which in turn determine work behaviour and attitudes (Furnham, Petrides, Tsaousis, Pappas and Garrod, 2005). Hence, certain personality traits have the tendency to influence the perception of work situations, as different types of employees tend to like or dislike certain features of their work (Bowling, Beehr and Lepisto, 2006). Such personality characteristics, characterized by high level of perceived control have been expressed as attitude of Type A behaviour of employees.

The Concept of Employee's Diversity

Due to the increase of globalization, it is evident that more interaction is required amongst people of diverse cultures, beliefs, and backgrounds. To support this, Fouche, De Jager and Crafford (2004) contend that one of the most important implications of globalization are that workers from different racial, cultural and ethnic backgrounds as well as workers with different sexual orientation and people with disability- enter the workplace with increased strength, both in numbers and in feelings of self-worth. Thus, employee's diversity encompasses differences amongst individuals, including gender, age, ability, religious affiliation, personality, economic class, social status, military attachments and sexual orientation. Cummings and Worley (2009) see employee's diversity as the mix of gender, age, disability, cultures, ethnic backgrounds and lifestyles that characterize an organization's workforce and potential labour pool. Harris, Rousseau and Venter (2007) define diversity as a range of differences, including gender, race, ethnicity, and age. Taking a descriptive approach, a diverse workforce include woman, Africans, Indians, coloured, the physically disabled, senior citizens, gay and lesbians. Managing this diversity has become a global concern (Robbins, Judge, Odendaal and Roodt 2009). Seen from another prism, employee's diversity also entails differences that are not visible, such as education, professional background, functional area of expertise, sexual preferences and religion (Carelse, 2013).

Employee's diversity altogether points to the fact that no two people are exactly the same (Swanepoel, Erasmus and Schenk, 2008). It thus accentuates the idea that there are a variety of differences among employees that stem from things like genetics and also the environment in which they were born, raised, and educated. Reference can be made to gender, race, ethnic groups, language, cultures, sexual orientation, religious beliefs and worldviews as well as personality, knowledge, perceptions, emotions and feelings, and personal values. It is of

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Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK importance for organizations to attract and retain staff from different diverse groups and culture in order to improve the employee performance and the competitive advantage of the organization. Yet, the mix of cultures, genders, lifestyles and values often become a source of misunderstanding and conflict. As Cook and Glass (2009) revealed, the similarity attraction model builds on social identity theory to suggest that in-group preferences often lead to evaluation bias. Elsewhere, plethora of scholars argues that a diverse workforce, when the right political strategy is applied, could increase the effectiveness of the company towards achieving its goals and accomplishing its mission (Ely and Thomas, 2001; Kalev, Dobbin and Kelly, 2006). When the right politicking with the right strategy is played in an organization, employee's diversity broadens access to markets, attracts new customer groups and increases productivity (Allen, Dawson, Wheatley and White, 2004). In addition, an organization that promotes the principle of employee's diversity, through healthy political practices, could improve its image and reduce the costs for promotion through advertising: the notion of social corporate responsibility (Horwitz, 2005).

METHODOLOGY

Survey research design was applied in the study on the basis that structured questionnaire was used in generating needed primary data for the study. The population of the study was 121 employees of the studied commission, which comprised of respondents that was categorized as senior level management staff, middle level management staff and lower-level management staff. The sample size of 121 respondents was determined using census/total sample size determination technique.

Face, content and construct validity of the research was properly assessed. A cronbach alpha coefficient values of 0.712, 0.644, and 0.611 shows that the research instrument was reliable for administration. After the administration of 121 copies of the questionnaire, 118 was returned in a usable form. The analysis in this study was done using the copies of the questionnaire that was returned. Pearson Product Moment Correlations (PPMC) analysis was applied in analyzing the generated primary data for the study. The rationale for this choice of data analytical tool is to show the causal relationship between the studied variables.

Data Analysis

Hypothesis 1

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between scarcity of resources and employee's diversity in Akwa Ibom State Local Government Service Commission.

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TABLE 1: PPMC RESULT OF HYPOTHESIS ONE

CORRELATED VARIABLES		SR	EMP. DIV
SR	Pearson Correlation	1	.614**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	118	118
EMP. DIV	Pearson Correlation	.614**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	118	118

Source: SPSS Computed Result (2023)

Table 1 above analyze the relationship between scarcity of resources and employee's diversity in Akwa Ibom State Local Government Commission. The result on the table shows a correlation co-efficient (r) of 0.614 with a probability value of 0.000. Since (r = 0.614 p.>0.000), implying that there is a significant relationship between scarcity of resources and employee's diversity in Akwa Ibom State Local Government Commission. This means that the null hypothesis does not hold and is therefore rejected. The alternative hypothesis that "there is a significant positive relationship between scarcity of resources and employee's diversity in Akwa Ibom State Local Government Service Commission" is accepted. This implies that when resources are scarce in the commission especially human resources, there is an increase need to source for human resources from diverse background with diverse expertise who are most likely going to have differences in age, religion, ethnic background among others.

Hypothesis 2

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between employee's personality and employee's diversity in Akwa Ibom State Local Government Service Commission.

TABLE 2: PPMC RESULT OF HYPOTHESIS TWO

CORRELATED VA	RIABLES	EMP. PERSONALITY	EMP. DIV
EMP.	Pearson	1	.662**
PERSONALITY	Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	118	118
EMP. DIV	Pearson Correlation	.662**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	118	118

Source: SPSS Computed Result (2023)

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Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK Table 2 above analyze the relationship between employee's personality and employee's diversity in Akwa Ibom State Local Government Commission. The result on the table shows a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.662 and a probability value of 0.000. This implies that there is a significant positive relationship between employee's personality and employee's diversity. Thus, since the correlation coefficient of 0.662 is greater than the probability value of 0.000 (r = 0.662, p.>0.000) the null hypothesis does not hold as such the null hypothesis is rejected. The Alternative hypothesis which states that "there is a significant positive relationship between employee's personality and employee's diversity in Akwa Ibom State Local Government Commission" is therefore accepted. The result implies that an increase in the level of employee's personality in the organization indicates an increase in the diversity of the employees in that organization.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Scarcity of Resources and Employee's Diversity

The result of hypothesis one shows that the correlation between scarcity of resources and employee's diversity in Akwa Ibom State Local Government Service Commission (r = 0.614, p<0.000) is positive and significant. This finding prompted the rejection of the null hypothesis, while the alternative hypothesis was accepted. This result of the hypothesis is supported by Muhammad (2007), who submit that when resources are limited, employees see the organization as more political. Emergence of this situation creates self-serving behaviours include bypassing the chain of command to get approval for a resource, going through improper channels to obtain special favours, or lobbying high-level managers just before they make a promotion decision. These types of actions undermine fairness in the organization, because not everyone engages in politicking to meet their own objectives.

Organizations engage in daily work operations so as to actualize their pre-determined goals. Optimal achievement of these goals demand that organizational resources must be used in their right quantity. There are various functional units in every organization. Effective and efficient achievement of corporate goals is a function of the resources at the disposal of employees at these units and how judiciously it is used. Corporate resources are often scarce or unavailable. Allocating it to different functional units in an organization brings up the issue of politics in an organization. All functional units seek and demand for the greater amount of resources in an organization. The question of which functional unit takes more of the resources, less of it or no resources brings up political debates, affiliations and tussle in an organization. Most times, it is much easier when individuals have relationship with one another based on certain demographic affiliations, while the employees who do not have such relationship are affected mostly by the outcomes of politics in an organization.

Therefore, resource scarcity in an organization can significantly determine how diversity among employees in an organization are properly managed. No doubt, organizational resources, whether tangible or intangible, are crucial in achieving corporate goals. However, the availability of these resources, how it is allocated and the behaviour of employees are

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Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK pivotal in determining whether scarcity of resources in an organization could blow up diversity among employees in an organization or help in managing it appropriately.

Employee's Personality and Employee's Diversity

The result of hypothesis 2 on employee's personality shows that the variable has positive and significant relationship with employee's diversity in Akwa Ibom State Local Government Service Commission (r = 0.662, p<0.000). This finding necessitated the rejection of the null hypothesis, while the alternative hypothesis was accepted. Employee's personality regulates how pronounced or sensitive the diversity among employees are. The result of the hypothesis aligns with the finding of Barrick, Parks and Mount (2015), who revealed that accurate knowledge of personality traits among employees help to anticipate their responses on different situations as well as in predicting performance outcomes.

Employees are key and integral part of any corporate organization. They are end in themselves and not means to achieve organizational goals and objectives. However, an important fact about employees is that, they come from different back and as such, their personality differs sharply among each other. Conceptually, employee's personality has been seen differently. Yet, the underlying point is that, personality of an employee is a great determinant of how the person behaves, the person's identity, temperament, and how they react to situations overtime. It represents a set of characteristics about an employee (Kinicki, 2008).

As individuals that are diverse, situations will always come up in an organization that will demand a show of an employee personality. Individuals will need to show who they are or their ability in controlling certain situations (Ones, Viswesvaran and Dilchert, 2005). Though the employees are of different backgrounds, however, how they behave given any situation will help in managing their differences or making it more pronounced. When employees remain calm, accommodating and tolerant, they are able to maintain positive disposition as well as maintain healthy group and work atmosphere. On the contrary, when an employee is hostile, arrogant, easily gets annoyed and unaccommodating, it quickly breeds formation of small groups that are against such an employee. It encourages social loafing attitude among employees, in extreme case where none of the employees want to maintain their grounds. Thus, knowledge of individual's personality will help employees to know one another and how best to relate with each other (Burch and Anderson, 2008).

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study revealed that scarcity of resources has positive and significant relationship with employees' diversity in Akwa Ibom State Local Government Service Commission; and employee's Personality has positive and significant relationship with employees' diversity in Akwa Ibom State Local Government Commission. Based on these findings, it was concluded that organizational politics has positive and significant relationship with employees' diversity in Akwa Ibom State Local Government Commission.

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Recommendations

Based on the major findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- i.An organizational culture that encourages proper allocation of resources should be created in order to minimize political behaviour in different units; and
- ii. The organization should endeavour to identify different personality of their employees as this would help to checkmate diversity that exist among them.

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