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Self-Determination and Employee Innovative Behavior in the Nigerian Telecommunication Industry

BY

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Abstract

The relationship between employee innovation and self-determination was examined in this study. In this cross-sectional study, 310 employees from the South-South region of Nigeria's telecommunications industry served as the sample size. Self-determination had a marginally significant positive relationship with concept implementation, but a significant positive relationship with idea genesis and idea evolution, according to the results of the application of Spearman Rank Order Correlation. This study implies that a person who is given the authority to enhance work processes will undoubtedly use his expertise and abilities to support innovative approaches to work organization, as was seen in the telecoms industry. Thus, we deduced that self-determination grants an employee the authority and freedom to change working conditions in a way that would improve task completion. Furthermore, it gets rid of the operational rigidities that hinder innovation in Nigeria's telecoms sector.

Keywords: *Self-determination, idea generation, idea development, idea implementation*

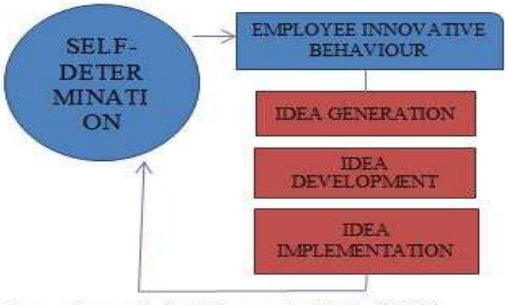
INTRODUCTION

Requests for both radical and incremental transformation are unavoidable in the current unpredictable business environment and must be managed by all firms. However, the rise in competition and globalization has only helped to emphasize how important it is for businesses to continuously learn about new technology, techniques, and tactics. Organizations must create new strategies to deal with this constant shift (Burgelman et al., 2004; Dasgupta & Gupta, 2009). Thus, it is believed that employee innovation provides organizations with a significant competitive edge (Beckman & Barry, 2007). Employers can expand their effect at work and provide employees greater autonomy by allowing them to take on a variety of roles and responsibilities (Pare & Tremblay, 2007). Positive work attitudes are produced, as well as a greater sense of support and internal motivation, through task involvement and empowerment.

Self-determination is concerned with how empowered people feel in terms of their ability to make decisions about their employment and other activities related to their jobs. It involves the belief that each individual has the power to direct their working environment, make choices, and accept responsibility for their actions. The self-determination factor, which fosters employee motivation, job happiness, and overall wellness, is one of the key components of psychological empowerment.

According to Shalley and Gilson (2004), creative staff members may share new ideas with other employees for their own usage and advancement. As a result, this form of individual innovation through idea development and application will lead to creative products at the organizational level. The overarching hypothesis of all of this research is that freedom of choice enhances the intrinsic motivation of the innovator for the work at hand, which is a precondition for inventive behavior (Amabile, 2002).

CONCEPTUAL MODEL ON SELF-DETERMINATION AND EMPLOYEE INNOVATIVE BEHAVIOUR



Source: Researcher's desk conceptualization (2023).

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2. Literature Review

2.1 Self-Determination

The conviction that one has control over starting and leading behaviors is considered a self-determination, Deci, Connell, and Ryan (1989). It represents corporate decisions regarding work methods, pace, and effort, is an example of autonomy in the commencement and continuance of work behaviors and processes (Bell & Straw, 1989; Spector, 1986). Individual and internal motivation is characteristics of self-determined goals (Ryan, Huta, & Deci, 2008). The scholars contend that one cannot be autonomous and still be true to oneself. An employee's sense of control over how their work is carried out is included in self-determination. Deci, Connell, and Ryan (1989) define this as the capacity to direct and control one's own behavior. Having some degree of control over one's conduct, level of effort, and start and stop times constitutes self-determination. 1986's Spector.

A popular motivational theory self-determination theory (SDT), which Deci and Ryan created in 2000 underpins what happens when people pursue an undertaking or idea fervently and devotedly when there are no external rewards at stake. The key to comprehending intrinsic motivation, according to SDT, is "the person's cognitive evaluation of the incentives, pressures, and limits inside the (workplace) environment" (Sheldon et al. 2003). According to SDT, it is essential for promoting intrinsic motivation to have a sense of autonomy—the conviction that one's actions are "literally, self-authored or endorsed" (Ryan & Deci, 2000). This sense of autonomy is often best attained when people believe that the professional goals and objectives they are pursuing match their own deeply held convictions and abiding interests. Having more freedom to make decisions or control over some areas of one's work can be employment features that contribute to one's sense of autonomy (Sheldon & House-Marko, 2001; Sheldon et al., 2003).

2.2 Employee Innovative behavior

Scott & Bruce (1994) noted that workers' creativity at work consists of the following three elements. Employees first identify an issue before coming up with creative suggestions or original remedies. Second, the person seeks for chances to advance their ideas, winning respect and backing from the organization. The employee thirdly offers the concept or solution concrete form by developing a prototype or innovation model that can be used, used, and implemented inside a work role, a group, or the organization as a whole (Kanter, 1983).

Therefore, in a perfect world, organizational innovation would be built on employee creativity (Oldham and Cummings, 1996). Creative workers are more likely to see opportunities for innovative product development. Creative staff members come up with original and useful proposals for firm procedures, strategies, or policies. Additionally, these people might have a snowball effect by setting a good example for the rest of the company. Shalley They might offer fresh, practical suggestions for the workplace or think of inventive ways to utilise tried-and-true methods or equipment. These individuals are more likely to push ideas and offer original solutions to problems. Additionally, they are more likely to produce adequate strategies for putting fresh notions into practice.

Innovative workers can quickly adjust to any circumstance and use what they already have to achieve their goals. They frequently have a feeling of wonder and an interest in how things work, in addition to flexibility, creativity, tolerance for ambiguity, interest in divergent (open-ended) and convergent thinking, and a sense of adaptation (Csikszentnihaly, 1996). (1959; Guilford). However, recent study also suggests that when faced with uncertainty, many people have a latent inclination to express creative thoughts (Mueller, Melwani, & Goncalo, 2011).

2.3 Self-Determination and Employee Innovative Behavior

Workers with innovative cognitive skills operate best in environments that respect independence, allow them to take calculated risks, and allow them to deviate from the norm (Kirton, 1990). Freedom to decide what to do and how to finish a task, a sense of control over one's work and ideas, and freedom from organizational or work limitations are all claimed to increase a person's capacity to engage in innovative behaviors (Amabile, 1988). Similarly, in order to completely express their creative potential, persons who are extremely intrinsically motivated at work need challenges, meaningful employment, and independence from outside constraints. Mumfort and Gustafson (1988) claimed that personal autonomy, which Sheldom (1995) identified as a critical characteristic of creative people, is what leads to innovation. may rise if companies encourage autonomy.

The degree of job autonomy and complexity is one of the most significant contextual elements that may influence creativity. Job control and creative outcomes have been linked in numerous research (Ekwall, 2006). Due to decreased job autonomy, Frese et al. (2004) found that personal initiative was lower among Eastern Germans than Western Germans. They also discovered that initiative increased as these work attributes did. LePine and Van Dyne (1998) discovered that employees with stronger self-control were more likely to challenge the status quo in a positive way to improve their work. Axtell et al. (2001) found a link between autonomy and a stronger inclination to make suggestions. Amabile and Gryskiewicz (2001) found that 74% of scientists agreed that autonomy played a key part in successful inventive episodes while 48% saw a lack of autonomy as a major hindrance to failed instances. Theorizing that individuals with high degrees of control and complexity would not need to be involved in such a plan since they are capable of making modifications on their own, Frese et al. (1999) presented an exception. They discovered a relatively inverse relationship between the control/complexity of the task and the presence of recommendations for a recommendation scheme.

For a variety of reasons, autonomy is important for innovation. By way of an example, Andrews (1996) showed

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how autonomy promoted the growth of creative potential. Ekwall (2006) asserts that autonomy impacted creativity levels by encouraging a more innovative setting. Research has shown that autonomy increases felt responsibility and intrinsic drive, both of which have an effect on innovation (Andrews, 1996).

However, autonomy's effects might not be as obvious as they first seem. Pelz and Andrew (1997) found a relationship between an individual's level of autonomy and the mean level of autonomy for the group. Due to their growing independence and preference for open environments, R&D scientists withdrew from social stimulation, which constrained their ability to be creative. Conversely, in situations when the society as a whole lacked agency, those few independent individuals were unable to benefit from their creativity. The relationship between autonomy and creativity was only positive under moderate conditions. These findings imply that individual and organizational contingency factors may have an impact on the link between autonomy and innovative behavior.

Chua and Lyengar (2005) identified likely setbacks managers may face when giving staff members greater choices for assignments that need innovation. Managers must take extraordinary caution when offering a wide range of options for activities that require creativity. A wide range of chances may be presented to workers who exhibit high levels of inventive self-efficacy and a passion for creativity, which may result in the desired results. However, a potentially hazardous situation arises when a management offers a worker with low innovative self-efficacy a sizable number of solutions for resolving an innovative-related issue. The person is unlikely to contribute anything new, and the challenges of meeting the necessary objectives may demoralize and dishearten the employee.

In the literature, control has been identified as the main impediment to innovative behaviour (Amabile, 2008; Kanter, 1983). Examples include the ability to manage how information is communicated, the perception of having decision-making control, or incentive programs that overly emphasize enhancing intrinsic motivation. In a society that values control, innovation, and creativity will suffer. The main culprit is control's negative effects on intrinsic motivation. Amabile (2000) asserts that individuals must possess both intrinsic motivation and knowledge and creative aptitude in order to exhibit highly inventive behavior. Though it might not be as straightforward as it looks, this concept. Kimberly (1981) asserts that formalizing and centralizing decision-making may enhance an organization's ability to implement innovations in stable and predictable contexts. The creation of plausible constraints on the relationship between the variables in this conception leads to the following proposed statements.

H_{01}: Self-determination and idea generation are not significantly related

H_{02}: Self-determination and idea development are not significantly linked

H_{03}: Self-determination is not significantly linked to idea implementation

3. Methods

In order to collect information from people who work in the telecoms industry in Nigeria's South-South region, this study used a cross-sectional survey approach. The study's intended 1,575 telecom workers drawn from six state capitals in the South-South region of Nigeria. The list of all the companies that have registered with the Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) includes six telecoms organizations that are considered as major service providers. The sample size for this experiment was determined using the chart Krejcie and Morgan produced in 1970. In all, 310 workers made up our sample. However, only 209 of the 209 valid survey copies that we sent out were returned, which represents 67.41% of the participants who genuinely took part in our study. The results were gathered via a thorough interview and a questionnaire.

Employee innovation was measured using the Innovative Behaviour Questionnaire (IBQ), which we modified for this study. The generation, refinement, and implementation of ideas were all evaluated by the IBQ. Other research (Spreitzer, 1995; Kirman and Rosen, 1997; Bruce, 2001; Amabile, 2002) have pre-tested and verified the parameters that were used in this investigation. As a consequence, the variables demonstrated construct validity.

The Cronbach Alpha coefficient was utilized in our study to evaluate reliability. Research studies commonly assess internal reliability using the Cronbach alpha statistic. According to experts, an alpha level of 0.7 is also regarded as effective (Bryman and Bell 2003; Nunally 1978; and Dana 2001); a widely accepted threshold for internal instrument dependability is an alpha value of 0.80. Self-determination (0.853) and Innovativeness (0.792) were determined to have the highest Cronbach Alpha Coefficients for our measures for reliability testing. All of our variables, therefore, had very high internal dependability.

Our demographic data was sorted into groups based on frequencies and percentages. We analyzed our variables using both univariate and bivariate methods. The Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient and inferential statistics were used to determine the relationship between employee creativity and self-determination.

4. Data analysis and Results

We divided up our demographic data into groups using frequencies and percentages. We conducted both univariate and bivariate analyses on our variables. The correlation between employee creativity and self-determination was discovered using inferential statistics and the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient. According to the results from our demographic information, 47 respondents (22.5%) met the NCE/OND minimal threshold for responders. The HND/B.Sc/BA category had 67 (32.1%) respondents, placing it in second place, while the Master's degree level had 83 respondents, or 39.7% of the sample, in third place. The highest degree of education is a Ph.D., which is held by

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twelve (5.7%) of the respondents. 111 respondents, or 53.1% of the total, were male workers in the telecommunications industry; 98 respondents, or 46.9% of all respondents, were female. Of the sample subjects, 111 respondents, or 63.6%, were from the firms' first-level management. 25 responses, or 12% of the sample, came from the top management level, while 51 responses, or 24.4% of the workforce, came from the medium-level management. This shows that the bulk of telecom workers in Nigeria are highly educated. Following are the mean scores for each variable that we were able to determine using univariate analysis. The average scores for each variable are displayed in Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4. The scale has nine ideas for idea generation (IG) and four for self-determination (SD).

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of Self-Determination Survey

		SD 1	SD 2	SD 3	SD 4
N	Valid	209	209	209	209
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		3.94	4.00	3.97	3.94
Std Dev		.335	.000	.167	.335
Skewness		-.534	-.602	-1.112	-.366
Std Error of skewness		.143	.143	.143	.143
Minimum		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Maximum	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00

Source: SPSS COMPUTATION

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of Idea Generation (Employee Innovative Behaviour) Survey

		IG 1	IG 2
N	Valid	209	209
	Missing	0	0
Mean		3.00	3.29
Std Deviation		0.00	.456
Skewness		-.320	-.611
Std Error of skewness		.143	.143
Minimum		0.00	0.00
Maximum		4.00	4.00

Source: SPSS COMPUTATION

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics of Idea Development (Employee Innovative Behaviour) Survey

		ID 1	ID 2
N	Valid	209	209
	Missing	0	0
Mean		2.97	2.93
Std Deviation		.167	.361
Skewness		-.424	-.967
Std Error of skewness		-.424	-.967
Minimum		0.00	0.00
Maximum		4.00	4.00

Source: SPSS COMPUTATION

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Idea Implementation (Employee Innovative Behaviour) Survey

		IDI 1	IDI 2	IDI 3	IDI 4	IDI 5
N	Valid	209	209	209	209	209
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		4.00	3.94	3.88	3.65	2.67
Std Dev		0.00	.341	.672	.535	1.389
Skewness		-1.982	-.778	.391	-.914	-1.146
Std Error of skewness		.143	.143	.143	.143	.143
Minimum		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Maximum		4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00

Source: SPSS COMPUTATION

Table 5. Self-determination and Employee Innovative Behavior

	Ho_7	Ho_8	Ho_9
	SD (IG)	SD (ID)	SD (IM)
N	209	209	209
Sig (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
Rho	.414**	.928**	.355**

*** Correlation is significant @ 0.01 Level (2-tailed)*

The degree of the association between the variables under consideration can be inferred from the correlation values in Table 5 above. It demonstrates the close relationship between employee innovation and self-determination. Self-determination and idea generation have a strong positive association, as indicated by the r-value of 0.414 (p 0.01). With r = 0.928 (P 0.01) for self-determination and r = 0.355 (P 0.01) for concept implementation, there is a very strong positive significant association between the two. The null hypotheses were rejected

Thus restated as;

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H01: Self-determination and idea generation have a strong positive link.

H2: There is a strong and positive connection between idea development and self-determination.

H3: Self-determination and Idea Implementation have a weakly significant positive correlation.

For tasks to be completed, employees must have the required independence and authority. Employees are more likely to contribute ideas that are crucial for achieving strategic goals when they operate in an environment where they are equally free to make their own decisions. The findings strongly imply that self-driven people are required to foster an innovative workplace that supports a competitive organization. The results of our study only hint at how much psychological empowerment's self-determination component fosters support for the development of established ideas. A worker who is given the freedom to enhance workplace practices, as was the case in the telecommunications industry, will undoubtedly put his knowledge and skills to use in advancing novel workplace management strategies.

The findings of this study also demonstrated the importance of a self-driven individual to the whole process of completing an inventive endeavor. They now have the power or freedom to restructure their operations in a way that advances objectives. They will be more likely to demonstrate a commitment to the assigned activities that will ultimately result in goal attainment if their efforts and inputs are utilized to the extent that they seek information and receive incentives.

5. Findings

Self-Determination Correlation with EIB

Self-determination is unquestionably based on the requirement to provide workers more control over the interpersonal, practical, and managerial components of their work as a sort of psychological empowerment. According to the logic presented here, having more authority will often lead to favorable behavioral consequences that aid in achieving goals. Although it may ultimately imply the loss of some managerial control, the considerable literature on autonomy already in existence demonstrates that understanding it for employees is a workplace requirement and has favorable effects on goal achievement. In 2001, Borins.

Reputable sources claim that the empowerment construct includes the concept of "self-determination" or "self-determination" as a component (Gosha &Barttlett, 2002; Pettigrew, 2004; Davidson, 2007). This concept has important advantages for how an employee behaves and contributes to the workplace. Laschinger (2001) examined a model connecting changes in autonomous scope to changes in job satisfaction using a longitudinal predictive methodology. Changes in the degree of autonomy directly affect psychological liberation and job satisfaction. The relationship between workplace autonomy and operational effectiveness was also looked at in Carless' (2004) study. The results of their study have conclusively demonstrated that autonomy is a critical workplace issue that has to be carefully evaluated in relation to a number of other outcomes. Conger and Kanugo (1988) and Porterfield (2002), among others, have written about how power is allocated in organizations. However, according to Judson (2003), the management approach to defining self-determination tries to relate empowerment primarily with the distribution or sharing of decision-making authority with front-line personnel using a variety of participative methods. Conger and Kanugo's self-determination construct, on the other hand, aims to encourage employees' innate commitment, which serves as the justification for behavioral thinking. Wei and Yuan (2010) firmly thought that innovative organizational behavior is typically influenced by affective and inclusive leadership behavior. The authors have promoted the transactional model of leadership and competitiveness as having a thorough empirical grasp in this field.

By depending on these viewpoints, this study has shown the connection between psychological empowerment and self-determination. Result of findings corroborate Bowen's (2003) claim that service firms' competitive edge comes from empowering methods that involve authority sharing. The majority of empowerment projects, according to the author, are unproductive when they only focus on the aspect of power, leaving out other factors like the ability to build infrastructures that promote knowledge-seeking for better work processes. Employees' confidence in their ability to change or enhance work processes is a basic cognitive emotion that shows up behaviorally. Unquestionably substantial and critical to the growth of ideas and individual autonomy is the study volume. Despite the possibility that autonomy may have cognitively sparked their innovativeness, it only serves to strengthen the hypothesis that they are interested in how companies provide the tools and capacities necessary to assure idea development and eventual implementation.

In contrast to promises of rewards or threats of punishment, Amabile (1983) discovered that self-determining authority motivates individuals in high-tech businesses more successfully. Employees that have high levels of discretionary pressure are more likely to engage in creative activity, which may be observed in how they generate and implement ideas, especially when those ideas have an impact on work processes and timelines. According to Quinn and Spreitzer (1997), an organization's creative and inventive culture is boosted when working conditions allow each worker to start his own creative process rather than using standard or prototype approaches. In other words, even if it starts at the individual level, it is encouraged to expand to the organizational level. From the aforementioned, it is clear that employees want the freedom and flexibility needed to foster the kinds of innovative thought processes. Empirical research shows that when employee flexibility is severely restricted, leaving little to no opportunity for self-determination, creative behavior is implicitly controlled.

6. Conclusions and Implications

Our investigation led us to the following conclusions:

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1. Autonomy for new practices has been proven to be crucial for innovative behaviour.
2. Findings revealed a strong link between self-motivation and creative behaviour in the Nigerian telecommunications sector.
3. Self-determination gives an employee the necessary authority and freedom to change work procedures in a way that would improve task completion. It also gets rid of the operational rigidities that stifle innovation in the Nigerian telecommunications sector.

The results of this study can be used by managers to improve innovation, as well as its administration and control. The findings of the study establish the foundation for ensuring that a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic elements is used to create and maintain employee commitment to an innovative culture in a firm, particularly in the case of the industry under study. The experiences workers have had with autonomy at work are also highlighted. Because they believe that discussions about employee autonomy or self-determination restrict their management options, managers frequently bolster institutional rigidities with more aggressive power interactions. Employee autonomy is a key component in creating a workplace culture that strongly fosters creative activities. Even among managers, actively fostering an environment of empowerment is a helpful strategy for improving creative performance.

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