

Group Cohesiveness and Organizational Effectiveness of Telecommunications Companies in Port Harcourt, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined the relationship that exists between group cohesiveness and organizational effectiveness in telecommunication networks of Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The work analyzed the impact of cohesiveness and how it brings about effectiveness in telecommunication networks. In the course of testing the formulated hypotheses, data were drawn from sixty-three (63) samples using structured questionnaires and analyzed with the aid of the statistical package for social sciences for (SPSS) software adopting Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (PPMCC) technique. The result indicated that cohesiveness influences goals and productivity with a greater correlation coefficient to goals by a value of .537 to bring about effectiveness. The result also shows a positive and significant relationship between the variables. The study thereby concludes that properly planned and well implemented grouping of employees who work cohesively will bring about the accomplishment of goals and productivity for organizational effectiveness.

Keywords: *Group Cohesiveness, Organizational Effectiveness, Goals and Productivity.*

Introduction

One of the important and maintenance variable of groups that is generally linked to organizational performance is cohesiveness. Cohesiveness is easy to recognize but difficult to define. People intuitively understand the term. However cohesive groups have several positive qualities that we all can recognize and agree upon. For example, cohesive groups have a general perception of "we-ness." There is a feeling of friendship and loyalty among group members.

Group cohesiveness means the degree of attachment of the members to their group. If group cohesion is high, the interaction between members of the group is high and the degree of agreement in group opinion is high which can lead to high performance for effectiveness in organisations. A cohesive group usually has its members share the group goals and have common interests and backgrounds composing of small members in numbers, who interact among themselves quite frequently and interpersonal communication is very effective with group having a history of past success.

Keller (1992) examined the association between group cohesiveness, physical distance, job satisfaction, innovation orientation and performance in a large R&D organization. This longitudinal study involved 32 project groups and was analyzed by hierarchical regression.

Among all the independent variable, it showed that group cohesiveness was the only variable that significantly correlated with the performance of project groups.

Mullen & Copper (1994) shows that, in general, cohesive groups are more productive than non-cohesive groups, particularly when group size is relatively small organizational

effectiveness are a complex and contentious concept. No two authorities agree on what constitutes effectiveness or on how it is measured.

Although they all agree that it involves attention to goals, satisfaction of constituents and relationship with the external environment. But we live in a world tyrannized by effectiveness. Workers, managers, departments and organizations are always asked to be effective and that simply means to produce some form of results. Early management thinkers believe that effectiveness is the ultimate measure of managerial and organizational performance.

Bernard (1964) believes that effectiveness relates to the accomplishment of the cooperative purpose which is social and non-personal in character, insisting that organizations cannot continue to exist without effectiveness and that this effectiveness can easily be measured. Drucker emphatically pointed out that effectiveness is crucial for individuals and even society to satisfy their needs. He put it this way, "Only executive effectiveness can enable this society of ours to harmonize its two needs: the needs of organization to obtain from the individual, the contribution it needs and the need of the individual to have organization serve as his tool for accomplishing his purposes" (Drucker, 1967:177).

Therefore, this study examined the relationship between group cohesiveness and organizational effectiveness (goals and productivity) in telecommunications companies in Port Harcourt Nigeria.

The following research questions are presented with regards to the objectives of the study:

- I. Examine the relationship between group cohesiveness and goals for organizational effectiveness of telecommunications networks in Port Harcourt?
- II. Examine the relationship between group cohesiveness and productivity for organizational effectiveness of telecommunications networks in Port Harcourt?

Literature Review

Theoretical Background

The theoretical framework, upon which this study is based, is on the theory of groupthink which is focused on the maintenance of group cohesion in an organization for effective performance. Irving Janis (1982 Janis & Mann, 1977) developed a study on group decision making, called groupthink theory. According to this study of human social behavior, group cohesion and solidarity maintenance are more valuable than realistic fact consideration. In his definition of this concept, Janis described a thought process driven group behavior in which the members of a group are motivated to prioritize unity over other more rational or otherwise fact based choices and alternatives (Janis, 1982).

Groupthink embodies conformism as a group dynamic among select groups that prioritize group cohesion. These dynamics eventually lead to attitude changes amongst individuals to the point that the overall effect on the group is a conformity that originated from the cumulative effect of this individual "self-deceit". Highly cohesive groups are much more engaged on groupthink. The closer group members are, the less likely they are to raise questions that might break the cohesion. For many years, Janis' model of groupthink (1972) provided an explanation for poor or ineffective decisions made by groups and also how cohesion can bring about a great change in the organization.

The Concept of Group Cohesiveness

Cohesiveness is a term that describes one of the maintenance and important variables of groups and is generally linked to organizational performance. Therefore, research on the organizational performance would be inappropriate without focusing this variable (Elenkov,

2002). Keller (1992) examined the association between group cohesiveness, physical distance, job satisfaction, innovation orientation and performance in a large R&D organization. This longitudinal study involved 32 project groups and was analyzed by hierarchical regression. Among all the independent variable, it showed that group cohesiveness was the only variable that significantly correlated with the performance of project groups. In addition, the result of the study clearly indicated that group cohesiveness was the strongest predictor of project group performance, both at the initial assessment and over time.

What does it mean to say that a group is cohesive? Like many concepts, cohesiveness is easy to recognize but difficult to define. People intuitively understand the term. However cohesive groups have several positive qualities that we all can recognize and agree upon. For example, cohesive groups have a general perception of "we-ness." There is a feeling of friendship and loyalty among group members. Group cohesiveness means the degree of attachment of the members to their group. If group cohesion is high, the interaction between members of the group is high and the degree of agreement in group opinion is high. In a cohesive group, members share the group goals and often have common interests and backgrounds and the members are often small in numbers. The members interact among themselves quite frequently and interpersonal communication is very effective as well as group loyalty leading members to enjoy high status, standing untied against any perceived external threat with history of past success.

Concept of Organizational Effectiveness (OE)

Generally, it is unclear what researchers mean when they refer to effectiveness and this has resulted in ambiguities in interpreting the results of their work (Cameron, 1984). Unfortunately, only a few studies have attempted to provide a definition of OE (Mohr, 1971), including Seashore and Yuchtman (1967), who viewed effectiveness as the ability of the organization to exploit the environment in the acquisition of critical resources, and Price (1968), who defines effectiveness as the degree of goal achievement. Despite the differences in opinion amongst OE researchers, it is necessary that an understanding of OE is acquired by the organization as OE may be considered to be the "...ultimate dependent variable in organizational research" (Cameron & Whetton, 1983).

Yet, as long as researchers have to justify the reasons for carrying out organizational research, criteria for evaluating OE will have to be developed (Cameron & Whetton, 1983). Many research studies have been conducted in an attempt to measure OE, using different criteria. Each of these studies has pursued a different approach in examining the construct OE as a result of the different conceptualization's of the meaning of an organization (Cameron, 1981). Typically, organizations have been viewed as rational entities in the pursuit of goals (Etzioni, 1964 Perrow, 1970), as coalitions reacting to strategic constituencies (Pfeffer & Salanick, 1978), as information processing systems (Galbraith, 1973), as meaning-producing systems (Weick, 1978) and so on. Accordingly, the lack of agreement on all these issues has led to some researchers to argue for a moratorium on traditional OE studies (Hannan & Freeman, 1977). The lack of consensus on definition has led to the suggestion that the whole construct of OE is "enigmatic" and that "effectiveness should be treated as representing an unmapped terrain where different approaches and models add to the completeness of the map, and debates about the accuracy of one viewpoint versus another are put aside" (Cameron, 1984), implying that the study of effectiveness should be consistent with the "appropriate model of effectiveness, including its criteria set, with the appropriate circumstances" (Cameron, 1986). For the purpose of this study, the researcher limited the

discussions on two measures of organizational effectiveness seen as; organizational goals and productivity.

Organizational Goals

According to Hale and Whitlam (1998), “whether they are known as goals, targets or objectives, organizations are constantly seeking ways of achieving them because “target setting is seen as a means of helping all employees to pull in the same direction with a view to gaining competitive advantage.” Locke and Latham (1990) reinforced the argument that “There is strong reason to conclude that goal setting works at the group and organizational (or unit) level as well as at the individual level. Communicating to employees on what is expected in terms of performance and results through goal setting is important. According to Landgon (1999), “objectives are still useful for the communication of performance intent”. This argument is reinforced by Xavier, (2002), who posits that clarifying expectations and the roles and responsibilities of employees through “clear communications and feedback can improve manager and employee effectiveness”. Additionally, Mills, (2002) pointed out that “people who see the connection between their personal goals and the larger goals of the organization will have a greater impact on the achievement of those goals than people who see no such connection”

Luthans (1995) in describing the theoretical background of goal setting highlighted that there was also an awareness that goal setting will not work if there was no commitment to the goals, and that “commitment is a moderator of the goal-performance relationship and a meta-analysis found that goal commitment significantly affects goal achievement.” According to Latham (2004), “goal is the object or aim of an action”. The author contented that people’s performances can be improved through specific hard goals or “stretched” goals. He further states, “A goal is a standard for assessing one’s satisfaction. In short, employees who are committed to attaining high goals are high performers”. Although the principles of goal setting, enunciated by Edwin Locke in 1668 (Carson & Carson, 1993), were not fully embraced by some theorists, like Edward Deming who espoused the Total Quality Management (TQM) concept more than five decades ago, the acceptance and dependence by organizations of goal setting is still valid and real as both “historical and contemporary research support the finding that goals improve productivity” (Carson & Carson, 1993). The essence of this argument is also highlighted by the findings of Dobbins, Cardy and Platz-Vieno, 1990 (cited in Roberts, 2003) that “goal setting within performance appraisal has been associated with greater appraisal satisfaction, higher job satisfaction, and increased performance”. Further research findings by Arvey, Dewhirst and Brown (1978), also supported the argument that employee effectiveness, manifested in increased “productivity” is a consequence of “goal setting procedures”. Studies conducted by Terpstra and Rozell (1994) found that ample empirical research has shown that individual performance level increased with the use of goal setting. The authors posit that it’s “probable that goal setting applications may also positively influence organizational-level outcomes”. The statement, “people and their performance are keys to an organization’s effectiveness” (Michie and West, 2004) further supports this research finding. Interestingly, an investigation conducted by Coote, Price and Ackfeldt, (2004), argued, “Goal congruence is related to employees’ perception of morale, leadership support, fairness in reward allocation, and empowerment.”

Organizational Productivity

Productivity has become a household word as almost everyone talks about it. Yet, the term ‘productivity’ means different things to different persons. As phenomenon, it ranges from efficiency to effectiveness, to rates of turnover and absenteeism, to output measures, to

measure of client or consumer satisfaction, to intangibles such as disruption in workflow and to further intangibles such as morale, loyalty and job satisfaction. Perhaps, Krugman (1990) intended to assert that defining or measuring productivity is a herculean task when he asserted that “productivity isn’t everything, but in the long run it is almost everything. The least controversial definition of productivity is that it is a quantitative relationship between output and input (Iyaniwura and Osoba, 1983, Antle and Capalbo, 1988). This definition enjoys general acceptability because of two related considerations. One, the definition suggests what productivity is thought of to be in the context of an enterprise, an industry or an economy as a whole, regardless of the type of production, economic or political system, this definition of productivity remains the same as long as the basic concept is the relationship between the quantity and quality of goods and services produced and the quantity of resources used to produce them (Prokopenko, 1987).

In effect, productivity becomes the attainment of the highest level of performance with the lowest possible expenditure of resources. It represents the ratio of the quality and quantity of products to the resources utilized. It is evident in the literature on productivity that almost all the definitions of productivity center on ‘outputs’ and ‘inputs’. Since production (creation of goods and services) is a team effort thereby making the demand for inputs to be interdependent, various elements (inputs) are involved in the production of output. The key to growth is an increase in productivity (Wonnacott and Wonnacott, 1986). Thus other measures of performance include quality of work life, innovation and profitability. Productivity as a source of growth has moved to center stage in analyses of growth of developing economies in recent years. Earlier, the focus was mainly on the growth of capital, through greater mobilization of resources. As investment levels have increased substantially in most developing countries and the scope for further increases becomes more limited, attention has naturally turned to productivity improvements which offer a complementary route to growth by getting more out of limited resources.

Group Cohesiveness and Organizational Effectiveness

Arguably, a great amount of cohesion among group members can bring about a significant change in the organization for an increase in productivity level and achievement of goals.

Mullen & Copper (1994) shows that, in general, cohesive groups are more productive than non-cohesive groups, particularly when group size is relatively small. However, this relationship is much stronger for task-based cohesiveness than it is for maintenance-based cohesiveness. Clearly, when groups are cohesive because their members care about their task, they will usually be more productive than groups that are not cohesive because their members do not care about their task.

Nevertheless, in relation to the theory adopted by this study, Groupthink theory, it can be maintained that an organization that practices and maintains cohesion among its groups, will bring about productivity and achievement of goals for organizations to be more effective.

The relationship between the variables indicates organizations that have management who encourage cohesion among members of a group, are most likely to enjoy the benefits of cohesiveness by achieving organizational goals and bringing about a high level of productivity for organizations to be more effective. It is in the context of these theories, the following hypothesis are presented:

H0₁: There is no significant relationship between group cohesiveness and goals in telecommunications networks in Port Harcourt.

H0₂: There is no significant relationship between group cohesiveness and productivity in telecommunications networks Port Harcourt.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is the cross sectional study of the survey research. Primary data drawn from branches in Port Harcourt have been selected. Sixty nine (69) copies of questionnaires were distributed to the employees in all the branches MTN, Airtel, Etisalat and GLO. Then sixty seven (67) of the distributed questionnaires were retrieved from the field. Furthermore, the derived data were analyzed with descriptive statistics, and the formulated hypothesis was tested by Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient statistical tool with the aid of (SPSS) version 23.0. The research instrument was designed with likert scale point method in measurement of group cohesiveness and organizational effectiveness ranging from strongly disagrees to strongly agree.

In our study, the items of the questionnaire have been applied in previous research and proven valid. In addition, a pilot test and content validation was conducted to justify it by accommodating expert opinion in order to reduce errors and ambiguity. Furthermore, In the view of Baridam (2001), reliability is the precision of a measure. In this study, the researcher adopted Cronbach alpha which is a reliability coefficient that indicates how well the items in a set are positively correlated to one another. Sekaran (2003) set a tolerable range of 0.7 to adjudge the goodness of this statistical measure. In view of this the coefficient of alpha which was computed to be 0.60 for group cohesiveness and 0.582 for organizational effectiveness indicated that the scale is reliable.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

The data on group cohesiveness and organizational effectiveness of telecommunications companies in Port Harcourt, Nigeria are discussed and presented in tables below:

Table 1: Result of Univariate Analysis of Group Cohesiveness

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	Std. Error	Std. Error	Std. Error
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
B1	63	1.00	5.00	3.8889	1.04898	-.464	.302	-.661	.595
B2	63	1.00	5.00	3.7778	1.08426	-.637	.302	-.233	.595
B3	63	1.00	5.00	3.4127	1.22652	-.252	.302	-.945	.595
B4	63	3.00	5.00	3.2540	1.17732	-.209	.302	-.549	.595
Valid (listwise)	N 63								

The results in table above revealed that there are 63 cases with a 100% response rate in all four (4) items of the group cohesiveness subscale. It revealed that most of the participants agree that in their organization, individual contribution is considered as a way of increasing cohesiveness in a group for organizational effectiveness. This is revealed by the central tendencies for the variables (\bar{x}) = 3.89 and standard deviation coefficient of (s) = 1.05 implying an average of agreement to the indicators of the variable as experienced and observed by the participants in their respective organization.

Table 2: Result of Univariate Analysis of Organizational Effectiveness

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Organizational goals	63	1.00	5.00	3.7302	1.35844
Organizational productivity	63	1.00	5.00	4.1746	1.02453

The results in table above revealed that there are 63 cases with a 100% response rate derived from all questions presented about the variables. The mean and standard coefficients of each of the variables revealed higher mean score for organizational productivity, but lower mean for organizational goals, to the presence and experience of variables in their organization. This is evidenced from a mean of $(x) = 4.1746$ and 3.7302 respectively while the standard deviation of $(s) = 1.02453$ and 1.35844 , implying substantial acceptance of the statements posed by the indicators of the variables indicating that the organization has a high level of productivity.

Table 3: Bivariate Hypotheses of Association between Variables (Group Cohesiveness and Organizational Goals and Organizational Productivity)

			Group Cohesiveness	Goals	Productivity
	Group Cohesiveness	Correlation Coefficient	1	.537**	.443**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		N	63	63	63
Pearson Correlation	Goals	Correlation Coefficient	.537**	1	.443**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		N	63	63	63
	Productivity	Correlation Coefficient	.443**	.537**	1**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
		N	63	63	63

Group Behavior and Organizational Effectiveness

The descriptive statistics as displayed in Table 1,2 and 3 showed that the employees in the telecommunications companies have a moderate group cohesiveness experience with their organizations ($M = 14.33$; $S.D = 2.6$). The correlation analyses stipulated in Table 3 showed that group cohesiveness has a significant and positive relationship with organizational effectiveness ($r = .443$, $p = .000$; $r = .537$, $p = .000$). Particularly, with a correlation (r) value of $.443$ and $.537$, the relationship between group cohesiveness and goals is stronger, compared with the relationship between group cohesiveness and productivity which also should strong correlation with an (r) value of $.537$. The study also revealed that the relationship between group cohesiveness and organizational effectiveness is significant at p -values of $.000$ for all the variables which is not up to $.01$. This made the hypothesis (H_0 , H_1 , H_2) to be rejected.

Discussion of the Findings

Previous paragraphs in this segment showed the outcomes from the analysis on the association between career mentoring and organizational citizenship behavior. A total of two hypotheses were formulated and respectively tested with results indicating significant relations between the group cohesiveness and organizational effectiveness (goals and productivity). The empirical techniques adopted in this study in its investigation followed the tradition of previous studies which also examined the relationship between the variables within developed socio-economic contexts. The application of the techniques allowed for consistency and replicability of processes and as such a confirmation of the validity of these tools and techniques.

These findings are in line with previously conducted studies by Keller (1992) who examined the association between group cohesiveness and performance in a large R&D organization. This longitudinal study involved 32 project groups and was analyzed by hierarchical regression.

Among all the independent variable, it showed that group cohesiveness was the only variable that significantly correlated with the performance of project groups. In addition, the result of the study clearly indicated that group cohesiveness was the strongest predictor of project group performance, both at the initial assessment and over time.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Following the activities of this study, the summary as well as the findings obtained from its investigation of the relationship between the variables (group cohesiveness and organizational effectiveness) we hereby conclude and recommend as there is a significant association between group cohesiveness and organizational effectiveness. This is as group cohesiveness is observed to significantly enhance organizational effectiveness and impact on its measures such as organizational goal and organizational productivity. Therefore, decision makers should always endeavor to create enabling environment that will enhance group cohesiveness among its employees, by promoting teamwork and grouping techniques in solving problems, thereby translating into productivity for the organization and promotion of cohesiveness amongst workers which is capable of bringing about achievement of goals and productivity.

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