

Reciprocity Dynamics of Psychological Contract Breach and Perceived Organisational Support on Job Involvement of Private and Public Organizations

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Abstract Organisational researchers believe that there is norm of reciprocity between the employers and employees. This study examined two measures of organization's contribution to reciprocity dynamic with employees which are psychological contract breach and perceived organisational support on job involvement in public and private organizations in Abuja. Two hundred participants were selected using purposive sampling technique in a cross sectional survey that utilised ex-post facto research design; and two hypotheses were tested using three standardised psychological scales. Data collected were analysed using multiple regression and independent t-test. The results showed 3.2% variance of psychological contract breach and perceived organizational support on job involvement. Employees in the public organizations had higher score on job involvement than employees in public organizations. Implication of study was discussed in line with attitude change and national development.

Keywords Psychological Contract Breach, Perceived Organisational Support, Job Involvement, Norm of Reciprocity

1. Introduction

Job involvement is the degree of enthusiasm an employee displays in performance of organizational tasks, as well as the desire to make significant contributions to the development of the organization. Job involvement is said to be the degree at which an employee is absorbed in task to the point that the employee develops decision making capabilities and assumes authority of one's functions [1]. Job involvement is when an employee is engrossed to and interested in the task given to one. Several other researchers like [2] and [3] also believed that job involvement is a background for psychological attachment to the work process and the organization.

Furthermore, job involvement is a job attitude; is the love, the pleasure, fulfillment and satisfaction derived from accomplishing the whole task and not only the benefits associated with performing that task. This means that the employee is dedicated to the task and is willing to go the extra length to get the task done. Job involvement is described as a state of engagement [4] and is conceived as a three dimensional variable. It could be conceived as a stable characteristic of a person or a reaction to the work situation or an interaction between the person and the situation. A

work situation that is able to show the employees that they matter and are relevant can trigger the sense of involvement in the employee. The employer and the employee know that they both have a responsibility to fulfill the needs and expectations of the other party for one's own needs to be fulfilled [5].

A work situation of such is psychological contract. Psychological contract is an unwritten, unspoken agreement that is implicit in nature; a promise known in the mind of both employer and employee. Psychological contract focuses on the bilateral relationship between parties, such that the exchange of mutual needs and expectations of both parties is the core of the contract. In the workplace psychological contract enables both parties perceive mutual obligations towards each other; employees observe what one is required to do to satisfy the mutual obligations on one's side of the deal as well as have realistic expectations for the work situation. When each party meets its expectations the other has the obligation to fulfil its own side of the contract and vice versa. Psychological contract can be a requirement in achieving efficient performance and involvement in the work place. According to [6] psychological contract is a give and take relationship which employee will likely venture into if one perceives it as a fair and a mutual contract of benefit.

However, a work situation where the employer is aware of its obligations to the employee but purposely ignores it is referred to as psychological contract breach [7, 8]. Psychological contract breach is the state of mind in which the employee interprets actions taken by the employer as

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failure in achieving and meeting the earlier obligations agreed upon [9]. Psychological contract breach is a construct regarding employee's negative feeling of betrayal arising from one's belief that the organization that is, employer has broken its promises. Employee feel disappointed because despite keeping one's side of the agreement, the employer fails to fulfill its obligations [7]. The breach of psychological contract could affect the way employee behave and can attract negative job attitude such as job involvement in that when employee feel one's efforts are not rewarded to fulfill the terms of one's agreement, one's efforts formerly put into the task to boost performance will be jeopardised. This is a reaction to show betrayal felt by the employee [10].

Another work situation where employer and employee have the responsibility to fulfil the needs and expectations of the other party for one's own needs to be fulfilled is perceived organizational support. Perceived organizational support can be viewed as all things that relate to assistance in fulfillings of needs, relationship and helping each other between employer and employee. Perceived organizational support include employee's belief and perception concerning the extent to which an organization supports work and welfare; contributes to employee's physical and psychological well-being for fair treatment, give incentives expressed through recognition, pay raise, fringe benefits and promotion [11, 12]. Perceived organizational support [12] would be valued by employees to meet social emotional needs, assess the benefits of increased work effort, organizations readiness to reward increased work effort and provide aid needed to carry out ones job effectively. The employer also values performance and job attitude such as job involvement of the employee.

Both psychological contract breach and perceived organizational support are measures of reciprocity norms. Norm of reciprocity is the expectation that people will respond to each other, either by reacting against unfavourable treatment with a negative reciprocity or by rewarding kind action with positive reciprocity [11-14]. Psychological contract breach measures organizational contribution to reciprocity dynamic with employees as a negative reciprocity in returning harms for harms. An action of negative reciprocity dynamic by the organization to employee may make the employee perform more poorly in return [13, 14] as could be manifested when an employee perceives breach in psychological contract. Failure of the organization to meet up to its obligations and reciprocal responsibility may jeopardise employee's job involvement. Perceived organizational support measures organizational contribution to reciprocity dynamic with employees as a positive reciprocity in returning benefits to benefits. An action of positive reciprocity dynamic by the organisation to employees makes the employees performance gets better in return [12] as could be manifested when an employee perceives support of the organization. When organisation meet up to its obligation and reciprocal responsibility; the employee's job involvement is likely to be better.

Some researchers [15] use social exchange theory to

explain the interaction between parties with the aim of developing a long profitable relationship. Social exchange theory purported employer obligations increase with the measure of efficiency and productive effort utilised by the employee [16]. Persons that give much to others try to get much from them, and persons that get much from others are under pressure to give much to them. This theory is used to explain psychological contract and perceived organizational support processes. Exchange theorists would expect involvement to develop within a relationship when parties experience fulfillment of reciprocal responsibility. Furthermore, it is proposed that employee is willing to exchange involvement on the job when there is fulfillment of obligation of both psychological contract and perceived organizational support in the interactions with the employer [11].

Social exchange theory argues that obligations are generated through interactions between parties who are in a state of reciprocal interdependence. The employer/employee reciprocal exchange is built on the exchange of good treatment for positive job attitude and bad treatment for negative job attitude. Consequently, the employer has the power to influence that relationship through its treatment to the employee. Breach in psychological contract could cause a negative relationship to develop within the organization affecting job performance [17, 18]. An experience of low quality social exchanges is likely to cause a breach in psychological contract and affect employee productivity and involvement in the job [19].

Researchers [20, 21] found that when employees perceive psychological contract breach they begin to display reduced job attitude such as job involvement. [22] indicated that there is relationship between employee job involvement and the psychological contract. [23-25] found that psychological contract breach is negatively correlated with job involvement. The study of [12] showed that organizations that care and show support about the welfare of employee, fulfilling all forms of pledges made are more likely to influence concern in the employee, likely leading to achievement of organizational goals. An experience of high-quality social exchanges such as perceived organizational support stirs up positive job attitude to develop within the organization with employee involvement in the job [26]. Researchers, [27, 28] found that perceived organizational support predicted job involvement.

The organization that is, the employer is preoccupied with maximizing its objective and profitability which will be brought about by employee's involvement in their job. When job involvement is jeopardized there is reduce employee's psychological attachment to work as employee develop negative attitudes to the job; employees of both private and public organizations may be less involved in their job due to certain situations surrounding that job. Although [29] expessed that employees of public organisations exhibit job involvement more than their counterparts in private organizations. Public organizations are government owned while private organisations are non-governmental. Some

employees endure their jobs rather than enjoy it because the employee perceives breach in psychological contract and lack of perceived organizational support. Employees therefore embark strike actions. Strike actions are more common in public organization especially because they have unions, which is lacking in private organizations.

This study therefore seeks to find out the influence of psychological contract breach and perceived organizational support on job involvement of employees in public organizations and private organizations in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria.

From the ongoing, the following hypotheses were tested:

1. There will be significant joint prediction of psychological contract breach and perceived organizational support on job involvement.
2. Participants in public organizations will significantly display job involvement than those in private organizations.

2. Method

The cross sectional survey and ex-post facto research design was adopted for this study. The adoption of the ex-post facto research design stems from the fact that the independent variables were not manipulated. The 200 participants for this study were selected using purposive sampling technique from both public and private organizations in Federal Capital Territory (FCT), in Abuja. The public organizations cover Federal ministries and parastatals while the private sectors covered the organized private sector such as financial institutions, manufacturing industries, service industries. The employees represent career professions such as bankers, security operatives, health workers, lecturers and social service workers.

Data collected consisted of demographic variables, psychological contract breach, perceived organizational support and job involvement in a questionnaire. Demographic variables are defined as the statistical study of the human population and its ability to be altered in regards to density, distribution, and size through the use of statistics. The demographic variables utilized in this study include gender, age, job status, and job tenure.

Psychological Contract Breach was measured with a scale developed by [30]. The purpose for this scale was to know the level at which psychological contracts were breached or fulfilled. [16] also agreed with this belief and adapted the

scale. The scale seeks to evaluate the level at which individuals felt fulfilled or dissatisfied with their employer's implicit agreements [16, 30]. The scale is assessed thus; when the psychological contract is fulfilled, the scores are high but when it is breached, the scores are low. The respondents were assessed using a Likert scale consisting of "Never" (0) to "Always" (6). It contains 10 items and an example of an item used in this scale is, 'The organization shows very little concern for me'. The expected standard for coefficient alpha level is 0.70 [31] but the author reported reliability of the test to be 0.78. The present study reported reliability of 0.91.

Perceived Organizational Support scale was developed by [11] to assess levels of employee's perceived organizational support and active interest in regard with which they are held by their employer. The perceived organizational support scale consists of 17 items. The respondents were assessed using a Likert scale consisting of "Strongly disagree" (1) to "Strong agree" (6). A reliability and item analysis of the scores obtained in the original study indicated acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) of 0.97. The present study reported reliability of 0.73.

Job Involvement scale is developed by [32] consists of 20-item; and later create a 6-item short version. The respondents were assessed using a Likert scale consisting of "Strongly disagree" (1) to "Strong agree" (6). [32] reported a correlation of .87 for both the 20-item version and the 6-item version. Evaluation of [32]'s study gave a Cronbach Alpha of .79 for the 20 item version and .70 for the 6 item version. The present study reported reliability of .67.

3. Results

The participants' socio-demographics characteristic was observed for a sample of 200. 120(60.0%) of total participants were male, female accounted for 80(40.0%). Age of participants ranges between 18 to 58 years ($M = 40$, $SD = 5.2$). The analysis of participants job status shows that 122(61.0%) of total participants are senior staff while 78(39.0%) are junior staff. In addition, job tenure ranges from 3 to 30 years ($M = 12.8$, $SD = 6.7$). Finally, for organizational type, 53(26.5%) of total participants are from private organization while 147 (73.5%) are from public organization. The analysis shows that majority of the participants are from public organization.

3.1. Zero-Order Correlation

Table 1. Showing Zero-Order Correlation matrix of relationship among variables

Variables	M	SD	SEX	PCB	POS	J.I.
Sex	-	-	1			
Psychological Contract Breach (PCB)	82.20	25.25	.047	1		
Perceived Organizational Support (POS)	40.70	9.27	-.041	.514**	1	
Job Involvement (JI)	54.63	6.30	-.185**	-.015	.145*	1

The analysis summary presented in Table 1 indicates that there is a significant positive relationship between psychological contract breach and perceived organizational support $\{r(199)=.514, p<.01\}$; and between perceived organizational support and job involvement $\{r(199)=.145, p<.05\}$. The analysis also indicates that there is a significant negative relationships between gender and job involvement $\{r(199)= -.185, p<.01\}$. The remaining bivariate correlations were not found to be significant at .05 significance level.

3.2. Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There will be significant joint prediction of psychological contract breach and perceived organizational support on job involvement.

Table 2. Multiple regression analysis of Psychological Contract Breach and Perceived Organizational Support on Job Involvement

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	R ²	P
Regression	245.008	2	122.504	3.145	.032	.05
Residual	7438.997	198	38.948			
Total	7684.005	200				

Table 3. Coefficient of Psychological Contract Breach and Perceived Organizational Support on Job Involvement

Model	B	SE.B	Beta	t	P
(Constant)	51.337	2.108		24.350	.00
Psychological Contract Breach	-.03	.021	-.119	-1.439	.15
Perceived Organizational Support	.14	.056	.206	2.499	.01

The analysis result in Table 2 indicated that there is significant joint prediction of psychological contract and perceived organizational support on job involvement $\{F(2, 198) = 3.145, p<0.05, R^2=0.032\}$. Further examination from Table 2 ($R^2=0.032$) indicated that the independent variables psychological contract breach and perceived organizational support explained 3.2% variation in job involvement among employees. The hypothesis is accepted. Furthermore, it is observed from Table 3 that perceived organizational support ($\beta=0.14, t=2.50, p<0.05$) independently predict job involvement among employees in private and public organization. Psychological contract breach has no significant independent prediction on job involvement among employees ($\beta=-0.03, t=-1.44, p>0.05$); however, there is a negative direction.

Hypotheses 2 participants in public organisation display significantly higher level of job involvement than their counterparts in private organisation. An independent sample t-test was used to analyze the data and test the hypothesis, at 0.05% significant level. The analysis results are summarized and presented in Table 4.

The result in Table 4 showed that there is significant difference of organizational type on job involvement $\{t(198) = -2.90, p<.05\}$. Furthermore, it is also observed from the table that private organisation mean scores on job

involvement ($N=53, \bar{X}=52.53, SD=5.82$) is significantly lower than those of participants in public organisations ($N=147, \bar{X}=55.41, SD=6.31$). The analysis shows that participants in public organisations display significantly higher level of job involvement than their counterparts in private organisation. Hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Table 4. Independent sample t-test showing the influence of Organizational Type on Job Involvement

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t	P-val
Job Involvement	Private	53	52.53	5.82		
	Public	147	55.41	6.31	198	-2.896 .004

4. Discussion

Hypothesis one states that there will be significant joint prediction of psychological contract breach and perceived organizational support on job involvement. Both psychological contract breach and perceived organizational support jointly predicted job involvement supporting social exchange theory [16] and norm of reciprocity. However, the independent contribution of psychological contract breach to job involvement shows that there is no significant independent influence of psychological contract breach on job involvement among the participants. This result contradicts [13, 22-24] that psychological contract breach negatively influences job involvement. When there is an action of negative reciprocity e.g psychological contract breach by the organization to employee, the employee in turn performs poorly.

This finding indicates a negative direction such that when employees perceive psychological contract breach, the employee in exchange according to norm of reciprocity will not be involved in their job. Employees withdraw their efforts and reduce their contributions which extensively affect productivity of the organization. Job involvement and psychological contract breach play vital role in understanding the overall low productivity in the organization and consequently the nation. There is economic recession in the country; there is fall in exchange rate of the nation's currency. The employees perceived that some employers are not intentionally breaching the implicit contract. A paradox of reciprocity is that you cannot give what you do not have. Social exchanges when in shortfall cause breach in psychological contract and affect employee productivity and involvement in the job.

The independent contribution of perceived organizational support to job involvement shows that perceived organizational support predicted job involvement and corroborates the findings of [27-28] that perceived organizational support predicted job involvement. In line with the norm of reciprocity, this finding supported action of positive reciprocity dynamic by the organisation to employees. The employees in turn get more involved in the

job and give better performance for the organizational support obtained. The result of the zero order correlation further show that there is significant positive relationship between perceived organizational support and job involvement. When the employee perceived that the employer renders organizational support, the employee in exchange gets involved in one's job in reaching organizational goals. In corroboration of social exchange theory high-quality social exchanges such as perceived organizational support stir up positive relationship to develop between the employer and the employee.

Hypothesis two states that participants in public organizations will significantly display job involvement than those in private organizations. The analysis of the findings indicates that employee in private organisations are less involved in their job compared to their counterparts in the public organisations. The findings of this study support [29] that employees in public organizations are more involved in their job than those in private organizations. Both employer and employee rely on the two-way relationship which requires the employee to be involved in the job, producing profit for the employer and the organization. In exchange, the employer is required to provide certain benefits and incentives to meet employees' needs. In the public organization employees embark on strike actions when their needs are not met; their employer the government has no choice but meet the demands. The private organizations do not make their agitations known publicly and therefore suffer silently; this is vent in reduced job involvement.

4.1. Implication of Findings in Line with Attitude Change/National Development

- Employees with negative direction of influence of psychological contract are likely not involved in their job, hence unproductive to the organisation and the nation.
- Employees with positive direction of perceived organizational support enhance productivity in the organisation and the nation.
- Profile of job involvement of employees on the organisational type-public versus private.
- I/O psychologists and human resource managers should give more serious attention to the subject of norm of reciprocity and its influence on job involvement, performance and productivity.

4.2. Recommendations

1. There should be faithful implementation of perceived organizational support which form basis of national development plan
2. Strategies to implement sustainable development by organisation is recommended via employer's enhanced perceived organizational support.
3. Review of the organisation's support to reflect the current socio-economic reality.
4. Psycho-attitudinal change education to employees in

line with change advocated by Federal Government

5. Additional research efforts to examine why participants in public organization is better than those in private organization on job involvement.

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