



Mediating Role of Intrinsic Motivation on the Relationship between Human Resource Flexibility and Organizational Citizenship Behavior: A Conceptual Framework

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Abstract

Organizational Citizenship Behavior is one of the most important attributes which organizations ensure its core employees practiced. The objective of this study is to propose a conceptual framework to explain the relationship between Human Resource Flexibility and Organizational Citizenship Behavior through the mediating role of intrinsic motivation in manufacturing sector of Kano State, Nigeria. This study reviews relevant literature on the key concepts in the study namely; human resource flexibility, organizational citizenship behavior and intrinsic motivation. Based on the literature reviewed, a potential mediation of intrinsic motivation on the relationship between human resource flexibility and organizational citizenship behavior was found. Accordingly, the paper recommends that future studies should consider carrying out an empirical investigation on effect of human resource flexibility on organizational citizenship behavior through the mediating role of intrinsic motivation.

Keywords: Organizational Citizenship Behavior, Intrinsic Motivation, Human Resource Flexibility.

1. Introduction

The nature of today's workplace is much more complex and unpredictable than ever before. The emergence of globalization, privatization and liberalization made the competition in business to increase in multifold. Today's workplace demands more energy, talent and multi skilling with specialized aptitudes in order to succeed and survive in the face of global competition (Pohl, Vonthron & Closon, 2017; Kumari & Pradhan, 2014).

To compete well, organizations need to inspire their staff to involve in Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB). Organizational Citizenship Behavior is an important factor for performance enhancement of employees. Ross (2015) regarded organizational citizenship behavior as individual discretionary behavior, without direct or

definite approval of the formal reward system of the organization, to assist organizational functions in effective operation. Traditionally, OCB trigger scholars' attentions to understanding of its concepts, antecedents, predictor's correlates, and outcomes (Pohl, Vonthron & Closon, 2017). In order to elevate businesses to the next competitive landscape, organizations require employees' cooperation, benevolence, self-sacrifice and extra effort. Employee OCB also benefits organizations directly or indirectly.

Today, it has become a priority for organizations to have OCB in order to overcome the challenges of becoming dynamic, efficient, proactive, innovative, and successful organizations for being able to quickly respond to changes (Lapierre &



Hackett, 2007, Amah, 2017). Employees who have OCB contribute positively to the organization and exhibit good relations with their co-workers. At the heart of OCB lies the contribution made by human potential, which forms the most important capital for companies in fierce competition.

Importantly, within the strategic approach to human resource management, studies have advocated flexibility in human resource systems and processes to help the organization adapt to a complex and dynamic environment (Lengnick-Hall and Lengnick-Hall, 1988; Snow and Snell, 1993; Ketkar and Sett, 2009; Way et al., 2012; Camps et al., 2015). From this point of view, human resource flexibility is conceived as a capability through which the organization can more easily adapt to environmental contingency changes (Snell, Youndt, and Wright, 1996; Tracey, 2012; Camps et al., 2015; Sekhar, Patwardhan & Vyas, 2016). In another perspective, Wright and Snell (1998) argues that employees' flexibility can be defined as the extent to which the firm's human resources possess skills and behavior repertoires which offer the organization a chance to develop strategic alternatives within its competitive environment. Focusing on the concept of human resource flexibility, the literature draws a distinction between external or numerical flexibility and internal or functional flexibility (Atkinson, 1984; Michie and Sheehan, 2005; Kumari and Pradhan, 2014). Numerical flexibility refers to a firm's ability to vary the amount of labor employed, while functional flexibility is associated with the ability to perform a variety of heterogeneous tasks.

The current study will be conducted in Nigerian manufacturing industry because of its importance to national development. In addition, due to the current situations brought about by COVID- 19 Pandemic the manufacturing sector contributes less than 10% of the GDP, as against the

previous year having a manufacturing sector that contributes as much as 25% (Business News, 2020). Many issues are attributed to these declines among such are; insecurity, skill gap, employees' discretionary behavior, poor infrastructure, High Government Bureaucracy etc. (infoguidenigeria, 2021). As a part of the organization, human resource department is now getting more importance in the hierarchy of the organization, for proper utilization of its human capital towards enhancing organizational performance and correspondingly gaining organizational effectiveness.

Similarly, the work of Story, Stasson, Mahoney and Heat (2018) indicates that there are some Intrinsic factors that can be considered to provide proper concentration in organization such as recognition, responsibility, advancement, achieving the goal and growth of the employees. This shows that whenever employees complete the task above the standard set, it is the duties of the manager to make proper recognition and appreciation apart from remuneration which will make them feel energetic. The employees expect the company to have advancement according to the technology change. Employees working in the firm expect the career growth when this thing has not happened from their company it will make them lose their scope and stop working with involvement which will lead to poor performance (Manzoor 2012).

However, recent attention to the increasing dynamism of competitive environments and the emergence of new principles to manage firms in these context points to human resource (HR) flexibility as a potential factor that can influence OCB and organizational outcomes (Bhattacharya, Gibson, & Doty, 2005; Do, Yeah & Madsen, 2016). The chaos, high uncertainty, and globally high competition in the 21st century have changed human resource management in an enterprise from the auxiliary role in the function to



the equivalent importance on the strategy (Huang & Hsu, 2019). The application of human resource strategy flexibility therefore is regarded as a primary direction for organizational flexibility. For instance, job rotation allows employees receiving unidirectional and multi-cultivation (job flexibility) and choices of salary and diverse welfare decisions (welfare flexibility) as well as understanding the relevance between individual and company finance being linked with diverse evaluation methods (salary flexibility) (Do, Yeah & Madsen, 2016; Huang & Hsu, 2019). Consequently, HR flexibility is critical for companies to be able to adapt their employee skills and employee behaviors to these dynamic environments (Wright and Snell, 1998). Therefore, HR flexibility can be viewed as a source of competitive advantage that should lead to high performance (Barney, 1991; Wright et al., 2001; Bhattacharya et al., 2005; Do, Yeah & Madsen, 2016), and probably to OCB (Adiele & Nweke, 2015).

Literature reveals that the link between Human resource flexibility and OCB was not only direct, but indirect (Turek & Wojtczuk-Turek, 2015). It was demonstrated that was related to OCB through mechanisms including skills flexibility (Turek & Wojtczuk-Turek, 2015), functional flexibility to the behavioral and human resource practice (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2010). Following partial mediation of the tested variables, recommendation for future studies to test other mediators under which OCB will be more significantly enhanced were made (Organ, 2006; Walumbwa et al., 2010). In addition, in a study Kumari and Pradhan, (2014) suggested future researchers can also incorporate some other variables such as consequences of HR flexibility like increased employee commitment, job satisfaction, performance & motivation, or some mediator variables can be taken into consideration. This also satisfy the condition of Mediation as stated by Baron

and Kenny, (1986) when there is consistent finding between two relation a mediator can be introduces to act and explain the mechanism or process that underlies an observed relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable.

Furthermore, studies on the relationship between OCB and human resources flexibility has been documented in Africa, Asia, Europe, and American continents (Mathumb & Dobb,2013; Rurkkhum, 2013; Osaro & Akinmayowa, 2014). Studies in those continents have revealed a positive relationship between organizational citizenship behavior and human resources management flexibility. Moreover, existing OCB studies mainly appear in a Western cultural context, however, due to the impact of cultural differences, the relevant conclusions may not be equally applicable to other cultural contexts. In addition, Previous studies on construct of OCB in Nigeria industries have focused on Maritime sector (Amadi, Seth & Ojiabo,2017), hospitality industry (Obiora & Okpu, 2015), tertiary institutions (Ucho & Atime, 2013; Itiola et al., 2014; Monanu, Okoli, Ezeliora & Okeke, 2014), banking sector (Nwankwo et al., 2013), and government-owned enterprise (Bambale, 2014; Ehigie & Otukoya, 2007) only few if any on Manufacturing sector.

Employers in both private and public organizations are becoming increasingly aware that motivations increase productivity. From the foregoing, and looking at today's 'economic trend, it is evident that the pace of change in our business environment presents fresh challenges daily. Despite these, few researches if any has targeted to investigate the influence of intrinsic motivation on relationship between Human resource flexibility and OCB in Nigeria. Existing studies in Nigeria, aimed at the effect of motivators and hygiene on OCB by Jibowo (2007). Related studies on

this study were on influence of monetary incentives and its removal on OCB (Bergum & Lehrs, 2004). Of these studies in Nigeria, very few assessed the influence of intrinsic motivation on relationship between Human resource flexibility and OCB in manufacturing sub-sector of Nigeria which suffer decline in boosting the economy.

Several scholars on OCB research have shown the significance of this concept for the patronage and penetration of their organizations, and meanwhile, many concepts of OCB exist in the literature as extra role behavior, pro-social organizational behavior, and contextual performance. (Organ, 1990; Adiele & Nweke, 2015; Chelagat, Chepkwony & Kemboi, 2015; Akanni & Ndubueze, 2017; Amadi, Seth, & Ojiabo, 2017; Pohl, Vonthron & Closon, 2017). It's against this backdrop that this study will try to investigate the influence of human resource flexibility on intrinsic motivation, the influence of intrinsic motivation on OCB and the mediating effect of intrinsic motivation on the relationship between human resource flexibility and OCB in the context of Manufacturing Industry in Kano, Nigeria.

1.2 Research objectives

Generally, this study aims at investigating the role played by intrinsic motivation on the relationship between human resource flexibility and organizational citizenship behavior among employees of some selected manufacturing companies in Kano state. Specifically, the study has the following objectives:

1. To investigate the relationship between human resource flexibility and Organization Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) in the Manufacturing Sector of Kano State.
2. To examine the mediating role of intrinsic motivation on the relationship between human resource flexibility and Organization Citizenship Behaviour

(OCB) in the Manufacturing Sector of Kano State.

3. To determine the relationship between intrinsic motivation and OCB in the Manufacturing industry of Kano State?

1.3 Hypotheses of the Study

Three (3) hypotheses are formulated which are concerned with relationships between the variables.

1. Human Resource Behaviour flexibility is positively related to Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) in the manufacturing sector of Kano State.
2. Intrinsic motivation significantly mediates the relationship between Human Resource Behaviour and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) in the manufacturing sector of Kano State
3. Intrinsic motivation significantly related with Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) of manufacturing sector in the Kano State.

2. Review of Related Literature

Here, all the major variables under study were reviewed namely: Human Resource Flexibility, Organizational Citizenship Behavior and Intrinsic Motivation

2.1 Concept of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)

The concept of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) was initiated by Barnard (1938). Barnard who used formal and informal classification for organization also adopted system approach in analyzing organizations. The concept of formal system includes the rules, regulations, and procedures of organizations and where relationship among individuals relies on achieving effectiveness and efficiency in the achievement of organizational goals. On the other hand, the informal systems make the foundation of the concept of OCB. The informal system has described as "contributions by individuals that go



beyond the content of contractual obligations, obedience to legitimate authority or calculated striving for remuneration as mediated by the formal organization” (Organ et al. 2006). Moreover, Katz (1964) in his study distinguished between the in-role performance which is also termed as dependable role performance and instinctive Behavior. Katz (1964) was of the opinion that for any organization to function well it requires three types of behavior. Firstly, employees must be induced not only to enter but also to remain with the organization. Secondly, employees must have the ability to perform the job requirements or any specific role, as and when assigned. Lastly, employees must have characteristics of innovation and perform spontaneously, that is beyond their job description (Werner, 2000).

The construct of OCB in previous literature can be reviewed since last 40 years, where different researchers provided their own conceptualization and instruments for OCB. The first study on OCB was conducted by Smith et al. (1983) where they referred a group of performance as Citizenship Behavior and termed them important for the organization. They conducted a study of two large banks with the aim of determining the nature and antecedents of OCB. The respondents of their study were 422 employees and their respective supervisors from 58 departments. Smith et al. (1983) developed a measurement instrument for OCB and used supervisor’s feedback regarding employees’ behavior which is beyond their job description. They were further asked to elaborate the behavior of those employees, who in their opinion, go beyond their job description during their conduct at work. The results of the study showed that OCB has at least two different dimensions that are altruism and general compliance. Behaviors such as helping a colleague in any work

assignment or providing useful training to a new inductee, which is not the part of an employee’s job description, were termed as altruism. Moreover, general compliance is being punctual at duty and giving prior information in case of not being able to attend. Their study also uncovered leader supportiveness, an element of workplace environment as one of the important findings. This aspect of leader supportiveness was helpful in employee’s job satisfaction, which helps in increasing the level of altruism dimension of OCB.

2.2 Human Resource Flexibility

Human resource flexibility refers to “the capacity of HRM to facilitate the organization's ability to adapt effectively and in a timely manner to changing or diverse demands from either its environment or from within the firm itself” (Milliman et al., 1991; Zolin et al., 2011). Situations that may require human resource flexibility include a dynamic or diverse environment as well as divergent or rapidly changing organizational goals and strategies (Lengnick-Hall and Lengnick-Hall, 1988; Zolin et al., 2011). These situations accurately describe the context of an entrepreneurial team, regardless of the industry.

Even though, human resource flexibility has been traditionally presented as a desirable capability, its dimensions as well as the process through which it develops were not adequately studied until Wright and Snell (1998) described these conceptualization deficiencies around the following three dimensions: skill flexibility; Behavioral flexibility; and HR practice flexibility. The definition of *behavioral flexibility* by Wright and Snell (1998) gives the consideration of ‘behaviour’ at work to those routine scripts or sequences that employees follow when performing their tasks. For these authors, behaviors become rigid or inflexible when the employees who have applied a sequence of actions to handle repetitive situations select the same sequence to deal

with new situations. By contrast, if employees are capable of using different routines when faced with new circumstances, their behaviors are flexible. Expressed differently, employees with flexible behaviors adapt their responses to previously unknown circumstances on the basis of improvisation rather than following predefined action patterns (Wright & Snell, 1998; Bhattacharya et al., 2005; Dyer and Ericksen, 2005; Kumari & Pradhan, 2014;). There is a variety of reasons why flexible behaviors amongst employees constitute a valuable resource for the organization. Firstly, employees who can successfully cope with different contingencies at their workplace allow the firm to achieve savings in the costs derived from the lack of adaptation to change (Lepine et al., 2000). And secondly, behavioral flexibility makes it easier to implement change processes in the firm, in as much as it gives the organization real chances to adequately respond to a wide range of situations (Bhattacharya et al., 2005; Beltran-Martin and Roca-Puig, 2013). *Skill flexibility* arguably differs from behavioral flexibility in the fact that employees may have a motivation to act flexibly but lack the knowledge or skills required to do so.

Flexibility in skills is one of the most relevant antecedents of flexibility in Behaviors (Sujan et al., 1994). Following the suggestion of Wright and Snell (1998), Beltran-Martin (2008) and Kumari and Pradhan (2014), skill flexibility refers on the one hand to the number of potential alternatives uses where the knowledge and skills owned by an employee can be applied. Those who have acquired a large number of skills which allow them to perform a wide range of tasks are flexible employees. A flexible employee is thus one who shows the ability to work on different tasks and under various circumstances, at a low cost and a short period of time being required to mobilize this employee to new functions or jobs

(Riley and Lockwood, 1997; Van den Berg and Van der Velde, 2005; De Lastra et al., 2014; Camps et al., 2015).

Flexibility in practices may create value inside the organization in several ways. Firstly, when the firm's situation undergoes changes, the organization can change its practices quickly. For instance, a remuneration system based on the description of jobs is bound to create resistance to change; however, a flexible pay policy linked to profit measures adapts faster to changes in terms of profit increase or decrease (Milkovich & Newman, 1999; Ismail et al., 2015). Secondly, flexibility in human resource practices will most probably result in flexible behaviors amongst employees. In the previous example about variable compensation plans, it becomes easier for employees to adapt to the change required by the business because their remuneration is determined by the firm's success. And thirdly, human resource practice flexibility enables the firm to offer similar practices in different units and to achieve coherence throughout the organization.

2.3 Relationship between Human Resource Flexibility and OCB

As for the connection between human resource flexibility and OCB, several studies have shown that employees' flexibility affects business results (Way et al., 2013; Arabi & Daneshparvar, 2008; Chang et al., 2013; Way et al., 2013; Preenen et al., 2015). For instance, Ronnmar, 2004; Camps et al., (2015) argue that the set of capabilities and skills underlying flexibility in human resources determines their capacity to be responsible for several activities inside the organization. Employees with a broad knowledge base contribute to the organization's competitive advantage because this base generates higher capabilities to develop more efficient means to fulfil the different task requirements (Wright et al., 1994; Boxall, 1999; Boxall, 2013). A number of studies

assume that greater flexibility increases employees' level of satisfaction and motivation and, accordingly, their productivity (Cordery et al., 1993; Camps et al., 2015).

Moreover, flexible employees maintain profitable relationships with customers that contribute to meeting those customers' needs, as well as to improving their satisfaction levels (Youndt and Snell, 2004; Fu et al., 2015). Human resource flexibility may become relevant in the adoption of innovative solutions inside the firm because such flexibility implies that employees can better respond to stimuli which have previously appeared. Furthermore, employees improve their knowledge on a regular basis, therefore their performance at work decreases and, consequently, their productivity increases (Lado & Wilson, 1994; Nieves & Quintana, 2016). Similarly, flexibility encourages the members of an organization to improvise and come up with new ideas, to question themselves and reflect on their actions, to give sense and generate new knowledge from these actions. For instance, it allows organization members to think about ways to reduce costs and develop new innovations in service delivery (Youndt & Snell, 2004; Nieves & Quintana, 2016). Some empirical studies have provided evidence of the impact that such a flexible employee has on working performance (Crant, 1995; Glaser, Stam & Takeuchi, 2015), on job satisfaction (Seibert, Crant, & Kraimer, 1999; Glaser, Stam & Takeuchi, 2015), on productivity, on customer service, and on the degree of commitment to the organization (Kirkman & Rosen, 1999; Beltran-Martin et al., 2008, 2013; Camps et al., 2015), as well as on objective financial performance measures (Bhattacharya *et al.*, 2005; Ngo & Loi, 2008) and on subjective financial performance measures (Ketkar & Sett, 2009, 2010).

2.4 Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation is defined as “the doing of an activity for its inherent satisfactions” (Ryan & Deci, 2000) or “performing an activity for the pleasure inherent in the activity” (Story, Stasson, Mahoney, & Heart, 2008) rather than for some outward and separable outcomes resulting in an external reward or recognition. In the perspective of Lee et al., (2012), it was learned that intrinsic motivation is actually a complex neurophysiological activity wherein an individual goes through an intense psychological process that stems from inherent feelings. In other words, Ryan and Deci found that “intrinsic motivation makes an individual much more likely to be motivated and perform well as opposed to those that were extrinsically motivated,” and “intrinsic factors may increase satisfaction, organizational commitment, and satisfaction”. In fact, those who had more inherent intrinsic motivation were “less susceptible to the external motivation of financial intervention”. Therefore, it can be concluded that the intrinsic motivators are psychological feelings that employees get from doing meaningful work and performing it well.

2.5 Relationship between Intrinsic Motivation and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)

Employee motivation is shown through energy directed towards work attitudes to achieve the goals of the organization (Salami, 2008 in Karabay et al., 2014; Eymur & Geban, 2011 in Karabay et al., 2014). OCB comprises extra-role behaviors that are not within role but nevertheless of great importance for efficient processes in organizations (Organ, 1988; Podsakoff, Ahearne & Mackenzie, 1997). According to Ehrhart, Bliese and Thomas (2006) OCB is a means of positively influencing organizational performance; it is argued that the OCB of the implementation team should result in a successful outcome. Niehoff (2005)

suggested that OCB exerts positive influence on organizational performance because it provides socio emotional support to other employees and facilitates the work of others. Therefore, employees may contribute to organizational effectiveness by building socio-emotional support in the organization and facilitating more efficient work behavior.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

The underpinning theory of this research work is social exchange theory. Social exchange theory is a behavioral theory that its foundation exists from anthropology, sociology Psychology, and socio-psychological theory (Homans, 1958; Blau, 1964; & Emerson 1972). The economic exchange is one of component of social exchange theory which involves specific conditions on transaction with extra rewards that is unique or encouragement as profit. Social exchange theory involves hidden individual commitments, trust, intrinsic and extra rewards, which comprise the central idea of pure calculation and wholesome love communication (Blau, 1994).

Social exchange theory provides an explanatory framework to clarify how employee perceptions of HRM flexibility are linked to OCB and intrinsic motivation. Social exchange theory is based on norms of reciprocity within social relationships. It is argued that employees who receive economic or socio-emotional benefits from their organization feel obligated to respond in kind (Blau,

1964, Eisenberger et al., 1986, Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). An organization’s HRM flexibility may be viewed as signaling intent for long-term investment in employees that obligates them to respond with discretionary role behavior (Sun, Aryee and Law, 2007, Shaw, Dineen, Fang and Vellella, 2009, Gong, Chang and Cheung, 2010). HRM flexibility is viewed by employees as a “personalized” commitment to them by the organization which is then reciprocated back to the organization by employees through positive attitudes and behavior social exchange theory perceived that an exchange of human relationship is effective for usage of cost benefit analysis and to expression of competition or alternatives. When there is balancing function in relationship then cost and benefits will be equitable. Equity is a form of fairness and just on relationship irrespective of nature of exchange either visible or non-visible item but the response of the exchange may be rewarded through financial or nonfinancial by giving and expecting or receiving with action to pay back to boost the relationship (Homan, 1958).

Based on the foregoing discussion and empirical evidence, a framework is developed to examine the relationship between Human Resource Flexibility on OCB with mediating role of intrinsic motivation in the manufacturing industry of Kano state. The research framework for this study is depicted in Figure 1.

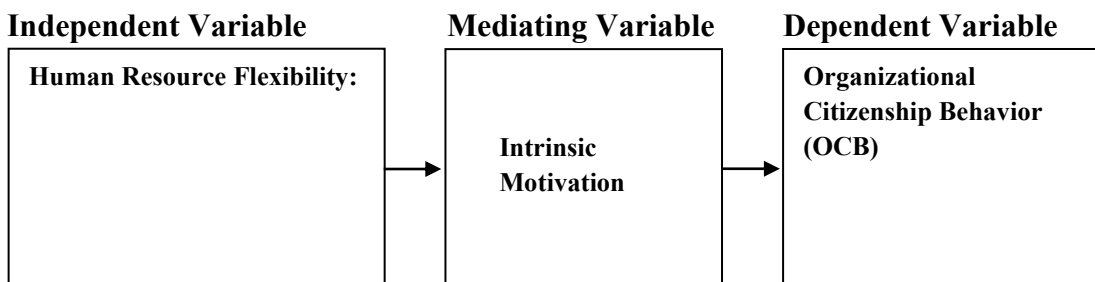


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework Model

Source: *The Researcher*



3. Conclusion and Recommendations

The present study presented the potential mediation role of intrinsic motivation on the relationship between Human Resource Flexibility and Organizational Citizenship Behaviors among employees in the manufacturing industry in Kano State, Nigeria. A literature review was conducted about the concept of Human Resource Flexibility, Organizational Citizenship Behaviors, and Intrinsic Motivation. Based on the review, condition for introducing a mediating variable was fulfilled. The present study theoretically reinforced the results of previous studies with regard to the link between Human Resource Flexibility and Organizational Citizenship Behavior through the mediating role of intrinsic motivation. The study also highlighted the importance of Human Resource Flexibility in the enhancement of organizational Citizenship Behavior.

The condition provides that to introduce a mediator, independent variable have to be related to a mediator, and mediator is related to dependent variable. In this study, literature showed that Human Resource Flexibility was related to intrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation was related to Organization Citizenship Behaviors. Therefore, it was proposed that Intrinsic Motivation will have a substantial role in mediating the relationship between Human Resource Flexibility and Organizational Citizenship Behaviors in the manufacturing industry in Kano State, Nigeria.

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