

Influence of Organisational Based Self-Esteem on Assertive Behaviour among Government Workers in Ekiti State



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ABSTRACT: This study investigated the influence of organizational based self-esteem on assertive behaviour among government workers in Ekiti State. The study made use of a total number of one hundred and ninety-six (196) participants across government organizations in Ekiti State who were randomly selected. The sample comprised of Male 115 (58.7%) and Female 81 (41.3%). Organizational based self-esteem (OBSE) was measured with a 10-item survey developed by Pierce, Gardner, and Dunham (1989). Rathus Assertiveness Schedule (RAS) was used to measure assertiveness. Three hypothesis were formulated and tested in the study and results shows that there is no significant influence of organizational based self-esteem on assertiveness $t(194)=-.717, p>.05$, there is no significant influence of sex on assertiveness $t(194)=.694, p>.05$. Finally, there is no significant age difference on assertiveness $t(194)=.694, p>.05$. Findings were discussed and it was recommended that assertiveness training or other such techniques may be given to the non-assertive employees to build their self-concept and self-esteem and a longitudinal study may be conducted on large sample to assess the effects of assertive training on assertive behaviour and self-esteem with comparison of the different interventional strategies.

KEYWORDS: Organisation, Self-Esteem, Assertive behaviour, Government workers, Ekiti, Nigeria.

I. INTRODUCTION

Organizations are facing increased competition due to globalization, changes in technology, political and economic environments (Evans, Pucik & Barsoux 2002) and therefore prompting these organizations to maximally manage their employees as one of the ways to prepare them to adjust to the increases above and thus enhance their performance. Organizations worldwide primarily exist in order to achieve specific goals. The most important capital of organizations and asset of institutes is individual who work for them in spite of the fact that organizations are becoming virtual with communications technology advancements (with the characteristic of lack of geographical concentration of human resources and varying number of employees) (Moshksar, 2010). Today, everyone knows that organizational success depends on physical, mental and social recognition of human resources (Hejazi, 2002). This is why many studies verified that individual skills like self-esteem and assertiveness can predict occupational performance of employees under special circumstances (Tett and Barent, 2003).

Self esteem has to do with how a person identifies and evaluates his or her definition of self. Start with self esteem as identification. When an individual commits his or her identity to just one part of life – to having friends, to competitive sports, to high academic achievement, good work, when academic performance drops, esteem comes crashing down. To maintain relative constancy of well being through the normal ups and downs of a person, it really helps to have multiple pillars of self esteem. Considering self esteem as evaluation, when the a person is routinely hard on him or herself- from insisting on excellence, from criticizing failings, from punishing mistakes – then when expectations are unmet, when imperfections become apparent, when human errors occur, esteem comes crashing down. To maintain constancy of well being during the trials of an employee, it really helps when life goes badly to treat oneself with tolerance and understanding. Assertiveness may play a critical role in an employee. Persons who are assertive are believed to competently communicate their thoughts and feelings in a manner that respects the rights of others (Elliot & Herrick, 1999). Assertive individuals develop confidence and satisfaction in their ability to communicate with others (Masters, Burish, Hollon & Rimm, 2007); those who are not assertive report more loneliness and dissatisfaction in social interactions, and less confidence in their beliefs and opinions (Gambrill, Florian & Splaver, 1986; Pitcher & Meikle, 1980). Elliott and Gramling (1990) have found that assertive employee under stress are able to benefit from supportive relationships that provide a sense of social integration and personal worth. It is reasonable to expect assertive persons to be more effective in garnering and utilized support available in their interpersonal environment.

Self-esteem and assertive behaviour can predict employees' performance in organizations and self-esteem influences on working behaviors in two methods; employees have different levels of self-esteem and this influences on their behavior and thoughts; employees need to feel good about themselves and their thoughts and behaviors, improve them and improve their self-

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esteem (Sadeghiyan, 2009). On the other hand, self-esteem is an individual's sense of his or her value or worth, or the extent to which a person values, approves of, appreciates, prizes, or likes himself or herself (Blascouich and Tomaka, 1991). It is generally considered to be the evaluative component of the self concept a broader representation of the self that included cognitive and behavioral aspects as well as evaluative or affective ones. It is believed that self esteem worked like a trait and was stable across time within individuals. Everyone's self esteem is influenced by many factors parents, teachers, co-workers, friends; colleague, class-mates and the environment were constantly influencing self esteem (Mahmoudi, 2009). Considering the importance of organisational based self-esteem and assertive behaviour and their influence on personal activities and performance of workers, the present study is aimed at examining the influence of organisational based self esteem on assertive behaviour of workers in Public institutions in Ekiti State so that employment and empowerment of employees will be facilitated with measurement and collection of data on this relationship.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Assertive behaviors are convergence to and correlated with positive self-concept, self-esteem, mastery, self efficacy, and self-confidence and non-assertive behaviors are preventive and avoidant and are highly correlated with fears, phobias, social anxiety and a variety of internal aggression. Effective performance is the success key for organizations because favorable performance means productivity, quality, profitability and conservation of firms and organisation depend on continuous improvement of employees' performance in order to increase competitiveness and gaining more benefits (Ghasemi, 2013). Employees' improvement depends on both organizational evaluation and learning and personality and communication and native skills (self-esteem and assertiveness). Therefore, awareness of personality skills and belief in effectiveness of these characteristics is essential in motivation of human behavior which causes activity, excellence and advancement (Ebrahimi Nejad & Salimiyan, 2007).

Self-esteem influences on working behaviors, employee self-esteem and assertiveness can predict organisational performance. Employees have different levels of self-esteem and this influences on their behavior and thoughts, employees need to feel good about themselves and their thoughts and behaviors, improve them and improve their self-esteem (Sadeghiyan, 2009). Therefore, one of the important factors which influences on personal performance (Sadeghiyan, 2009). On the other hand, assertiveness which means explicitness of statement and not yielding can influence on employees performance and prevents from unacceptable behaviors (Mahmoudi Alami, 2009).

Considering the importance of self-esteem and assertiveness and their influence on organisation, This study is to prove that the level of anxiety an employee has in taking decision or indulging in any useful/risks at work can have an effect on the development and sustenance of self-esteem in any employee. The researchers therefore decided to conduct a research on the influence of organisational self-esteem and assertiveness behaviour of workers in government parastatals in Ekiti State so that employment and empowerment of employees will be facilitated with measurement and collection of data on this relationship.

III. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study is engendered to investigate the following objectives;

1. To ascertain the influence of organisational based self esteem on assertive behaviour of workers
2. To examine the difference in the assertive behaviour of male and female employees
3. To know the influence of age on the assertive behaviour among employees.

IV. RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is relevant to policy makers, educators, employers, employee, general public and the upcoming researchers in showing a significant relationship that exist between organisational self esteem and assertive behaviour of workers.

The outcome of the study will help the employer and management of organisations to understand the work attitudes of its employees because people coming from diverse backgrounds and cultural values have to work together like a team for the organization. Dealing with the employees individually is always difficult for the employer because a large number of employees work in an organization.

Findings of this study will assist employers to understand and befitting the employees work attitudes with the objectives of the organization. It will further help the employers to enhance employees' potential through different means to handle the stress at work. It also provides the society the information and importance of employee having good self-esteem and how they can help in developing the society.

The study will benefit the employee on the importance of having a good self-worth and self-image, placing of value over oneself and appreciating oneself, it becomes imperative to develop and guide one's self esteem from whatever that can lower self-esteem e.g. making a bad choice, suffering hurt feelings, taking burden of guilt, self-criticizing or blame, punishing self for acting badly can lower self-esteem.

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The study will benefit the general public on the importance of organisational based self esteem and assertiveness behaviour of workers. For the upcoming researchers who may want to further their studies on the subject matter, this study may set as a basis for their work.

HYPOTHESES

1. Organisational based self-esteem will significantly influence assertive behaviour of workers
2. There will be a significant difference in the assertive behaviour of male and female employees
3. Age will significantly influence assertive behaviour among employees.

METHODS

Research Design

This research is a survey research. Questionnaire was used to obtain information from different government workers in Ekiti State. The design was employed to make it possible to compare the research participants on the variables of interest to the researcher

Research Participants

The study made use of a total number of one hundred and ninety-six (196) participants across government organizations in Ekiti State. Male 115 (58.7%) and Female 81 (41.3%).

Research Instruments

The instrument administered consists of three (3) sections.

The first section is designed to collect the personal demography from the research participants which include: sex, marital status, age. Section B focused on Organizational based self-esteem (OBSE) which was measured with a 10-item survey developed by Pierce, Gardner, and Dunham (1989). Items were rated on a seven-point scale. Sample items include: "I count around here," "I am taken seriously," "I can make a difference." OBSE, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was 0.906 and the Bartlett's test of sphericity was statistically significant ($\chi^2= 1991.72$, $df=45$, $p < .01$). For measures of burnout, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was 0.824 and the Bartlett's test of sphericity was statistically significant ($\chi^2= 1662.91$, $df=231$, $p < .01$). This suggests that the use of EFA for both sets of measures is appropriate (Stewart 1981). In the EFA, principal components analysis was used for factor extraction, parallel analysis for determining number of factors to retain, and varimax rotation for aiding the interpretation of factors. This package of decisions was used because of its accuracy over other available approaches (Patil et al. 2008). All 10-items of OBSE loaded on one factor. Coefficient alpha was .94 and compares favorably with alpha coefficients of .86 to .96 as reported by Pierce et al. (1989, 1993). The scale comprises 10 self-assessment items, which were used in various studies by Pierce et al. with either a five or seven-point agreement scale. The internal consistency of the OBSE scale was demonstrated by Pierce et al. (1989) with seven different samples (Cronbach's Alpha between .86 and .96; average .91). The retest reliability over a period of five weeks lies between .75 and .87.

Section C contained the Scale used for Assessing Assertive Behavior (Rathus Assertiveness Schedule), the scale consisted of 18 items for participants to rate themselves on five-point scale ranging from (5, very characteristic of me and , 1, very uncharacteristic of me. Scoring (+45) on the scale is considered as mean value. A mean score and above indicate that the individual is high on assertiveness, while a score below the mean indicates that the individual is low on assertiveness, as reported by Oladipo et al. (2012). This scale originally consists of 30 items with test-re test reliability of (0.78). The scale consists of items such as boldness, outspokenness, confidence, aggressive and the like. Oladipo (2012) reported internal item consistency analysis for Nigerian sample and test re-test reliability Cronbach alpha.76. The 18-item version was used for final data collection.

Procedure

The questionnaires were individually administered in the offices of the participants. They were informed of the nature and purpose of the research and assured of the confidentiality of their response. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed while 197 were retrieved but only 196 were useable for analysis purpose because some were filled incorrectly.

Data Analysis

The data gathered from this study was analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. Independent t-test statistics was used to analyse the data gathered for this study. The level of significance was set at the conventional criterion of 0.05 for all analysis.

Data Analysis and Presentation

This study examined the influence of organisational based self-esteem on assertive behaviour among employees. This chapter presents the results of the data collected for the study.

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Table 1.1: t-test Summary Table showing influence of organizational based self-esteem on assertiveness

	OBSE	N	Mean	SD	Df	t	P
ASSERTIVENESS	High	100	56.62	12.74	194	-.717	>.05
	Low	96	57.92	12.78			

Table 1.1 above shows that there is no significant influence of organizational based self-esteem on assertiveness $t(194)=-.717, p>.05$. Therefore, hypothesis one is not supported.

Table 1.2: t-test Summary Table showing influence of sex on assertiveness

	Sex	N	Mean	SD	Df	t	P
ASSERTIVENESS	Male	100	57.79	13.50	194	.694	>.05
	Female	96	56.51	11.62			

Table 1.2 above shows that there is no significant influence of sex on assertiveness $t(194)=.694, p>.05$. Therefore, hypothesis two is not supported.

Table 4.3: t-test Summary table showing age difference on assertiveness

	Age	N	Mean	SD	df	t	P
ASSERTIVENESS	20-40	118	57.05	12.77	194	.058	>.05
	41-60	78	57.17	12.29			

Table 4.3 above shows that there is no significant age difference on assertiveness $t(194)=.694, p>.05$. Therefore, hypothesis three is not supported.

V. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

DISCUSSION

Analysis of data revealed that there is no significant influence of organizational based self-esteem on assertive behavior among employees. Assertiveness has been described as a key attribute for employees without which true autonomy, professional status or empowerment cannot be achieved. Benton (1999) equates being assertive with being a good communicator. A positive correlation of assertive behaviour exists with role clarity, job and career satisfaction. Being employed involves fulfilling several roles, including interacting with clients, peers and other health professionals. These roles are enhanced and carried out with greater effectiveness when employees are equipped with good communication skills and assertive behaviour. In contradiction to the findings of this study, McCabe & Timmins (2010) reported that assertive behavior develops the self-confidence of employees which result in effective communication and quality services and goods to customers.

Recent evidences show that effective organizational and leadership qualities are much influenced by interpersonal assertiveness. It should be a continuous process, where individuals attune their assertiveness according to expectations (“outcome expectations” in Bandura’s terms). Many psychologists like Lazarus (1971), Ullrich and Ullrich de Mynck (1973), Wolpe (1990), Salter (2002) and Beck, Freeman and Davis (2004) proved that being non-assertive resulted in some mental illness and devised various programs for developing assertiveness. In the 80s and 90s of the previous century, assertiveness was found important to increase human potential to enjoy maximum personal fulfillment. Alberti and Emmons (2008) delineated that assertive conduct was important to protect personal human rights without interfering with the fundamental rights of others.

The possible reason for the consistent positive relationship between assertive behavior and self-esteem may be that assertive persons are likely to experience a higher level of psychological wellbeing and a lower level of emotional deficit than persons, who possess a low level of assertive behavior. Assertive persons are able to maintain positive mental states due to their capability to efficiently manage their situations. When a person accepts his/ her faults and simultaneously recognizes his/ her strengths and positive qualities, the person will experience strong self-worth within the workplace.

Hypothesis two revealed that there is no significant sex difference in the assertive behaviour of male and female employees. The study of gender differences in assertiveness has a long history that spans gender studies, psychology, linguistics, communication, and computational linguistics, among other fields. Investigating gender differences has been, at times, considered controversial, although a consensus has emerged that gender remains an important variable worthy of scientific investigation. While language use varies only minimally across gender, algorithms capable of identifying female versus male authors with a high degree of accuracy beg the question: what gender features account for these measurable gender differences?

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Individual studies and meta-analytic reviews have found evidence for *gender-linked assertive features*, such as the nature of words, phrases, and sentence length, that are used consistently more by one gender than the other (*male-linked* if used more by men; *female-linked* if used more by women). In most studies, researchers have identified gender-linked features by comparing text samples from self-identified females and males, counting the frequencies of theoretically interesting features in each text (e.g., use of the first-person singular), comparing average frequencies across gender, and then interpreting results in terms of psychological theory. This finding of this study is in agreement with that of Weiss (2008) who reported that gender does not significantly influence assertiveness. There seems to be a consensus in literature about the negative relationship between gender and assertiveness. For example, a meta-analysis of 200 studies by Johan and Frayon (2015) revealed that there is a congenial agreement in literature about the relationship between these two constructs. They concluded that seems no bearing between an individual's self-worth, sex and age in negotiating relationship and stating likes and dislikes generally and in the workplace in particular.

In a study by Jong and Chen (2007) a psychological labelling method revealed that gender differences were largely confined to differences in affiliative language. They found a surprising degree of gender similarity in assertive language. The former finding is consistent with several studies, but the latter is at odds with past research and with gender stereotypes regarding assertiveness. Commonly held stereotypes often portray men as more assertive and cold, while characterizing women as more passive and nurturing.

One explanation for this finding of gender similarity in assertiveness may be found in social role theory, which holds that the disproportionate allocation of men and women into different social roles contributes to gender specific behavior. For example, men are more likely to hold supervisory positions (e.g., physicians, organizational leaders) and women are more likely to hold supervisee positions (e.g., nurses, supervisees). These positions have corresponding expectations of assertive and affiliative behavior. Observed gender differences in behavior are partially confounded with the social roles that men and women are more likely to hold. From this perspective, there should be no gender differences among men and women in similar social roles (e.g., among male and female leaders). Supporting this prediction, Moskowitz, Suh, and Desaulniers (2009) tracked interactions with supervisors, co-workers, and supervisees, and found that these social roles—not gender—predicted assertive behavior. When in supervisory roles, men and women were equally assertive

Hypothesis three revealed that there is no significant age difference in assertiveness. This finding contradicts other studies that have shown that the average younger adult is more assertive than the average older adult (center on an aging society 2003). Many studies have documented that people who marry too live longer and enjoy better physical health than those who do not marry. However, methodological issues require caution in interpreting this pattern because most of the research in this area relies on descriptive methods that do not adequately control for the possible selection of dispositionally assertive people into marriage.

Employees those are older, Christian, belongs to nuclear family and working as full time had more self-esteem as compared to others whereas gender, marital status, area of residence, present stay with has no relation with self -esteem. Qualification, joined nursing as professional carrier, type of nursing college/school from where one took basic nursing training, nature of job, type of hospital and present area of work (ward) has no relationship with self-esteem. These findings are inconsistent with the other available literatures. However, most of the studies within the workplace and with other population have reported positive correlations between levels of education with assertiveness levels(Gerry, 1989; Kilkus, 1992; Onyeizuigbo, 2003). Verbiugge (2013) also found out that there are several pattern of differential in the behavior of young and old employees. The divorced and separated have the highest rates of poor interpersonal behaviour followed by the widowed.

CONCLUSION

From the findings of this study, it can be conclude that organisational based self-esteem does not significantly influence assertive behaviours of employees. Also, sex and age do not significantly influence assertive behaviour.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Employees should regularly use assertive behaviour and communication which may result in high self-esteem within the workplace. Assertiveness and its training program can be included in employees program so that sufficient emphasis can be given to understanding of assertiveness. Findings of the study will act as a catalyst to carry out more extensive research in a large sample and in other settings and such research work enforces evidence based practice.
2. It is also recommended that assertiveness training or other such techniques may be given to the non-assertive employees to build their self-concept and self-esteem. A longitudinal study may be conducted on large sample to assess the effects of assertive training on assertive behaviour and self-esteem with comparison of the different interventional strategies.
3. Efforts should be made by organisations to foster an atmosphere that could promote sense of worth within the organisation as studies have proven that employees with perception of greater self -worth perform better, feel more satisfied and experience greater commitment to the organisation.

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4. Employees should be regularly assessed for their assertive behaviour as it affects the self-esteem and other variables of individual. Assertiveness training may be included in curriculum to manage non-assertive behaviour nurses. Further researches can be done to investigate the socio-cultural circumstances that may hinder or enhance the individual to be assertive.

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