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ACQUISITION EXPERIENCE AND BEHAVIOURAL DISPOSITIONS OF EMPLOYEES IN CNSSL

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Introduction

Naturally, ability to dispose different behavioural elements is one of the most distinguished features of all human animals. Generally, behaviour has been identified as important dynamics of human life and it has been the focus of attention of scholars from time immemorial. Series of theoretical orientations and several explanations have been given regarding human behaviour, its reality, dynamics, its dimensions and its typologies. Basically, different behavioural outlook has been devised for differing social situations. Specifically, some sets of behavioural elements have been described as work behaviour.

Conceptually, work behaviours are sets of behavioural dispositions put on by a member of a work organization, and it could be manifested in both positive and negative ways. To this extent, work behaviour has been an important factor in all work organizations because everything about the organizations in terms of survival and continuity would largely depend upon the type of behaviour put on by employees in the workplace. Consequent upon this, great deal of interests have been placed on work behaviour because of the central position it occupies in the existence and persistence of any work organization (Aluko 2003).

In realization of the above, researchers in the field of management industrial psychologists as well as sociologists have spelt out hundreds of factors that could be held responsible for the enhancement or dis-enhancement of people's dispositions in the workplace. The understanding is that art of working is a reality that people engaged in as a result of important natural/social factors and that certain important elements could serve as motivating or demotivating factor for workers and these factors would go a long way in determining the pattern of behaviour people display while at work.

Extensively, existing literatures have demonstrated the extent at which different motivational factors such as monetary incentives, welfare packages, employee's training, human resources management, work environment, nature of employment, leadership style/managerial competency and so on could be a strong factor determining people's dispositions towards work. Essentially, both monetary and non-monetary, micro and macro, direct and indirect factors have been highlighted as playing important role in this regard (McGregor, 1987; McClelland, 1997; Mullns 2004; Adam, 2001).

However a critical look at the state of literatures on work behaviour would reveal that academic attention is given more to manifest elements with a gross neglect of many latent elements that could also play significant role. An example of such latent elements are psychological elements such as fear of being retrenched or sacked which is a common experience with many private organizations in developing countries such as Nigeria. Most often, such an indiscriminate and untimely termination of work appointment always occur as a consequence of as company acquisition and amalgamation. Experience has shown and existing research has it that company acquisition occur when the acquired company do not have the well-wither to further manage the company and hence the possibility of folding up (Baruch, 2004).

According to Walter (1985) and Nord (1994), mergers and acquisitions represents part of corporate/business strategy used by many firms to achieve various objectives such as growth, gaining technical/management expertise and most importantly to survive turbulent economic season. Thus, acquisition sometimes results as manifestation of the fact that the acquired work organization is not



doing well and it needs to be rescued from absolute closure (Appelbaum, Ayre & Shapiro, 2002).

In many instances, one of the major managerial action that usually follow acquisition is the trimming or cutting down of the work force in order to cut down cost and to save the organization from total collapse (David and Singh, 1993; Gall, 1991). According to Greenhaus, Callanan & Godshalk, (2000), the advent of M&A in a work organization could create structural changes at the organizational level thereby leading to restructuring and downsizing processes in order to cope with the managerial pressures been experienced by the firm. Invariably thus, when employees are not certain about their career due to constant structural reshuffling, they are likely to develop negative work behaviours such as increased psychological stress, low job morale, absenteeism, significant decline in job satisfaction, commitment as well as negative perception of the organization's trustworthiness (Schweiger & De-Nisi, 1991).

This research effort is an attempt to empirically examine whether company acquisition could have significant effect on the behavioural dispositions of employees of the organization, this is necessary as early researches in this regard have focused more on Western societies. The study is significant to the extent that it has been shown that the success or failure of M&A can be attributed to the behavior of the affected employees, thus, the need to ascertain if merger experience has significant relationship with some behavioural dispositions of the workers in the affected organization.

Conceptual Issues

Conceptual review of relevant concepts was made for better understanding of the work.

The Twin Concepts: Merger and acquisition

According to Bertrand (2004), a merger is the combination of two or more companies to share resources in order to achieve common objectives. A merger implies that, as a result of the merger operation, only one entity will survive. On the other hand, an acquisition is a business transaction between unrelated parties based on terms established by the market where each company acts in its own interest. The acquiring company purchases the assets and liabilities of the target company. The shareholders of the company can no longer claim any ownership. In some cases, the target company becomes a subsidiary of the acquiring company (Bertrand, 2004:7).

In the works of Hall, Symes & Luescher, 2004, a merger is the combination of two or more separate business entities into a single new one entity, in which control rests with a single governing body and a single chief executive body, and whereby all assets, liabilities, and responsibilities of the former are transferred to the single new firm bank. According to Coffey, Garrow & Holbeche (2002), a merger could be likened to a union of marriage between two organizations; it is the process which two or more organizations lose their status as juristic firm on the date that they are merged into a new juristic firm.

Mergers and acquisition have become a common phenomenon in recent times. This is in recognition of the critical role of consolidation in the success or failure of companies. M&A has a very long history, it has existed at least since the 1990's (Gaugan, 1999). M&A serve as a common corporate strategy to expand organizational capabilities and to take a better competitive market position (Buono & Bawditch, 1989). This proliferation continued during the 1990's and beyond including seven thousand, eight hundred and nine (7,809) M&A transaction with a total value of \$1.19 trillion in the United States of America alone (Gaugan, 2009).

Mergers and acquisitions have provided organizations synergistic opportunities for market share improvements, technological advancements and economies of scope through vertical integration (Kennedy, Payne & Whitehead, 2002; Lindgren, 1982 and Haspeslagh & Jemison 1991). They have also provided employees with rewards and benefits including skills attainment, expanded market knowledge and career opportunities (Laamanan, 1997 & Leroy & Ramanantsoa 1997).

In a study by Coffey, Garrow & Holbeche (2002:8) there are a number of classic reasons for acquiring other businesses or organisations. These reasons include being able to add scale and so achieve greater economies of scale, gain access to new markets and distribution networks, capture new product technologies and innovations, wipe out competition and emerging competitive threats, provide long-term ownership and control over value created, and the most important reason is to acquire intellectual property and talent.

According to David (1999:) there are many reasons for mergers, including the following: To provide improved capacity utilization, to make better use of



existing sales force, to reduce managerial staff, to gain economies of scale, to smooth out seasonal trends in sales, to gain access to new suppliers, distributors, customers, products, and creditors, and to gain new technology. In other words merger and acquisition is an industrial/managerial practices that is targeted towards organizational efficiency and productivity and researchers have all agreed on its definition but are yet to agree on its general procedure and that whether the act gives positive feedback across work sectors and across societies. In specific term, this study adopted the definition of merger by Coffey *et al* (2002) because it captured not only the stakeholders involved, but also includes the legal aspect of the process of merger and acquisition.

What is Work Behaviour?

In order to attain a clearer understanding of what work behaviour is, one might first need to explain what behaviour is first. As a concept, the BBC English Dictionary (1992) defined it as a description of how individuals act, function or change. In other words, behaviour could be described as the general disposition of a person in relations to how he acts or reacts to a given situations. According to radical behaviourists, behaviour is classified into two main categories, namely: overt and covert. Overt behaviour comprises the observable forms of behaviour such as smiling, frowning, among others. Covert behaviour involves all the mental processes that occur in a person's mind which propel or hinder behaviour that is observed in the physical.

Inferring from the above, work behaviour could be described as any human behavioural dispositions (over or covert) exhibited by a member of a work force in the process of relationship with the organization. Observing from a similar point of view, Aluko (2001) described work behaviour as those human acts and responses which are exhibited by the working member of an organization. Generally, the behaviour of people within work organisations are manifested in both positive and negatives ways. The negative aspect of work behaviours are reflected in concepts, such as absenteeism, high labour turnover, lateness, withdrawal, and all act of insubordination, among others. In contrast, the positive aspects of work behaviours are shown in concepts, such as job satisfaction, commitment, high job morale, job involvement, organizational citizenship behaviour among others (Aluko 2001). On classification level, Levitt (2002) classified work behaviour as caused behaviour and goal oriented behaviour. Steers &

Porter (2002) concluded that work behaviour is the product of a multitude of factors such as individual thoughts and feelings, physical environment, social interaction, and the macro-social environment.

According to Beynon and Blackburn (1977), it is the belief that people had about work and how work fit into their lives that made up an important source of variation in the attitudes and behaviour of people in the workplace.

Generally, work behaviour represents one of the key areas of measuring organizational effectiveness, efficiency and productivity because of the importance of the links of task, contextual and ethical performance with important measure of organizational effectiveness. However, it is not always easy to change a person's behaviour about their work. The reason is that behaviour towards work may be only one important aspect of the person's structure of behaviour. They might be linked strongly to other important ones, making them deeply embedded (Boudreau, Jones and Judge, 1996).

Mathieu and Kohler (1990) explained that turnover, tardiness and absenteeism are important part of work related behaviour. In relation to absenteeism, Richard and Susan (1998) noted that absence among workers frequently is assumed to include a substantial element of absenteeism that arises from poor behaviour. In fact, much of the research on absence implies that workers are free to decide whether or not to go to work than in the case. A model of work attendance developed by Richard (1998) incorporates both ability and motivation to work. Health, family responsibilities and transportation are the principal determinants of ability in the model. By and large, work behaviour is an important element in understanding the nature of modern work environment, it non-the-less determines organizational effectiveness and could cause its fallacies. As regards merger and acquisition as organizational practice, researchers though have concluded on it as a factor that affects work behaviour but they are yet to agree on the pattern and extent at which it affects it.

Merger and acquisition as Determinant Work Behaviour: A review of Literature

Evidently, M&A is a managerial practice that is targeted towards efficiency and organizational productivity. The grand philosophy behind merger practices has been captured by series of researchers. For instance Kennedy, Payne & Whitehead (2002)



sees it as a way of providing organizations synergistic opportunities for market share improvements, technological advancements and economies of scope through vertical integration. Haspeslagh & Jeminson (1991) described it as rewarding because it provided employees with rewards and benefits including skills attainment, expanded market knowledge and career opportunities. According to David (1999) M&A provide improved capacity utilization for the organization, it make better use of existing sales force, it reduce managerial staff, it enhances economies of scale, it smoothen out seasonal trends in sales, it provides/gain access to new suppliers, distributors, customers, products, and creditors, and to gain new technology.

Despite these enormous benefits of M&A, it would be erroneous to assume that the phenomenon is not without its shortcomings, literatures have shown that despite these potential positive outcomes, mergers have been fraught with problems and challenges in which if not properly managed could mar the operational dynamics and smooth operation of a work organization (Lubatkin, 1997; Jeminson & Sitkin, 1986). Extant literatures have examined wide varieties of issues that are associated with M&A.

For an example, Laamanan, (1997) & Leroy & Ramanantsoa (1997) highlighted the problems of culture conflict and acculturation challenges. According Marks & Mirvis, (1997), every acquisition entails modification of organizations social identity and this is liable to introduction of a new philosophy or culture. According to Lubatkin, Calori & Veiga, (1997), culture clash has been shown to have such consequences as lower commitment, reduced cooperation and turnover and a deterioration of operating performance (Weber, 1986).

As such, several authors have highlighted the importance of change management process in the attainment of organizational goals after acquisition and merger. David and Singh (1993) and Gall (1991) concluded from research that confrontation against the introduction of changes within the newly-acquired subsidiaries is one reason for disappointing performance. Furthermore, Employee's acceptance and backing for organizational change programs has also being contended for the success of any planned organizational change (Armenakis et al., 1993; Miller et al., 1994).

Apart from the above, M&A could have series of other consequences on work behaviour of the employees. As reiterated earlier, M&A usually involve cost cutting activities such as laying off workers. For example, at least one (1) in four (4) U.S workers has been affected by the M&A wave (Cartwright & Cooper, 1993), and one (1) out of ten (10) workers lost their jobs in the first three quarters of 1998 as a result of M&A (Harrison, 1999). An experience such as this could have devastating effects on the work behavioural components of the employees.

Methodology

According to Stay and Margaret (1999), methodology is a step by step procedure by means of which research data are collected, collated and analyzed in order to test the hypotheses proposed for the study. This study is purely a survey research and survey design. Bichi (2004) believed that survey research is a means of collecting information from a representative sample, to describe the situation as they exist. This becomes the best method to be used in conducting the research because of the focus of the study which aimed at examining the relationship between two operational variables. This study investigated if acquisition exercise experienced by employees in CNSSL have significant effect on some of their behavioural elements such as job morale and turnover intention. The choice of the firm is bore out of the fact that the CNSSL has just been acquired by ISONBPO. This development no doubt would be followed by some shake ups in the managerial and structural make-up in the organization. In this study, two behavioural elements and one independent variable were considered for empirical testing in the research.

Data used in the study were obtained through primary source as questionnaire was adopted as the instrument of data collection for the study. Questionnaire used for the study was structured into two (2) sections. The first section was used to retrieve socio-demographic attributes of the respondents while the second section was used to elicit information on the behavioural elements of the respondents at post-acquisition era.

The population of the study consists of 520 employees who work in the MTN call centre as the time of conducting this research. These are majority employees who are employed to pick calls to respond to MTN customers' queries. The sample for this study consists of 30 per cent of the 520 employees which amount to one hundred and fifty



six employees of the centre who were selected through simple random sampling technique.

However, of the 156 questionnaires distributed, only 133 returned a valid questionnaire that would be useful for analysis in the study. For the purpose of analysis, descriptive and inferential statistics were employed; frequency distribution and percentage were used for descriptive analysis of data collected while, chi-square was used as inferential statistical tools for the study. Chi-square is used to seek for the significant relationship between the independent and dependent variables of the study.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

This sub-section of this research is used to present and analyze the data retrieved for the study.

Table 1: Descriptive analysis of socio-demographic features of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	62	46.7
Female	71	53.3
Total	133	100.0
Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
HND	56	42.1
B.Sc., B.A; LLB. (1 st Degree)	72	54.1
Post graduate and Other qualifications	5	4.8
Total	133	100.0
Years spent	Frequency	Percentage
not up to a year	22	16.6
A year and above	111	83.4
Total	133	100.0
Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	84	63.1
Married	45	33.8
Divorced	4	3.1
Total	133	100.0
Age	Frequency	Percentage
Below 20 years	12	9.0
21 - 29 years	82	62.2
30 - 39 years	25	18.4
40 years and above	14	10.4
Total	133	100.0

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork (2015)

As could be seen in Table 1, the gender distribution of the study respondents reveals that 62 (46.7%) of the respondents are male while the rest respondents of 71 (53.3%) were females. This might be as result of the fact that work organization is customer care oriented and as such more females than males were employed due to the nature of the job. The

educational background of the respondents also varies significantly, as about 56 (42.1%) are HND holders and 72 (54.1%) of the respondents were university graduates with B.sc, B.A, LLB or B.A and 5 (4.8%) of the respondents are with post graduate certificates and none of the respondents have Ph.D qualification.

Frequency distribution of the respondents based on the years already spent in the organization shows that, those that have not spent up to a year with the organization were 22 constituting (13.9%), while 111 (83.4%) of the respondents have spent a year and above with the organization. On the marital status of the respondents the respondents that were single were 84 (63.1 %) while 45 (33.8%) were married and only 4 (3.1%) or the respondents were divorced. On the age distribution of the respondents, 12 (9.0%) of the respondents aged below 20 years and those between the ages of 21 and 29 years were 82 (62.2%), while those whose ages ranged between 30-39 was 25 (18.4%). And those aged 40 years and above were 14 (10.4%).

Table 2: Descriptive analysis of the perception of Respondents on M&A and Behavioural Dispositions of the employees

Conception of M&A	Frequency	Percentage
Okay	54	40.7
Not okay	79	59.3
Total	133	100.0
Description of work experience since acquisition	Frequency	Percentage
Favourable	43	32.3
Not favourable	90	67.7
Total	133	100.0
Description of employee's organizational citizenship behaviour since acquisition	Frequency	Percentage
High	31	23.3
Low	102	76.7
Total	133	100.0
Description of work moral since acquisition	Frequency	Percentage
Not okay	76	57
Fair	37	27
Okay	20	16
Total	133	100.0
Description of turnover intention of employees	Frequency	Percentage
High	79	59.3
Moderate	33	24.7
Low	21	16.0
Total	133	100.0

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork (2015)

Table 2 is used to give descriptive analysis of respondents' conceptions of the merger and acquisition experience by the organization and the possible consequence of same on some work behavioural dispositions of employees. The table shows that 54 (40.7%) of the respondents conceived of the acquisition exercise as okay while the remaining 79 (59.3%) conceived of the exercise as not okay. This depicts that many of the respondents possess negative orientation towards the exercise. More so, 43 (32.3%) of the respondents described work experience of the post-acquisition as favourable while 90 (67.7%) described it as non-favourable. This implies that acquisition has negative effects on work experience of the employees. On the question which sought to examine organizational citizenship behaviour of the respondents, 31 (23.3%) described organizational citizenship behaviour of employees in the organization at the post acquisition era as high while 102 (76.7%) described employees' organizational citizenship behaviour as low. This is a further reflection of the fact that acquisition has negative effects on the behavioural dispositions of employees in the study setting.

Furthermore, on the description of employees' morale at the post acquisition era, responses shows that 76 (57%) of the respondents said employees' work morale since the organization was acquired is 'not okay', while 37 (27%) described employees' work morale as fair while 20 (16%) of the respondents described employees' work morale since acquisition as okay. This also means that acquisition has negative effect on work morale. Lastly on the descriptive analysis of behavioural dispositions of employees at the post-acquisition era, the analysis on turnover intention of the employees; 79 (59.3%) of the respondents described employees' turnover intention of employees as high while 33 (24.7%) as moderate while 21 (16.0%) described employees' turnover intention as low. All in all, analysis of responses even at descriptive level shows that acquisition exercise has negative effects on behavioural dispositions of employees in the work organization. This observation notwithstanding, there is the need to further examine if the relationship between the dependent and independent variables of the study is significant or not.

Test of Hypotheses

In order to achieve the main objective of this study, two null hypotheses were generated and tested in the course of this research

H₀₁: employee's conception of M&A does not have significant effect on their citizenship behaviour

Table 3 is used to present a summary of the results of the chi-square analysis.

Table 3: Contingency table showing relationship between M&A and organizational citizenship behaviour

Conception of M&A	citizenship behaviour		
	High	Low	Total
Okay	69	20	89
Not okay	12	32	44
Total	81	52	133

$\chi^2_c = 9.216$; $d.f. = 1$; $n = 133$; $\chi^2_{(0.05)} = 3.111$; H_0 rejected.

An examination of the chi-square analysis conducted in the table 4 revealed that the observed (calculated χ^2_c) value of 9.216 is greater than the tabulated (critical χ^2_t) value of 3.11 at 0.05 levels of significance and degree of freedom of 1. Deducing from this, the null hypothesis which stated that ***employee's conception of M&A does not have significant effect on their citizenship behaviour*** is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This revelation is in tandem with the observations of several researchers such as Bastien (1987); Buono & Bowditch (1989); Ivancevich, *et al.*, 1989; Mirvis & Marks 1992) on negative consequences of acquisition. For instance McGill & Sheehan (2008) observed that the complex process of acquisition in terms of culture differences and man-power reshuffling most times result in psychological deficiencies which would invariably lead to work behavioural problems such as decreasing citizenship behaviour of employees towards the organization. This is also related to the view of Ashkensas *et al.*, (1998) who assert that merger experience can lead to depression and impaired performance.

H₀₂: employee's conception of M&A does not have significant effect on their turn over intention

Table 4 is used to present a summary of the results of the chi-square analysis.

Table 4: Contingency table showing relationship between M&A and turnover intention of employees

Employee's conception of M&A	turnover intention			
	High	Moderate	Low	Total
Okay	41	16	26	83
Not okay	14	17	19	50
Total	55	33	45	133

$\chi^2_c = 19.022$; $d.f. = 2$; $n = 133$; $\chi^2_{(0.05)} = 5.911$; H_0 rejected.

An observation of the chi-square analysis conducted in the table showed that the observed (calculated χ^2_o) value of 19.022 is greater than the tabulated (critical χ^2_t) value of 5.991 at 0.05 levels of significance and degree of freedom of 2. It could thus be deduced therein that, *employee's conception of M&A does not have significant effect on their turn over intention* is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. In other words, acquisition exercise has significant effect of turnover intention of employees. This finding is in line with the view of scholars such as Afolabi (2006); Fish (2007); Chambers (2008). All agreed on the fact that acquisition is always followed by mass restructuring of the workforce which often results into retrenchment and sack of workers, as a result of this there is higher tendency that workers lose hope on certainty of his future prospect with the organization, hence, the possibility of leaving the organization at the sight of any little alternative with a better secured future.

Summary of Findings

Based on the presentation and analysis of data generated for this study, some interesting findings were made:

- i. There are more females than males in the sampled work organization
- ii. Majority of the respondents have spent more than one year with the organization
- iii. Majority of the respondents were single (bachelors and spinsters), with many in the age category of 21-29.
- iv. Many of the study respondents have negative conception of the acquisition exercise carried out in the organization
- v. Majority of the respondents described their work experience at the post acquisition era as not favourable
- vi. The acquisition exercise have made many of the respondents developed low citizenship behaviour and un-favourable work morale
- vii. The respondents have higher tendency of leaving the organization
- viii. Acquisition experience have significant relationship with organizational citizenship behaviour and their possibility of leaving the organization (turnover intention)

Conclusion and Recommendations

Evidently, the conclusion that could be drawn from this study is that acquisition has significant relationship with the behavioural dispositions of employees in the work organization. In other words, explanations regarding causes of employees' dispositions of negative work behaviour could be

located in factors such as merger and acquisition. Thus, attention on causes of work behavioural dispositions should be located in both manifest and latent aspects of the organization. Based on this finding, some important recommendations were made.

Thus study recommended that the management body of a work organization experiencing M&A should understand the under-lying elements regarding the exercise such that it would turn out to be an exercise in futility, this is necessary because, acquisition exercise that does not take all the necessary factors into consideration is bound to fail. Since acquisition is an inevitable fact of organizational management, it thus cannot be totally eradicated but management of acquired work organization find every means to ameliorate the negative effects of acquisition, this could be achieved by minimizing the act or retrenchment and organization of counseling programme for the employees in order to sensitize them of the need for the exercise and that the exercise is carried out in good fate as spell out the benefits for the employees as well as the work organization.

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