INDIRECT INFLUENCE OF ORGANISATIONAL CONSTRAINTS AND OCCUPATIONAL SELF-EFFICACY ON WORK ENGAGEMENT OF TEACHERS THROUGH PERCEIVED OCCUPATIONAL CALLING IN ENUGU STATE

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Abstract

Literature has documented that work engagement on the part of teachers may influence not only the teachers' professional growth, but also students' physical and mental development, academic performance, and teachers' interactions with students. However, there is limited research among teachers that explored organisational factors that influence their engagement with their work, especially in the Sub-Saharan Africa. The purpose of this study is to investigate the indirect effects of organisational constraints and occupational self-efficacy on work engagement through perceived occupational calling. A total of 347 Nigerian secondary school teachers (317 females and 30 males) were drawn from ten secondary schools in Enugu State. The average age of the sample was 30.78 (*SD* = 3.34, ranging from 24 to 42 years). Results of the Hayes PROCESS Macro showed that organisational constraint, perceived occupational calling and occupational self-efficacy were all related with work engagement. The mediation analysis further showed that perceived occupational calling mediated the relationship between organisational constraint and work engagement but did not mediate the relationship between occupational self-efficacy and work engagement. This study contributes to existing literature and further advances knowledge on the relationship between organisational constraint and work engagement.

Keywords: occupational calling; occupational self-efficacy; organisational constraints; work engagement

Introduction

Work engagement has emerged as a fundamental indication of the quality of teachers' professional life, accounting for substantial variation in the prediction of their organizational outcomes (Minghui et al., 2018). It is a positive and psychologically satisfactory mental state marked by vigour, dedication, and absorption. According to Hakanen et al. (2006), vigour may be described as high levels of energy and mental resilience when working, a willingness to put effort into one's job, and persistence in the face of difficulty. Dedication is defined by a sense of priority, desire, drive, dignity, and intricacy. Absorption refers to the state of

being totally engrossed and enthusiastically engrossed in one's job to the point where one loses track of time and finds it difficult to detach themselves from their work.

Work engagement on the part of teachers has influence not only on the teachers' professional growth (Lyons, 2006), but also on the students' physical and mental development, academic performance (Ruzek, 2012), and teachers' interactions with students (Runhaar et al., 2013). Research has shown that the vast majority of highly engaged educators are pleased with their careers (Higaard et al., 2012), and these individuals are also more likely to demonstrate organizational citizenship and creative behaviour (Konermann, 2012). Additionally, research demonstrates that work engagement is strongly and positively connected with teacher effectiveness (Hoigaard et al., 2012). Teachers with inadequate engagement frequently experience burnout, health issues, and high turnover (Bal et al., 2013; Hakanen et al., 2006).

However, the current study is anchored on the Job Demand and Resources (JD-R) model. The JD-R suggests that different types of work may be associated with a distinct set of characteristics that contribute to job stress. These components can, in a general sense, be divided into two categories: job demands and job resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). This research concentrated especially on the JD-R model's motivating mechanism. According to the JD-R model's motivational process, organizational constraints, occupational calling, and occupational self-efficacy can impact work engagement. Engagement at work is therefore considered to be of major importance for both corporations and individuals.

Organisational constraints are factors or circumstances that impede work outcomes because they restrict workers from performing at maximum potential (Peters &O'Connor, 1980), such as faulty equipment or contradictory organizational processes. Organizational constraints were characterized by Pindek et al. (2019) as work settings that restrict, interfere with, or fail to support an individual's job performance objectives and serve as barriers to motivation. According to the job demand control support model, employee strain is caused when there is an excessive number of high expectations, a limited amount of control, and an insufficient amount of social support (Hausser et al., 2010; Johnson & Hall, 1988; Karasek, 1979).

Organizational constraints are linked to the psychological (such as job dissatisfaction), somatic (such as somatic complaints), and behavioural (such as counterproductive work practices) manifestations of strain and stress. For example, job dissatisfaction is one of the psychological manifestations of strain and stress (Pindek& Spector, 2016). There is a

propensity to withdraw effort when confronted with organisational constraints, which may have negative impacts on work engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003; Sonnentag et al., 2012). Consequently, it is essential to investigate certain obstacles to clarify their distinctive implications on organizational and human outcomes such as job engagement.

Bandura (1997) noted that a person with high self-efficacy would pick tough tasks on purpose, be prepared to devote more time and effort to achieving goals, and endure despite the possibility of failing to reach personal or organizational goals (Buric &Macuka, 2018). A person's level of self-efficacy can be defined as the degree to which they are confident in their ability to plan and carry out actions in order to achieve specific kinds of performance and tasks. Self-efficacy can also be defined as the degree to which a person believes that they are able to achieve certain kinds of performance (Young et al., 2018). According to Bandura (1997), the amount of self-efficacy that individual possesses is the factor that decides whether or not that individual will take action, as well as his level of dedication and effort, and whether or not that individual would continue in the face of probable failure and obstructions.

Teachers with high self-efficacy find it easier to acquire new skills, devise innovative instructional methods, and train pupils who have unique requirements (Craig, 2010). The conviction that a teacher has in his or her own ability to apply an instructional strategy that will result in favourable student outcomes in a given educational circumstance is what we mean when we talk about teacher self-efficacy (Lemon & Garvis, 2016). When opposed to teachers who have low self-efficacy, teachers who have high self-efficacy are more creative in their pedagogy and have improved ability to manage their classrooms, as stated by Wagner and Imanel-Noy (2014). According to the findings of several studies, there is a connection between high levels of teacher self-efficacy and high levels of student accomplishment as well as teacher job satisfaction (Klassen et al., 2013). In addition to this, teachers who have high levels of self-efficacy are more likely to participate in professional development activities and try out innovative methods of instruction (Kent & Giles, 2017).

According to Liu and Huang (2019), self-efficacy has a significant impact on the level of teachers' work engagement, which in turn creates a more positive atmosphere for students to learn. Researchers have shown that teachers who have higher levels of perceived self-efficacy are more engaged in their work, have greater levels of happiness, pride, and love for their students, and experience lower levels of anger, tiredness, and discouragement (Buric &Macuka, 2018).

There have been empirical investigations of

the relationship between calling and better career developments (e.g., Douglass & Duffy, 2015; Erum et al., 2020; Guo et al., 2014; Hirschi & Hermann, 2013; Kaminsky & Behrend, 2015). The origin of the concept of calling is the Latin term *vocare,* which means to summon (Madero, 2020). Madero (2020) stated in his review that calling is understood from three perspectives: classical, modern, and neoclassical. According to the religious tradition-derived classical view of calling, one is called by God to serve the greater good in order to gain eternal salvation (Ponton et al., 2014). The modern approach, known as Weber's notion, stresses satisfaction and contentment in work life and job selection. Dobrow and Tosti-Kharas' (2011) contemporary approach on calling defined calling as a genuine, all-consuming enthusiasm for a certain field. According to the neoclassical approach, calling stems from prosocial duty, strong call, a sense of destiny. A person's calling consists of the activities that he feels compelled to pursue in order to fulfil his life's purpose.

According to Hall and Chandler (2005), when an occupation is considered as a calling, rather than a job, that person will place a significant amount of importance on attaining goals that are representative of that person's purpose. Because of the objective clarity of the situation, he or she will make the required sacrifices to answer the calling. Consequently, a strong sense of calling is likely to motivate people to actively pursue their chosen career. When employees have a calling to their profession, they are more suited for it, more likely to experience love for it, and are organically driven to do it, hence experiencing workplace pleasure. A person who has been called acknowledges his or her interest in a certain profession and attempts to pursue it in order to satisfy him or herself. In addition, researchers agree that calling is action-oriented, prosaically centred, and promotes a purpose or mission (Elangovan et al., 2010). Several empirical studies (Hirschi, 2012; Pei & Zhao, 2015; Park et al., 2015; Xie et al., 2016) examined the link between calling and work engagement and discovered that calling strongly predicted work engagement among employed individuals.

The concept of calling contributes to our knowledge of a variety of organizational behaviour (Elangovan et al., 2010), but relatively few studies have examined the relationship between calling and work-orientation outcomes among employed individuals. A further shortcoming in the existing literature is the scarcity of studies on calling in the Nigerian setting. Overall, lack of variety makes it tough to determine how calling works with Nigerian personnel. Consequently, there is a need to empirically research characteristics related to calling. Although direct paths have been studied, there is dearth in studies that investigate perceived organisational calling as a pathway through which organisational constraint and

occupational self-efficacy could influence work engagement, particularly within the Nigerian educational system. Given the current background and the existing literature, this study therefore attempted to provide answers to the following questions:

Question 1: Would there be a significant relationship between occupational self-efficacy and perceived occupational calling on work engagement?

Question 2: Would there be a significant relationship between occupational self-efficacy and work engagement.

Question 3: Would Perceived occupational calling will mediate the link between organizational constraint, occupational self-efficacy, and work engagement.

Based on the literature, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 1: There will be a significant relationship between occupational self-efficacy and perceived occupational calling on work engagement

Hypothesis 2: There will be a significant relationship between occupational self-efficacy and work engagement.

Hypothesis 3: Perceived occupational calling will mediate the link between organizational constraint, occupational self-efficacy, and work engagement.

Method

Design

The study was primarily survey research, and the study adopted a cross-sectional design because a large number of participants were required to establish the hypothesized links among the variables. Shaughnessy et al. (2000) asserted that cross-sectional design is one of the most commonly used survey designs that involve selection of one or more samples from the population at one time and the information (data) collected from the sample(s) is used to describe the population at that point in time. Beswick et al. (2006) similarly asserted that it is a design whereby respondents are approached at one time only and responses are compared within the sample.

Sampling

The participants for the study were selected from ten secondary schools in Igbo-Eze-North LGA of Enugu State, Nigeria. They included 347 teachers (30 males and 317 females). A total of 350 copies of the questionnaire were printed and distributed and all the copies of the questionnaire were returned as well. However, after sorting and cleaning the data, three (3) returned copies of the questionnaire were considered as invalid (the same response to every question or refusal to complete some parts of the questionnaires) and were therefore excluded, leaving 347 valid completed copies of the questionnaire that were coded and used for

data analysis.

Sample size determination

A multistage sampling technique was adopted in choosing the schools and teachers for the study because it provides the opportunity for a probability sampling. Specifically, the purposive sampling technique was used to select schools that matched the needed profile of participants, which was that the school must be coeducational and must comprise unity schools, state government schools and private schools. Subsequently, simple random sampling was used to select one local government from the state which is Igbo-Eze-North LGA. Afterwards, convenient sampling technique was used to select the teachers that are willing to participate in the study.

Participants

The participants included 347 teachers (30 males and 317 females). The average respondent age of the sample was 30.78 (SD = 3.34, ranging from 24 to 42 years). A total of 22.8% (n = 79) participants were single, 73.2% (n = 254) were married and devoiced were represented with 4% (n = 14). Those that had their HND / Bachelor's degree were 78.8% (n = 273), 19.6% (n = 68) had master's degree while 1.7% (n = 6) had Ph.D. Participation on the study was voluntary and no incentives were provided to encourage participation.

Procedure

The researcher first of all got approval from the principals of the schools selected for the study. Participation in the study was voluntary. Participants were made aware of the purpose of the study, what they needed to complete, and who was conducting it. Participants were informed that they may withdraw from the research at any time, and that their personal information would remain confidential, without affecting their participation. The participants provided their written consent. The teachers were approached in their individual staff rooms during break periods to request for their participation in the study. It took 2 weeks and 2 days to collect sufficient data. On the same day that the surveys were distributed, they were completed and returned. The researcher and two trained assistants ensured the research was done in accordance with accepted ethical standards.

Instruments

Utrecht Work Engagement Scale – 9 ((UWES-9)

The UWES-9 (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2006) was employed to check the level of mental and emotional connection that teachers have towards the work that they do, their teams and their organizations. Items are graded on a frequency rating scale of seven points, ranging from 0 (never) to 6 (always), with higher scores indicating higher levels of job involvement. "At my work, I feel like I'm

overflowing with energy," is an example of one of the items on the scale. The internal consistency of the UWES-9 was found to be rather good, coming in at .85 according to Schaufeli and Bakker (2006). According to Ugwu (2013), an internal consistency score of .91 was found in a sample from Nigeria, while Adekola (2010) found a good reliability coefficient (α) of .91 in a sample of Nigerian secondary school teachers. Cronbach's alpha of .85 was established for the present study.

Organisational Constraint Scale (OCS)

The OCS (Spector & Jex, 1998) is an 11-item scale that was used to assess the frequency with which it is difficult or impossible for teachers to do their jobs because of constraints such as rules and procedures, the availability of resources, co-workers, interruptions, and inadequate training. The OCS was developed to determine how frequently it is difficult or impossible for teachers to do their jobs as a result of these constraints. Response options vary from 1 (less frequently than once per month or never) to 5 (more frequently than once per day). High scores indicate that there are many restrictions. The question "How often do you find it difficult or impossible to execute your work due of your supervisor?" is one example of an item on the scale. In their study on a Nigerian sample, Ehigie and Sholola (2020) found that the Cronbach's alpha was .90. The current study established Cronbach's alpha of .78.

Brief Scale for Making Calls (BCS)

The BCS, which was developed by Dik et al. (2012), is a four-item unidimensional scale that evaluates the presence of a calling as well as the quest for a calling. According to the definition provided by the BCS, a person is said to have a calling when they have the conviction that they are destined to engage in a specific line of labour because of the demands of society, their own latent potential, God, or another higher power. Items employ a five-level response scale. Cronbach's alpha of .91 of the scale was established for the current study.

The Short Form of the Occupational Self-Efficacy Scale (OSS-SF)

The OSS-SF (Rigotti et al., 2008) is comprised of six questions, each of which is scored using a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Scores that were higher showed that respondents had higher levels of self-efficacy, whilst scores that were lower suggested that respondents had lower levels of self-efficacy. One of the items on the scale reads, "When I am presented with a challenge in my profession, I can typically discover alternative solutions." The current investigation arrived in a value of .87 as the Cronbach's alpha.

Data Analysis

Pearson's (r) correlational analysis was used to examine the relationship between the variables. Model 4 of the Hayes PROCESS

macro (4.1) in SPSS® was used to explore the indirect effect of organisational constraint and occupational self-efficacy on work engagement through perceived occupational calling.

Results

Table 1: Correlations of demographic variables, organisational constraints, perceived occupational calling, occupational self-efficacy and work engagement

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 Gender	-							
2 Age	-.14**	-						
3 Marital status	-.02	-.09	-					
4 Educational qualification	-.09	.04	-.22**	-				
5 Years working	.03	-.09	-.24**	.59**	-			
6 Organisational constraint	-.03	-.10	.11*	.05	-.07	-		
7 Occupational calling	-.01	.15**	-.06	-.04	.12*	-.91**	-	
8 Occupational self-efficacy	-.01	.15**	-.06	-.09	.15**	-.85**	.94**	-
9 Work engagement	.01	.01	-.18**	-.08	.21**	-.22**	.26**	.30**

Note: N = 347. ** p<.01; * p<.05; Gender (0 = Male, 1 = Female), Marital status (1 = single, 2 = married), Educational qualification (1 = HND/Bachelors, 2 = Masters, 3 = PhD, 4 = others), Years working (1 = 10 years and less, 2 = 11 - 20 years, 3 = 21 years and above)

In Table 1, the correlations coefficient showed that higher age was associated with higher perception of occupational calling (r = .15, p<.01) and occupational self-efficacy (r = .15, p<.01). Single teachers had higher educational qualifications (r = -.22, p<.01), a greater number of years working (r = -.24, p<.01), and higher work engagement (r = -.18, p<.01). Married teachers were associated with higher organisational constraint (r = .11, p<.05). Higher educational qualification was associated with higher number of years working (r = .59, p<.01). Number of years working was associated with higher perception of occupational calling (r = .12, p<.05), occupational self-efficacy (r = .15, p<.01) and work engagement (r = .21, p<.01). Organisational constraint was negatively associated with perceived occupational calling (r = -.91, p<.01), occupational self-efficacy (r = -.85, p<.01) and work engagement (r = -.22, p<.01). Perceived occupational calling was positively associated with occupational self-efficacy (r = .94, p<.01) and work engagement (r = .26, p<.01). Occupational self-efficacy was positively correlated with work engagement (r = .30, p<.01).

Table 2: Mediating effect of perceived occupational calling on the relationship between organisational constraint, occupational self-efficacy and work engagement

Variables	*B*	*SE*	*T*	*p*	95%*CI*
Organisational constraint					
Total effect	.47	.11	4.10	.000	[.24, .69]
Direct effect	-.78	.38	-2.09	.038	[-.52, -.04]
Indirect effect	1.25	.38			[.46, 1.93]
Occupational self-efficacy					
Total effect	.65	.11	5.81	.000	[.43, .88]
Direct effect	1.06	.34	3.14	.002	[.40, 1.73]
Indirect effect	-.41	32			[-1.09, .19]

Results of the mediation analysis for the test of the hypotheses is shown in Table 2. Results show that there was a significant total effect of organisational constraint and perceived occupational calling on work engagement (B = .47, p<.001). Also, there was a significant direct effect of organisational constraint on work engagement (B = -.78, p<.05). Perceived occupational calling significantly mediated the relationship between organisational constraint and work engagement, as the 95% bias-corrected bootstrap *CI* did not contain zero when the indirect effect was tested (B = 1.25; 95%*CI* = .46, 1.93).

The results also indicated that there was a significant total effect of occupational self-efficacy and perceived occupational calling on work engagement (B = .65, p<.001). Also, there was a significant direct effect of occupational self-efficacy on work engagement (B = 1.06, p<.01). However, perceived occupational calling did not significantly mediate the relationship between occupational self-efficacy and work engagement, as the 95% bias-corrected bootstrap *CI* contained zero when the indirect effect was tested (B = -.41; 95%*CI* = -1.09, .19).

Discussion

The current study investigated whether organizational constraints and occupational self-efficacy can affect work engagement of Nigerian secondary school teachers through perceived occupational calling. The survey that formed the basis of the study included 347 secondary school teachers who worked at a variety of schools in Enugu State. According to the findings, a significant negative association was found between organizational constraints and teachers' level of work engagement. According to the

findings of Pindek and Spector (2016), which were derived from the framework of the job demand control support model, organizational constraints have a negative effect on the motivation of employees. The current findings, when compared to the past findings of these researchers, show consistency.

A substantial positive correlation was found, according to the findings of the study, between teachers' perceptions of their career as a calling and the degree to which they engaged in their job. This finding is consistent with those found in earlier investigations (Erum et al., 2020; Xie et al., 2016) that linked a person's profession to calling which is a critical psychological driver of work engagement explaining about 30% variance and it is valuable in shaping the employee's orientation and several positive work performances, such as job satisfaction.

In addition, a favourable correlation was found between occupational self-efficacy and work engagement. The findings of this study are consistent with those found by Buric and Macuka (2017) and Johnson (2021). They unanimously agreed that there is a favourable connection between self-efficacy and successful outcomes on the job.

For the indirect effect, the study found that perceived occupational calling was found to significantly mediate the relationship between organizational constraints and work engagement, whereas perceived occupational calling did not significantly mediate the relationship between occupational self-efficacy and work engagement. The perception of a calling to a certain career is diminished by organizational constraints. On the other hand, for some other educators, it broadened their perspective since it required them to discover answers, complete their task, and handle their profession in a way that required greater creativity. In addition to this, even while more teachers reported that organizational constraints had a negative effect on their work engagement, those teachers were more likely to report this if they had also reported that the constraints had a negative impact on their impression of occupational calling. As a result, the path from organizational constraint to work engagement was not linear.

The dedication and efforts that school teachers put in their profession are directly proportional to the quality of education that students get there. This study contributes to the existing body of research in two different ways: first, it tests the hypotheses that organizational constraint, occupational self-efficacy, and perceived occupational calling are all important drivers of work engagement; second, it explains how perceived occupational calling mediates the relationship between organisational constraint and work engagement.

This study, which was supported by the Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), proposed that organizational constraint, occupational self-efficacy, and perceived occupational calling are critical predictors of work engagement. Additionally, this study contributed to the expansion of the existing body of literature by specifying perception of occupational calling as a linking factor through which organizational constraint is related to work engagement.

Conclusion

Teachers who experience calling at work consider themselves a contributing source for society which makes it easier for them to cope with constraints, hence leading them to a better work engagement. This study contributes to advance our knowledge about the relationship between organisational constraint and work engagement, which should be considered for future teaching practices and teacher development.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it appears that educational administrators might stand to profit by encouraging employees to see their jobs as callings rather than tasks. Humans are creatures that are always looking for more meaning and purpose in their lives. A feeling of calling may give people a deep sense of purpose and meaning at work (Hirchi, 2012), thus management should encourage teachers to connect their job with a particular altruistic aim to promote their sense of calling. This will help employees feel like they have a place in the world where they are contributing to something greater than themselves. This may help the employees feel more connected to their work.

One of the most significant things that can be done to promote teachers' work engagement is to execute interventions that lessen the organizational constraints they face and reinforce their feeling that their career is a calling. According to a previous study, increasing the level of engagement among educators may be accomplished by catering to their fundamental psychological requirements (Klassen et al., 2012). Administrators should also examine the possibility of providing teachers with professional development that is tailored to directly target the teachers' work engagement, such as the incorporation of critical reasoning, creative thinking, and motivational thinking into the teaching process. Consequently, it is important to lessen the burdens that teachers face on a social, emotional, physical, and even financial level, and it is also important to provide teachers with constructive feedback about how they can improve their teaching in order to encourage greater levels of work engagement and personal achievements among teachers. A teacher's sense of the vocational calling may be positively influenced by participation in professional development activities such as training, tutoring, and observations.

It should not come as a surprise, in terms of the practical implications, that constraints caused by a lack of resources would have a negative impact on one's level of participation in their workplace. There is also the possibility that, when faced with circumstances such as these, the administrators point out that they do not have the resources that can be offered. Constraints on one's perception of one's professional calling are not necessarily caused by a lack of resources, as previously thought, but rather by co-workers, supervisors, and the rules and procedures in place at the company as a whole. This is something that can be seen as an important takeaway from this research. A helpful evaluation tool that can be used to establish grounds for organizational interventions that are intended to address these issues and can be done at a relatively affordable cost is assessing the levels of conflicts that exist within teams regarding the various types of constraints. This type of evaluation can be used to establish grounds for organizational interventions. These are problems that may be solved by placing more emphasis on effective organizational methods, and more specifically by determining the degree to which members of a team agree or disagree with one another on the various kinds of constraints. In a similar vein, team-focused interventions in the education system should concentrate on achieving fundamental levels of consensus regarding the social components of their regular job in order to increase the participants' levels of engagement. This will allow for greater levels of engagement overall.

It is important to note that the present investigation does have a few limitations. Because this was a cross-sectional study, the mediating model is insufficient for identifying whether or not there is a causal link between organizational constraint, perceived occupational calling, occupational self-efficacy, and work engagement. To investigate the possible links between these factors, any future research should consider the possibility of employing experimental, prospective, and longitudinal methods. In addition, the participants in the current research came from a small number of schools in Enugu State, therefore their educational environment may be distinct from that of other states in Nigeria. In further research, it should be taken into consideration to widen the samples to include multiple states.

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