Research Article

ORGANIZATIONAL SOLIDARITY AND INVOLVEMENT IN EMPLOYMENT AMONG FEMALE STAFF IN THE ABIDJAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the relationship between organizational solidarity and job involvement. To conduct this study, a questionnaire including an organizational solidarity scale and a job involvement scale was administered to 320 women in the Abidjan public administration. The results show that female employees in the Abidjan public administration who benefit from strong organizational solidarity are more engaged in their jobs than those with weak solidarity. This finding leads to the conclusion that solidarity as a value must be maintained and enhanced within organizations to promote strong employee involvement and better performance for women in particular.

Keywords: organizational solidarity – involvement – employment – female employees.

INTRODUCTION

Organizations operate to achieve goals that exceed the capabilities of a single person. Humans, being the main actor in the organization, sometimes called a company when it is in the private or parapublic sector, sometimes called an institution or public administration when it is a state structure where civil servants work, become the central element on which to rely to achieve convincing and satisfactory results. The thinking of managers or administrators of public or private organizations is how to better take advantage of the human variable in order to increase productivity. We thus study and analyze human behavior at work or their attitude toward work. Everything that will take several names in the world of organizations: mobilization of human capital, motivation, human involvement at work. In this study, it is the involvement variable that has caught our attention. It is associated with several terminologies that all lead to the same realities. We will thus have involvement in employment or in the profession, involvement in work and involvement in work, organizational involvement. Although nuances have been mentioned, these terminologies all converge towards a kind of commitment or attachment to work and/or the workplace.

There are numerous studies addressing this issue. Belghiti-Mahut & Briole (2004) examined organizational involvement and female managers, noting the paucity of studies that took gender issues into account. Three distinct factors were validated following exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, thus confirming the multidimensionality of the concept of organizational involvement: an affective dimension, a calculated dimension, and a normative dimension.

Paillé (2005) investigated the relationships between work involvement and organizational citizenship behaviors, on the one hand, and organizational citizenship behaviors and withdrawal intention (intention to leave and intention to be absent), on the other. The results show that work involvement predicts most organizational citizenship behaviors (helping colleagues, civic virtues, and team spirit), with the exception of altruism. Citizenship behaviors, for their part, are negatively and significantly related to intention to leave. Specifically, civic virtues and altruism only predict intention to be absent, while team spirit simultaneously predicts intention to be absent and intention to leave.

Lourel & Gueguen (2007) studied the work-life interface, specifically examining its effects on organizational commitment and perceived stress. The authors first showed that women perceived the positive effects of the work-life interface more than men. They then showed that the negative effects of the work-life interface predicted lower affective commitment and lower calculated commitment.

Commeiras, Loubès, & Fournier (2009) conducted a study on the effects of role strain on work commitment. The study was conducted among department managers. The results show that it is possible to influence affective organizational commitment and job commitment by reducing role conflict and ambiguity. Reducing work overload would lead to an increase in calculated organizational involvement as well as involvement in the workplace.

Using questionnaires administered to 313 individuals, Pasquier & Valéau (2011) presented various elements indicating that while affective and normative involvement ensure a certain well-being, negative emotions such as anxiety contribute to the development of calculated involvement leading to a certain withdrawal. Thus, according to these authors, the most discriminating variable is socio-normative distance at work: the more socially integrated the individual, the more involved and balanced they are; conversely, the less integrated they are, the more anxious they are at work and the more they fall into forms of emotional distress.

Creusier (2014) studied the link between job satisfaction and organizational involvement, which remains controversial despite the multitude of studies that have been conducted on each of these concepts. In this approach, the author develops a literature review primarily focused on the existence, nature, and meaning of this relationship. The research also shows that the concept of well-being at work plays an important role in this relationship. Creusier (op. cit.), finally indicates that the inclusion of well-being at work in the

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Satisfaction-Involvement relationship as a mediator seems to be the best solution and allows for improved explanations of its existence, thanks to the method of Preacher and Hayes (2008).

Hammach (2016) studied the issue of CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility), focusing specifically on the agri-food sector in Morocco. The aim was to determine whether employee managers' perceptions of corporate social responsibility could influence attitudes and behaviors regarding organizational engagement. The author noted, following semi-structured interviews, that employees' behaviors and attitudes are influenced by their perceptions of CSR in terms of organizational involvement.

Otémé *et al.,* (2016) highlighted the impact of organizational solidarity and the relationship with superiors on worker motivation in industrial companies. Through a survey conducted among 80 employees from industrial companies in the Abidjan district, the authors demonstrated that those who benefit from mutual support within their company and a good professional relationship with their manager are more engaged in their work. These findings indicate that socio-cultural and non-economic/non-formal factors are crucial in employee engagement to achieve their company's goals. These findings also indicated that taking into account institutional solidarity and professional relationships within companies is necessary in developing strategies to strengthen their competitiveness.

In addition, Kapela & Pohl (2017) conducted research on perceived organizational support, the quality of the relationship between the leader and the member, social support, emotional involvement and job satisfaction. The study conducted a survey of 367 employees from public companies in Kinshasa. The results indicate that the quality of the interaction between the leader and the member, as well as perceived organizational support, have a positive association with affective commitment. In addition, poverty appears to be a moderating factor in the link between social support and job satisfaction.

Yao (2018) conducted a study on engagement with the aim of highlighting the influence of sociability and career profile on the organizational engagement of employees of the Société pour le Développement Minier de la Côte d'Ivoire. As part of this study, 60 employees of this organization were administered a questionnaire. The results show that work engagement is higher among employees of this organization when their level of sociability is high. From a second perspective, Yao (Op. Cit.) notes that those with a career profile have a stronger engagement than those without.

Similarly, Safy-Godineau *et al.,* (2020) conducted a study on the effect of perceived organizational support and organizational commitment on the absenteeism rate of territorial civil servants. They indicate that organizational support is a protection against absenteeism while calculated organizational commitment is a given factor. This study proved that absenteeism among territorial civil servants is caused by their lack of desire for their organizational structure. In conclusion, the research confirms that perceived support in the organization can be an effective way to combat absenteeism. Other findings should arouse the interest of public managers regarding the ineffectiveness of pecuniary incentive policies regarding their employment as a means of combating absenteeism. The study also recommends the use of ethical management to promote the participation of territorial service staff members.

Lebrument, Rochette & Zumbo-Lebrument (2020) conducted research on the impact of attachment to organizational values and the place of residence on the various forms of organizational involvement (affective, calculated and normative) of employees in the healthcare field. After the work, they found that commitment to organizational values has a positive impact on emotional commitment and normative commitment. In addition, they also noted the subtle, but not neutral, consequences of attitude towards the place of residence on commitment within the organization.

Erguibi & Sadik (2022) focused on organizational involvement and active participation as determining factors in women's empowerment. Their objective was to study the contribution of women's involvement and active participation in cooperatives to their empowerment process. The results of their thematic analysis allowed them, on the one hand, to assess the importance of organizational involvement and active participation in improving women's empowerment in a cooperative context, and on the other hand, to establish a battery of 34 items linked to the five constructs of this study.

A significant number of factors are invoked to address the issue of job engagement. For our part, we wish to approach this study by linking organizational solidarity with job engagement. The objective of this study is to better understand the link between job engagement among female employees in the Abidjan public administration and organizational solidarity.

We can therefore develop the following hypothesis: "Female employees in the Abidjan public administration who benefit from the solidarity of their organization are more engaged in their jobs than their counterparts who do not receive such support."

METHODOLOGY

Research variables

Here, we are faced with two types of variables: a dependent variable and an independent variable. The dependent variable is involvement, with two categories: low involvement/high involvement. Involvement refers to the degree of attachment, commitment, and willingness of female public administration employees to serve their positions with dedication.

Solidarity is the independent variable. Organizational solidarity refers to a certain duty that encourages men to unite, help each other, provide mutual assistance, and cooperate as members of the same organization in achieving overall objectives. Thus, in this study, the solidarity variable also presents two categories: low solidarity/high solidarity.

Participants

We submitted 320 women from the Abidjan public administration to a questionnaire including an organizational solidarity scale and an organizational involvement scale. This number is distributed as follows: 128 of low solidarity against 192 of high solidarity; 183 of low involvement against 137 of high involvement. All the subjects submitted to the study obey the following characteristics: being female staff of the public service, being categories A, B or C, then having at least two years of effective seniority, having at least one dependent child, not being in a director position.

Data collection equipment and data analysis procedure

Here we use a questionnaire. In addition to biographical data (female civil servants, rank and category, seniority, number of dependent children, position in the hierarchy, etc.), this questionnaire includes an organizational involvement scale and an organizational solidarity scale.

The organizational solidarity scale consists of ten items, five of which are negative and five positive. Thus, items 3-5-7-9-10 are negative items, while items 1-2-4-6-8 are positive items. All these items follow a Rensis Likert scale and have four response options: "strongly disagree," "disagree," "agree," and "strongly agree." The different response options are scored from 1 to 4. Thus, for negative items, "strongly disagree" is scored 4 points, "disagree" 3 points, "agree" 2 points, and "strongly agree" 1 point. The process is reversed for positive items, where "strongly disagree" is scored 1 point, "disagree" 2 points, "agree" 3 points, and "strongly agree" 4 points. The results of these different scores allowed us to obtain an average or modal score from the entire workforce, which is 30. Thus, subjects who obtained a score lower than 30 were classified among those who benefit from low organizational solidarity, while those with a score greater than or equal to 30 are classified as benefiting from strong or high solidarity.

As for the organizational involvement scale, it comprises eighteen items, including four negative items and fourteen positive items. These different items also follow four Likert-type response modalities: "strongly disagree," "disagree," "agree," "strongly agree." The scores also range from 1 to 4 depending on the response modalities. Thus, for negative items, "strongly disagree" is rated 4 points, "disagree" 3 points, "agree" 2 points, and "strongly agree" 1 point. The process is reversed for positive items, where "strongly disagree" is rated 1 point, "disagree" 2 points, "agree" 3 points, and "strongly agree" 4 points. The results of these ratings allowed us to obtain a mean or modal score of 46.28. Thus, subjects who obtained a score lower than this average score are considered to be of low involvement while those with a score higher than this modal score are considered to be of high involvement.

RESULTATS

The data from this point lead us to present the results relating to the link between organizational solidarity and involvement in employment.

Table I: Cross-tabulation of organizational solidarity and involvement in employment

Involvement in employment / Organizational solidarity	Low involvement	Forte involvement	Total
Low solidarity	86	42	128
Strong solidarity	97	95	192
Total	**183**	**137**	**320**

The table above shows, at first glance, that out of 320 subjects in our study, 183 (57.18%) have low job involvement, compared to 137 (42.82%) with high job involvement.

In terms of organizational solidarity, we note that out of the 320 subjects in the study, 128 (40%) report low job involvement, compared to 192 (60%) who report high job involvement.

When comparing these results, we note that out of 128 who report low job involvement, 86 (67.18%) have low job involvement. From another perspective, we also note that out of 192 subjects who report high job involvement, 97 (50.52%) have low job involvement. Thus, the low job involvement/low job involvement trend is more than 16 points above the high job involvement/low job involvement trend. On

the other hand, out of 137 subjects of high involvement, 95 or 69.34% mention strong solidarity.

These different trends, although giving an overview that tips the scales towards confirmation, our certainty in order to confirm or not this hypothesis lies in the submission of the results to the Chi-square statistical test for which we opted after having made our variables dichotomous and qualitative. To arrive at the test of the null hypothesis of the Chi-square, we went through the Phi correlation coefficient taking into account the size of our sample (320 subjects) which allows us to do so.

The Phi correlation coefficient gives a result of 0.16, which gives a Chi-square value of 8.71. This result is significant at 1 dof and at the probability threshold $P>.01$. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected and the working hypothesis is retained. There is therefore a significant difference. We can therefore conclude that organizational solidarity has an influence on the degree of involvement of female civil servants in their jobs. Better still, female staff in the Abidjan public administration who benefit from strong organizational solidarity are more involved in their jobs than those who benefit only very weakly or not at all.

We can read this result in light of the theory of symbolic interactionism, because solidarity presents itself as a modality of social interaction. Indeed, entering into a relationship with others can also be observed by the degree of solidarity. The stronger this solidarity, the more it denotes the intensity of the relationships between the different actors involved. In fact, organizational solidarity means that the individuals involved are led to unite, to help each other, to provide mutual assistance and to cooperate. There is therefore an intense interaction between individuals when this solidarity is strong. However, interaction is a situation of mutual influence that brings individuals together and makes them resemble each other in many ways in terms of behavior and attitudes. The individual benefiting from or appreciating solidarity thus finds himself in relative comfort with the group. He seems to develop a behavior and a positive attitude towards the job that places him in this situation in order to maintain and preserve the benefit of this solidarity.

The individual therefore maintains a certain attachment to the group and to the place (workstation) or to the activity which allows him to benefit from this solidarity. We can therefore, in addition to the theory of symbolic interactionism, evoke the theory of attachment to the place and therefore precisely here, to the workplace. As a reminder, Liliane Rioux (2005), presents attachment to the workplace as an emotional bond resulting from the dynamic interaction between a person and their work environment. All things which join the theory of interactionism on a certain level. Indeed, the overall environment from which organizational solidarity arises presents itself as a fertile ground for the individual in the development of an emotional bond and an attachment to the specific workstation where he finds himself. It is this reality that can partly explain his involvement in the job. Thus, emotionally attached to his job, the individual develops the resources of involvement necessary to not lose this bond that does him good. Involvement can therefore be both calculated and affective. Calculated because the individual evaluates the benefit he gains by being attached to his work and by being involved in it, and what he loses by detaching himself from it. Affective, because the individual ends up developing an emotional relationship with his work or the work environment, so much so that detaching himself from it is like losing a part of himself.

In short, female staff in the Abidjan public administration, in other words female civil servants in the Abidjan public administration, place

great importance on the values of solidarity to the point of having a positive impact on their involvement in their work.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

In conducting this study, we were keen to establish the relationship between organizational solidarity and job engagement among female public sector employees in Abidjan.

We note that workplace solidarity within the administration is an important factor in motivation and job engagement. This solidarity is reflected in emotional and moral support between team members, effective collaboration to resolve problems, and shared workloads and responsibilities. Generally, it contributes to a more inclusive and caring work environment, which can explain the greater job engagement of women who benefit from it. Professional engagement, which is reflected in, among other things, a sense of belonging to a team, the opportunity to contribute meaningfully, and the feeling of losing something if one were to step away from one's job, is a lever that can strengthen these factors by fostering a sense of community and valuing each individual's contributions.

These results also align with the work of Otémé *et al.,* (2016), who, following their studies, noted that employees who feel they benefit from a solidarity initiative in their workplace are more motivated at work than their peers who do not. Here too, a parallel is drawn by comparing the concept of motivation with that of involvement, which is a related concept.

These results are also similar to those of Kapela & Pohl (2017), who stipulate that perceived organizational support is a factor influencing organizational involvement. Indeed, it is worth remembering that workers who benefit from support from their organization or their superior have a stronger emotional commitment or involvement in their work.

These results are also in line with those of Safy-Godineau *et al.,* (2020) who show that the support felt from the organization is a factor in combating absenteeism and therefore a lever that underpins organizational involvement. These results can also shed light on the issues for managers and public authorities, particularly in promoting mentoring and support programs between colleagues, in encouraging a team and collaborative culture, and also in implementing policies promoting gender equality and inclusion. This result may, however, have some limitations, namely that solidarity can have multiple interpretations depending on the individual, and that other factors such as remuneration or working conditions can have an impact on involvement. The combined effect of all these factors could also be explored in other studies, according to different contexts and sectors.

CONCLUSION

What can we learn from this study? We can say that this study allowed us to address the issue of job engagement by linking it to organizational solidarity. The results we obtained lead us to conclude that organizational solidarity is an important lever for job engagement. It is therefore a key variable that deserves to be preserved and strengthened. This is achieved through:

- promoting team spirit, strengthening cohesion by developing a sense of belonging, revitalizing employees and stimulating their commitment, encouraging innovation and group problem-solving, and learning to accept differences. The development of mutual assistance through the creation of mutual support mechanisms such as discussion groups or mentoring programs with a view to strengthening ties between colleagues.
- Recognition of collective contributions, such as valuing collective efforts and celebrating group successes. This can also strengthen the sense of belonging. La mise en œuvre de toutes ces recommendations' suppose la formation des managers eux-mêmes au développement humain et social de leurs collaborateurs.

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