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Behavioural Cultural Intelligence and Innovative Work Behaviour in Telecommunication Companies in South-South, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between behavioural cultural intelligence and innovative work behaviour in telecommunication companies in South-South, Nigeria. The proxies of innovative work behaviour (criterion variable) were of idea generation, idea promotion and idea realization. The study adopted the cross-sectional research survey design. Primary data was generated through structured questionnaire. The population for this study was 283 supervisors in four major telecommunication companies in South-South, Nigeria. The sample size of 166 was determined using Taro Yamane sample size determination formula. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Statistics. The tests were carried out at a 0.05 significance level. Findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between behavioural cultural intelligence and innovative work behaviour in telecommunication companies in South-South, Nigeria. Therefore, the study concludes that that the use of behavioural cultural intelligence in the workplace positively enhances employee innovative behaviour in telecommunication companies in South-South, Nigeria. Thus, the researcher recommends that telecommunication companies should invest in comprehensive training programs aimed at developing employees' behavioural cultural intelligence. These programs should focus on improving cultural knowledge, understanding, and interpretation.

KEYWORDS: *Behavioural Cultural Intelligence, Innovative Work Behaviour, Idea Generation, Idea Promotion, Idea Realisation*

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INTRODUCTION

In today's turbulent business environment, all organizations are inevitably facing demands for both radical and incremental change. Moreover, globalization and increasing competition have however reinforced organizations need to constantly learn about new practices, procedures and technologies. In order to be able to cope with this continuous change, organization must design strategies to be innovative (Amesho, Edoun, Naidoo & Pooe, 2022). Thus, the innovative behavior of employees is considered to represent an important competitive advantage for organizations (Rösch, Tiberius & Kraus, 2023). To keep pace with these changes and to maintain a competitive edge, organizations need to innovate, that is to explore and implement new ideas. Organizations bring innovation in their product(s), service(s), introduce new technology, new managerial or administrative practices and bringing changes in other elements of the organization. To build innovative workplace employees are heavily relied upon and must bring innovations in their processes, methods and operations (Musneh, Ambad, Azwa & Mohd Roslin, 2021). In the present scenario, innovation is not confined to specialists, scientists and other research and development professionals but organizations for long-term success to encourage and develop the innovative potential of all of their employees. Innovative work behaviour (IWB) is described as the intentional creation, introduction and application of

new ideas within a work role, group or organization, in order to benefit performance (Srirahayu, Ekowati & Sridadi, 2023). It helps to develop new and creative ideas and to encompass their implementation.

In the rapidly changing competitive work environment, organizations are increasingly faced with the need to get engaged into innovative work behaviours to get enduring competitive work advantage and delivering newly developed product. Changing surroundings, access of the people to the information, changing demands of the clients, new and advanced technology, and rapidly changing circumstances play an important role in today's expanding world. Rapidly changing hierarchical needs and demands of the customers and suppliers put a great deal of emphasis on employees' innovative work behaviour nowadays (Hanif & Bukhari, 2015). To meet this challenge, successful organizations, nowadays, prefer to hire innovative employees (Knezović & Drkić, 2021). Getz and Robinson (2003) reported that eighty percent ideas in the organization are generated by employees who are innovative.

Behavioral Cultural Intelligence refers to an individual's ability to adapt their behavior to different cultural contexts effectively. Thomas et al. (2008) define it as "the ability to decode and interpret cultural cues and respond appropriately to them, as well as the ability to adjust one's behavior to cultural differences without losing one's authenticity." The concept of cultural intelligence has gained significant attention in the field of cross-cultural management, as organizations increasingly operate in diverse cultural contexts. Behavioral Cultural Intelligence is essential for individuals working in cross-cultural settings, as it allows them to navigate cultural differences and establish positive relationships with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. The ability to understand and respond to cultural cues can help individuals avoid misunderstandings, conflicts, and cultural faux pas that can negatively impact their relationships with others. Additionally, individuals with high Behavioral Cultural Intelligence are better equipped to engage in effective communication and build trust and rapport with individuals from different cultural backgrounds.

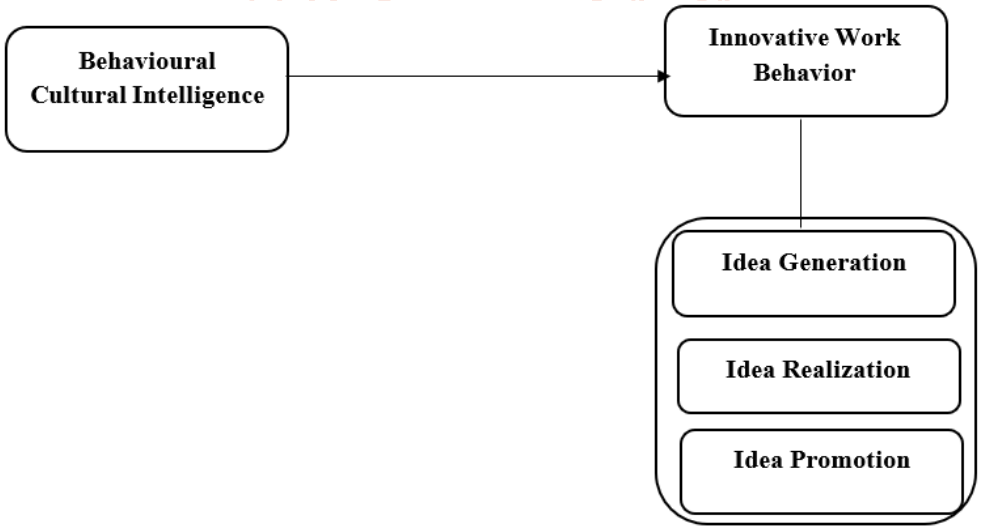

Figure 1: conceptual model for the relationship between behavioural cultural intelligence and innovative work behavior in telecommunication companies in South-South, Nigeria.
Source: Desk Research (2023)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation

The Social Exchange Theory

This paper theoretically roots its argument on the relationship between the variables in the social exchange theory (Balu, 1964). Blau (1964) opined that the basis of any exchange relationship can be described in terms of either social or economic principles. Exchanges that are social in nature are based on a trust that gestures of goodwill will be reciprocated at some point in the future. The specific benefits exchanged may be valued primarily because they are symbols of a high-quality relationship; this is as it is the exchange of mutual support that is of concern to the parties involved in the exchange (Blau, 1964).

The two main ways social exchange has been conceptualized in the management literature are a global exchange relationship between employees and the organization and a more focused, dyadic relationship between subordinates and their superiors. At the global level, Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison and Sowa (1986) suggested that employees form a global belief concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. They labelled this belief

perceived organizational support. High levels of perceived organizational support are thought to create obligations within individuals to repay the organization. Furthermore, perceived organizational support is associated with a trust that the organization will fulfil its exchange obligations (for example, rewarding employees).

In this vein the social exchange theory clearly indicates potential outcomes of identification based on the manager's capacity to understand and behave in a manner that not only tolerates diversity but accepts, supports and admits to its usefulness or relevance within the workgroup. As such the social exchange theory prescribes manager cultural competence as imperative and highly useful in the achievement of organizational identification. This prescription serves to position this paper as regards its view and perspective on the relationship between the variable. The theory also provides insight on the extent to which perceptions and interpretations of social events and exchanges form the basis for behaviour and actions within the organization.

Behavioral cultural intelligence

Behavioral cultural intelligence is an increasingly important skill in today's globalized world. As businesses expand into new regions and countries, it becomes crucial for employees to understand and adapt to the cultural norms and behaviors of their counterparts. According to Livermore (2011:9), behavioral cultural intelligence involves "the ability to adjust behavior to cultural differences". This includes understanding different communication styles, etiquette, and social norms. Failure to adapt to these differences can result in misunderstandings, miscommunications, and even lost business opportunities. Developing behavioral cultural intelligence requires both knowledge and skills. It is important to educate oneself about different cultures and to be open-minded and curious about cultural differences. However, it is equally important to be able to apply this knowledge in practical situations. This involves being able to read social cues and adapt one's behavior accordingly. In today's globalized world, those who possess strong behavioral cultural intelligence are likely to be more successful in cross-cultural interactions and to be seen as more professional and respectful by their international counterparts.

Developing behavioral cultural intelligence (BCQ) in individuals and organizations has become a crucial aspect of success in the globalized world. BCQ involves developing the ability to adapt behavior based on cultural norms and values of different societies, which is essential for effective communication, negotiation, and collaboration across cultures (Van Dyne, Ang, & Tan, 2016). Organizations can cultivate BCQ by providing cross-cultural training programs, mentoring, and encouraging diverse teams. For instance, cross-cultural training programs can help employees gain awareness of cultural differences and develop strategies to effectively interact with people from different backgrounds (Van Dyne et al., 2016).

Employee Innovative Work Behaviour

Innovative work behaviour is generally outlined in the context of how individuals could facilitate the achievement of initiation and intentional introduction of new and useful ideas, processes, products or procedures (Leong & Rasli, 2014). Innovative work behaviour thus includes behaviour of employees that directly and indirectly encourages the development and introduction of innovations on the workplace (Spiegelaere, Gyes, Vandekerckhove, & Hootegem, 2012). In current working environment, innovative work behaviour is one of the important factors for organizational growth and development in both private and public sectors (Abdullatif, Johari & Adnan, 2016). It is aligned with Hakimian, Farid, Ismail and Nair (2016) that innovative work behaviour can be as competitive advantage for an organization.

De Jong and Den Hartog (2007) described innovative work behaviour (IWB) as individuals' behaviours directed towards the initiation and intentional introduction (within a work role, group or organization) of new and useful ideas, processes, products or procedures. According to Baer (2012) and Kanter (1988), IWB refers to the development and initiation of novel and useful ideas and implementing these ideas into new and improved products, services or ways of doing things. Rules and regulations and procedures are not sufficient to ensure effective employee behaviour in the workplace; there is always some need for discretionary innovative actions to adapt to new situations and unusual circumstances (Janssen, 2003).

Not surprisingly, public organizations are becoming increasingly reliant on the innovativeness of their employees (Suseno et al., 2019), especially as "innovation at the lower levels, such as individual innovativeness of public servants, has been deemed lacking in the public sector" (Vivona et al., 2021, p. 6). In addition, studies of employee innovative behavior have predominantly focused on organizations (Li et al., 2018; Walker et al., 2011), groups (Nsenduluka et al., 2009), projects (Borins, 2002), and policy (Osborne and Brown, 2011). As a result, "the innovative behavior of individual

employees has received far less attention" (Miao et al., 2018). Consequently, this dissertation examines the fostering factors and consequences of such behavior.

Measures of Employee Innovative Work Behaviour

Idea Generation

This dimension is premised on the belief that innovative behaviour begins with the ability of an individual to generate an idea (Yesil & Sozbilir, 2013). It is the creation of a new and original idea, which is useful to the organization. In the views of (Kesting & Parm Ulhøi, 2010), idea generation is born out of existing challenges, unfilled gaps, and technological advancement. Scott and Bruce, 1994) opined that idea generation is not a controlled stage of the innovative process, as it is more focused on how to solve the observed problem through new methods. This stage allows for the development and experimenting of conceptualized methods. Janssen (2000) stated that among the determinants of success idea generation is the depth of knowledge and information, experience, and openness. Idea generation is better approached from a multi-access approach, as the problem may not be connected to a single defined and easily identified source (Wisse, Barelds & Rietzschel, 2015). Thus, it demands an in-depth understanding of the work function, the varying segments, and the operational intricacies that require a range of skills (Xerri & Brunetto, 2013). This dimension is the foundation for innovative behaviour and requires a new and distinct way of doing things is evolved to provide a solution to the observed organizational problem.

The idea generation step includes looking for ways to improve current products or processes, or to solve problems, through thinking about them in alternative ways and combining or reorganizing information and existing concepts (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010). The innovation process is made up of two core segments, initiation and implementation. The initiation segment of the innovation process ends as soon as the idea is produced, whereas the implementation phase ends when the idea is implemented (King & Anderson, 2002). Thomas (2006) further added that in the organizational settings, these ideas are usually produced by individuals or teams that are vital for success of organizations. These ideas are cherished by creative thinking, made up of four steps naming; preparation (gathering information, doing analysis, and search solutions); incubation (letting the mind work sub-consciously to carry on the process); illumination (inspiration, when an individual is relaxed and not essentially thinking about the problem, there is a possibility that it can come to individual's mind); and verification (it is about testing the ideas, solutions, obstacles and insights for applicability).

Idea Promotion

Janssen (2000) stated that secondary to idea generation is idea promotion, indicating that it is a vital component of individual innovative behaviour. It is the information and support stage of innovative behaviour, as at this stage efforts are made towards ensuring that getting the necessary support for the implementation of the through sharing of the idea (Potočnik & Anderson, 2016). The idea is offered at this stage and packaged for delivery to the organization to get support for the acceptance of the idea. Janssen (2000) opined that to promote new ideas, it is expected that employees socialize, meet people higher and lower, little organizational politics, solicit support from friends, and sponsors to accept and key into the idea for acceptance and implementation.

Once a new idea has been generated, it has to be promoted and championed as it will generally demand a change in the current ways of doing business that can meet resistance. This step implies coalition building (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010), promoting ideas to potential allies (Janssen, 2004) and finding sponsors (Scott & Bruce, 1994). Basically, this stage occurs when a service firm has decided on an idea. This means the idea (new service) will be converted into an actual result with a prior test before launching (De Jong, Den Hartog & Zoetermeer, 2003). The innovative work behaviour at this stage is also known as the convergent innovative work behaviour by De Jong, Den Hartog and Zoetermeer (2003). Furthermore, in this stage, it is necessary for knowledge workers need to become more conversant with results in the process of idea development and implementation (Mumford, 2000). When new service has been taken up and established as a status quo among the knowledge workers, the innovation process is said to have come to a conclusion (Kanter, 1988). Thus, given new idea, it has to be developed, tested and commercialized by the knowledge workers. In this study, implementation stage is defined as a convergent innovative work behaviour that comprised of two intertwined elements which are championing (idea promotion) and application (idea implementation) efforts.

Idea Realization

The final process in the innovative behaviour framework that takes into cognizance the transfer and reprocessing of ideas into expected outcomes that are to the benefit of the individual and the organization

(Janssen, 2000). The idea generated with the right support and promotion is further given life through implementation in the realization stage (Stoffers, Van der Heijden & Jacobs, 2018). The idea is completed at this stage, and it converted to the benefit of the organization. The realization is the reality of the idea, and the feasibility of its application is known at this stage. Haapasaari, Engeström and Kerosuo (2018) state that there are several organizational issues that, however, hinders innovative behaviour. They indicated that scarce resources, organizational bureaucracy, lack of skilled employees and poor organizational culture are critical factors that often hinders idea realization in the organization. Idea realization is a fundamental component in the three-stage ladder as the complex innovation process is broken down at this stage of the innovative behaviour in the organization (Messmann & Mulder, 2011). It is the most demanding of the behavioural task in the innovative process, thus, requiring varying skills set, in-depth knowledge, and widening communications with other individuals in the organization (Orth & Volmer, 2017).

The final task of the innovation process concerns idea realization by producing a prototype or model of the innovation that can be experienced and ultimately applied within a work role, a group or the total organization (Ömür, 2019). In the final step, implementing new ideas involves producing a prototype or model of the new product, technology or process (Janssen, 2004), testing and modifying the prototype (Scott & Bruce, 1994) and routinizing the new way of doing such that the innovation becomes part of the regular work processes of work groups or entire organizations (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010). Simple innovations are often completed by individual workers involved, while the accomplishment of more complex innovations usually requires teamwork based on a variety of specific knowledge, competence, and work roles (Ömür, 2019).

Behavioral cultural intelligence and Employee Innovative Behaviour

Rose, Ramalu, Uli, and Kumar (2010) observed that behavioral cultural intelligence positively influenced contextual and assignment specific performance of the expatriates living and working in Malaysia though it had no significant influence on their task performance. Similar findings were noted by a study conducted by Duff, Tahbaz and Chan (2012) on Canadian undergraduate students which revealed that behavioral cultural intelligence had a positive significant influence on task performance. On the other hand, Chen et al. (2011) observed that behavioral cultural intelligence had a positive significant relationship with the performance of foreign laborers in Taiwan.

Ang and Dyne (2008) stated that a person ought to possess essential non-verbal and verbal skills in order to converse and intermingle with people from various cultures effectively. Consequently, behavioral CQ is an important dimension that improves social collaborations and emphasizes how individuals should resolve to transform their conduct to match the anticipations of other people (Ang et al., 2007). People possessing great behavioral CQ are adjustable in their verbal and nonverbal conduct and are capable to meet the expectations of other people from other cultures (Kumar, Rose & Subramaniam, 2008). Moreover, a research investigation carried out by Ang et al. (2007) revealed when the workers enhance their behavioral cultural intelligence then their task performance would consequently increase in a significant fashion.

Based on the foregoing, the study thus hypothesized that:

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between behavioural cultural intelligence and idea generation.

Ho_2: There is no significant relationship between behavioural cultural intelligence and idea realization.

Ho_3: There is no significant relationship between behavioural cultural intelligence and idea promotion.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the cross-sectional research survey design. Primary data was generated through structured questionnaire. The population for this study was 283 supervisors in four major telecommunication companies in South-South, Nigeria. The sample size of 166 was determined using Taro Yamane sample size determination formula. The research instrument was validated by supervisors' vetting and approval while the reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Statistics. The tests were carried out at a 0.05 significance level.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Table 1 Correlations for Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence and Employee Innovative Behaviour Measures

			Behavioural Cultural intelligence	Idea Generation	Idea Promotion	Idea Realization
Spearman's rho	Behavioural Cultural intelligence	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.789**	.803**	.651**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	138	138	138	138
	Idea Generation	Correlation Coefficient	.789**	1.000	.804**	.816**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	138	138	138	138
	Idea Promotion	Correlation Coefficient	.803**	.804**	1.000	.762**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	138	138	138	138
	Idea Realization	Correlation Coefficient	.651**	.816**	.762**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	138	138	138	138
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						

Source: SPSS Output version 23.0

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between behavioural cultural intelligence and idea generation.

Table 1 shows a Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (rho) of 0.789 on the relationship between behavioural cultural intelligence and idea generation. This value implies that a strong relationship exists between the variables. The direction of the relationship indicates that the correlation is positive; implying that an increase in idea generation was as a result of the adoption of behavioural cultural intelligence. Therefore, there is a strong positive correlation between behavioural cultural intelligence and idea generation of telecommunications companies in South-South, Nigeria. Similarly displayed in the table is the statistical test of significance (p-value) which makes possible the generalization of our findings to the study population. From the result obtained, the sig- calculated is less than significant level ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). Therefore, based on this finding the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between behavioural cultural intelligence and idea generation.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between behavioural cultural intelligence and idea realization.

Similarly, table 1 shows a Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (rho) of 0.803 on the relationship between behavioural cultural intelligence and idea promotion. This value implies that a very strong relationship exists between the variables. The direction of the relationship indicates that the correlation is positive; implying that an increase in idea promotion was as a result of the adoption of behavioural cultural intelligence. Therefore, there is a very strong positive correlation between behavioural cultural intelligence and idea promotion of telecommunications companies in South-South, Nigeria. Also displayed in the table is the statistical test of significance (p-value) which makes possible the generalization of our findings to the study population. From the result obtained from Table, the sig- calculated is less than significant level ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). Therefore, based on this finding the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between behavioural cultural intelligence and idea realization.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between behavioural cultural intelligence and idea promotion.

Furthermore, table 1 shows a Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (rho) of 0.651 on the relationship between behavioural cultural intelligence and idea retention. This value implies that a strong relationship exists between the variables. The direction of the relationship indicates that the correlation is positive; implying that an increase in idea retention was as a result of the adoption of behavioural cultural intelligence. Therefore, there is a strong positive correlation between behavioural cultural intelligence and idea retention of telecommunications companies in South-South, Nigeria. Also displayed is the statistical test of significance (p-value) which makes possible the generalization of our findings to the study population. From the result obtained, the sig- calculated is less than significant level ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). Therefore,

based on this finding the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between behavioural cultural intelligence and idea promotion.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The finding revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between the behavioural cultural intelligence and the measures of employee innovative behaviour telecommunications companies in South-South, Nigeria. This finding supports the earlier finding of Rose, Ramalu, Uli, and Kumar (2010) who observed that behavioral cultural intelligence positively influenced contextual and assignment specific performance of the expatriates living and working in Malaysia though it had no significant influence on their task performance. Similar findings were noted by a study conducted by Duff, Tahbaz and Chan (2012) on Canadian undergraduate students which revealed that behavioral cultural intelligence had a positive significant influence on task performance. On the other hand, Chen et al. (2011) observed that behavioral cultural intelligence had a positive significant relationship with the performance of foreign laborers in Taiwan.

Also, Ang and Dyne (2008) stated that a person ought to possess essential non-verbal and verbal skills in order to converse and intermingle with people from various cultures effectively. Consequently, behavioral CQ is an important dimension that improves social collaborations and emphasizes how individuals should resolve to transform their conduct to match the anticipations of other people (Ang et al., 2007). People possessing great behavioral CQ are adjustable in their verbal and nonverbal conduct and are capable to meet the expectations of other people from other cultures (Kumar, Rose & Subramaniam, 2008). Moreover, a research investigation carried out by Ang et al. (2007) revealed when the workers enhance their behavioral cultural intelligence then their task performance would consequently increase in a significant fashion.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study concludes that behavioral cultural intelligence positively enhances employee innovative behavior in telecommunication companies in the South-South region of Nigeria. This implies that individuals who demonstrate higher levels of behavioral cultural intelligence are more likely to engage in innovative behaviors in the workplace. By nurturing employees' behavioral competencies, organizations can create an environment that values diversity, encourages effective communication, and fosters collaboration, ultimately fueling innovation and enhancing the competitive advantage of telecommunication companies in the South-South region of Nigeria.

Based on the foregoing, the study thus recommends that management of telecommunication companies should actively promote cross-cultural teamwork and collaboration by assigning employees from different cultural backgrounds to work together on projects. This will provide opportunities for employees to learn from one another, exchange ideas, and leverage their behavioral cultural intelligence to drive innovation. Establishing diverse teams can lead to increased creativity and innovative problem-solving.

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