CORRELATES OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND PAY PERCEPTION IN JOB SATISFACTION OF PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

Obumse Chike N.
Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Anambra State
Department of Psychology

Okoye Chinwe F.
Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Anambra State
Department of Psychology

Abstract

The study investigated organizational culture and pay perception as correlates of job satisfaction among public employees in Anambra State, Nigeria. A total of 297 participants took part in the study, comprising 182 males (61.3%) and 115 females (38.7%), aged between 24 and 67 years (mean age = 36.4, SD = 7.02). Cluster and convenience sampling was employed to select both participants and organizations. Three instruments were utilized: the Organizational Culture Scale, Pay Perception Questionnaire, and Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire. The research employed a correlation design, utilizing Pearson Product Moment Correlation to analyze the data and test the hypotheses. The results indicated that organizational culture had a significant positive correlation with job satisfaction and pay perception also showed a moderate positive correlation with job satisfaction. The study recommended that Organizations should institutionalize recognition and reward programs that celebrate employees' hard work, commitment, and outstanding performance.

Keywords: Organizational culture, Pay perception, Job satisfaction, public employees.

Introduction

In the present era of rapid organizational transformation, many institutions have come to acknowledge that employees represent their most valuable asset (Belias & Koustelios, 2014). Employee satisfaction has become fundamental to achieving organizational success and is widely recognized as a critical factor distinguishing thriving institutions from those struggling to meet their objectives. Given the pace of globalization and industrialisation, there has been a remarkable increase in the establishment of public organisations designed to address diverse social and administrative needs (Tsai, 2011). These organisations, including those in sectors such as education, health, and finance, rely heavily on human resources to ensure effective operation and productivity. Even with technological advancements, the human element remains indispensable for monitoring, decision-making, and driving innovation.

High productivity and sustainable performance in organisations are often realised through employee commitment and contributions (Adewojo et al., 2025). Employees are central to the development and implementation of strategies that help achieve institutional goals. Within this context, organisational culture and employees' perception of pay have emerged as vital components of effective human resource management. The long-term success of any organisation depends largely on how these factors are managed and aligned with both institutional objectives and employee expectations (Olonade et al., 2021).

Organisational culture is commonly defined as the system of shared values, beliefs, and practices that guide behaviour and shape social interactions within a workplace (Olumide & Olu-Abiodun, 2017). It is a unifying force that connects members and influences both individual and collective performance. A strong, positive organisational culture promotes teamwork, innovation, and commitment, while a misaligned or rigid culture often leads to dissatisfaction and disengagement. When the cultural values of an organisation are consistent with the beliefs and expectations of its employees, a sense of harmony is created, leading to higher job satisfaction and productivity (Nwokorie, 2025). Conversely, when this alignment is absent, employees may experience reduced motivation and weaker organisational commitment.

Pay perception, on the other hand, refers to the psychological evaluation employees make about their compensation, its fairness, adequacy, and equity relative to their effort and contributions (Ozumba & Alabere, 2022). This perception plays a critical role in shaping attitudes toward work, influencing job satisfaction, motivation, and retention. When employees believe that their pay is fair and commensurate with their performance, they are more likely to display higher levels of satisfaction and commitment. Conversely, perceived inequities or pay dissatisfaction can result in low morale, increased absenteeism, and even turnover (Ayinde & Obawole, 2019). Thus, the perceived fairness of compensation systems is a key determinant of organisational stability and success.

Job satisfaction itself is a multifaceted concept encompassing both emotional and cognitive evaluations of one's job experiences. It has been described as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job (Locke, 1976). Job satisfaction remains vital to employee motivation, engagement, and performance, reflecting the extent to which workers' needs and expectations are fulfilled within their work environment. Satisfied employees tend to demonstrate loyalty, reduced absenteeism, and stronger commitment to organisational goals (Pepple et al., 2023). In contrast, dissatisfaction may lead to counterproductive behaviours, poor performance, and reduced organisational citizenship.

Research conducted in Nigeria and other developing contexts confirms that pay perception and organisational culture are significant antecedents of job satisfaction (Ebeh, 2021; Kanu et al., 2023). However, most empirical studies examining these relationships have been carried out in Western and Asian settings, with limited attention to Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly Nigeria. Understanding the predictive influence of organisational culture and pay perception on job satisfaction among public sector employees in Anambra State is, therefore, both timely and crucial for improving public service performance.

Statement of the Problem

Job satisfaction is closely tied to productivity, efficiency, and organisational success. Nevertheless, many public institutions in Nigeria continue to face challenges in sustaining high levels of employee satisfaction, resulting in poor motivation and reduced performance. Factors such as rigid bureaucratic structures, perceived pay inequities, and misaligned cultural values often lead to low morale and disengagement among workers. Despite growing awareness of the role of organisational culture and compensation in shaping employee behaviour, these factors remain underexplored in Nigeria's public sector context (Okafor & Otu, 2024).

While several studies have investigated the relationships among organisational culture, pay perception, and job satisfaction, little attention has been given to examining these variables simultaneously in public organisations in Anambra State. This research gap is particularly significant considering the critical role that public sector employees play in implementing government policies and fostering national development. Understanding how organisational culture and pay perception predict job satisfaction will provide evidence-based insights for improving workforce morale, retention, and service delivery.

Accordingly, this study seeks to investigate organisational culture and pay perception as correlates of job satisfaction among public sector workers in Anambra State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. Determine whether organisational culture significantly correlates with job satisfaction among public sector workers in Anambra State, Nigeria.
2. Examine if pay perception significantly correlates with job satisfaction among public sector workers in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study;

1. Organizational culture will correlate with job satisfaction among public organization employees in Anambra state, Nigeria.
2. Pay perception will correlate with job satisfaction among public organization employees in Anambra state, Nigeria.

Method

Participants

A total of 297 employees were drawn from eight (8) public organizations in Anambra State, Nigeria, which included Nnamdi Azikiwe University, the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), United Bank for Africa (UBA), Access Bank, First Bank, Zenith Bank, Fidelity Bank, and Awka South Local Government Headquarters. Participants were selected using a combination of probability (cluster) and non-probability (convenience) sampling techniques. For the cluster sampling, employees were grouped according to their organizational affiliation, and for the convenience sampling, participants were chosen based on their availability and willingness to take part in the study. Convenience sampling is a non-probability method where the sample is drawn from individuals who are easily accessible and willing to participate (Goodwin, 2013). Of the 297 participants, 182 were males (61.3%) and 115 were females (38.7%). The participants' ages ranged from 24 to 67 years with a mean age of 36.4 years (SD = 7.02). In terms of ethnicity, 229 participants (77.1%) identified as Igbo, 27 (9.1%) as Hausa/Fulani, 23 (7.7%) as Yoruba, and 18 (6.1%) as belonging to other minority ethnic groups. Regarding religious affiliation, 251 participants (84.5%) identified as Christians, 28 (9.4%) as Muslims, and 18 (6.1%) as traditionalists or belonging to other faiths.

Instruments

Three instruments were used in this study, namely: Organizational culture scale (OCS), Pay perception Questionnaire, Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ).

Organizational Culture Scale (OCS)

The Organizational Culture Scale (OCS) consists of 30 items, which has been developed by Kılıç (2006). The scale has cronbach alpha of 0.87 for the overall scale. The researcher using 50 employees from public organizations in Onitsha metropolis for a pilot study obtained the cronbach score of .80 for the overall scale. The instrument reported a convergent validity of .64 with the death anxiety scale. Participants will be asked to rate the degree to which they agree with each statement (on a Likert scale from 1- 5, with a score of 1 being "I strongly agree" and a score of 5 being "I strongly disagree"). Sample items included: "Our policies and procedures help us to provide the service our customers want and need."; "People sometimes compromise company policies or principles to reach operational goals."

Pay perception questionnaire (PSQ)

Pay perception Questionnaire" (PSQ), an 18- item instrument developed by Heneman & Schwab, (1985). The instrument was reported to demonstrate adequate reliability and dimensionality (Heneman & Scwhab, 1985; Judge & Welbourne, 1994). The instrument has a reliability Coefficient of .88, and Mogaji (2019) in his reliability and validity check in Nigeria reported an alpha score of 0.94 and a convergent validity score of 0.71. Respondents will be asked to indicate their degree of satisfaction with various aspects of pay on 5- point, "1 = Very Dissatisfied, 2 = Dissatisfied, 3 = Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied, 4 = Satisfied, 5 = Very Satisfied".

Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire

Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ-Short Form). Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ-short form) is a 20-item standardized scale and is especially designed to measure intrinsic and extrinsic job factors of employees. MSQ-short form was developed by Weiss, Dawis, England, and Lofquist (1967). MSQ-short form has 20 items which include; activity, responsibility, variety, social status, supervision of human relations, technical supervision, moral values, security, social service, authority, ability utilization, company policy, compensation, advancement, independence, creativity, working conditions, co-employees, recognition, and achievement. MSQ-short form is a 5-point Likert scale, responses of which range from 1 (very satisfied) to 5 (very dissatisfied). Reliability value of the scale is .77. The researcher using 50 employees from public organizations in Onitsha metropolis for a pilot study obtained the cronbach score of .82 for the scale. The instrument reported a convergent validity of .57 with the death anxiety scale.

Procedures

The researcher identified eight (8) public organizations in Anambra State, Nigeria, as the focus of the study. These included Nnamdi Azikiwe University, the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), United Bank for Africa (UBA), Access Bank, First Bank, Zenith Bank, Fidelity Bank, and Awka South Local Government Headquarters. From these organizations, a total of 297 employees were selected through a combination of cluster and convenience sampling techniques. Collaboration with human resource and public relations officers in each organization facilitated access to employees who met the study's inclusion criteria. Questionnaires were distributed in person to willing full-time and confirmed staff members who voluntarily agreed to participate. Employees who were on probation, part-time, or unwilling to participate were excluded from the study. The administration of the questionnaire was conducted during official working hours with the consent of management, and participants were given adequate time to complete and return the forms. Participation was strictly voluntary, and no form of financial or material reward was offered. To ensure ethical compliance, participants were assured of anonymity, confidentiality, and informed consent throughout the data collection process. The purpose of the study was clearly explained to all participants, emphasizing that the information obtained would be used solely for academic research and that their responses would not be disclosed in any manner that could identify them individually.

Design and statistics

This study utilized a correlational research design, with data analyzed in line with the hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance using pearson product moment correlation through SPSS version 25.0.

Results

Below is the outcome of the analyzed data.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of feminism-masculism, organizational culture, pay perception, job satisfaction.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Organ. Culture	297	34	135	75.8	13.7	0.91	0.142	0.74	0.283
Pay Perception	297	20	82	43.0	9.05	0.25	0.142	0.41	0.283
Job satisfaction	297	24	93	48.6	9.64	0.32	0.142	0.65	0.283

Source: Questionnaire Primary Data

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the variables used in the study among 297 public-sector employees in Anambra State, Nigeria. The participants' ages ranged from 24 to 67 years, with a mean age of 36.4 years (SD = 7.02), indicating a relatively young and active workforce. Pay perception recorded a mean of 43.0 (SD = 9.05), showing that employees generally held moderate views regarding fairness and adequacy of compensation in their organizations. Meanwhile, job satisfaction had a mean score of 48.6 (SD = 9.64), indicating that most employees experienced a moderate to high level of satisfaction with their jobs. All variables showed slightly positive skewness values, implying that most respondents rated their experiences slightly above the midpoint of each scale. The kurtosis values fall within acceptable ranges (between -2 and +2), suggesting that the distributions are approximately normal and suitable for further parametric analysis such as correlation or regression.

Table 2: Zero-Order Correlation Matrix of Organizational Culture, Pay Perception, and Job Satisfaction (N = 297)

Variables	Age	Organizational Culture	Pay Perception	Job Satisfaction
AGE	1.00			
OC	0.118*	1.00		
PP	0.006	0.386**	1.00	
JS	-0.162*	0.241**	0.298**	1.00

p < .05; *p < .01

Table 2 presents the Pearson product–moment correlation coefficients among age, organizational culture, pay perception, and job satisfaction for 297 public-sector employees in Anambra State, Nigeria. The results reveal that organizational culture was positively and significantly correlated with pay perception ($r = .386$, $p < .01$) and job satisfaction ($r = .241$, $p < .01$). This indicates that employees who perceived their organizations as supportive, innovative, and value-driven also tended to have higher satisfaction levels and more positive perceptions of their pay. Similarly, pay perception showed a moderate positive correlation with job satisfaction ($r = .298$, $p < .01$), implying that when employees consider their compensation fair and commensurate with their effort, their satisfaction with their jobs increases. The relationship between age and job satisfaction was negative and significant ($r = –.162$, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that older employees tended to report slightly lower job satisfaction than their younger counterparts. However, age was not significantly related to pay perception ($r = 0.006$, ns), implying that perceptions of compensation fairness did not differ substantially across age groups. Overall, the findings indicate that both organizational culture and pay perception play vital roles in shaping job satisfaction among public-sector employees in Anambra State.

Discussion

Based on the findings of this study, the first hypothesis, which stated that organizational culture will significantly correlate with job satisfaction among public sector workers in Anambra State, Nigeria, was accepted. The results revealed that organizational culture had a significant positive correlation with job satisfaction among the respondents. This implies that the shared beliefs, values, practices, and behavioural norms within an organization strongly influence how employees perceive their work and the degree of satisfaction they derive from it. When employees experience a culture characterized by trust, collaboration, effective communication, and recognition, they tend to feel more valued, motivated, and content in their work roles.

This finding is consistent with Tsai (2011), who found a strong positive relationship between organizational culture and job satisfaction, emphasizing that employees working in supportive, innovative, and people-centred cultures express higher satisfaction than those in rigid, bureaucratic settings. Similarly, Soryani et al., (2020) reported that organizational culture significantly correlated with job satisfaction, highlighting that when organizational values promote inclusiveness, recognition, and mutual respect, employees feel more committed and emotionally attached to their work. Ojo (2019) also noted that cultural alignment between employees and their organization enhances engagement and satisfaction, as workers find meaning in an environment that resonates with their personal values.

Furthermore, Cameron and Quinn (2016) argued that organizations that foster developmental and participative cultures experience higher morale, loyalty, and productivity among staff. In such contexts, employees perceive their workplace as fair, transparent, and supportive of professional growth. Conversely, organizations with rigid or overly bureaucratic cultures often encounter low morale, absenteeism, and job dissatisfaction due to lack of autonomy and innovation.

The observed relationship can be explained using Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959), which distinguishes between motivator and hygiene factors in determining job satisfaction. A positive and inclusive organizational culture serves as a motivator by fulfilling employees' intrinsic needs for achievement, recognition, and belongingness. When employees are encouraged to participate in decision-making, supported by leadership, and recognized for their contributions, they experience higher satisfaction. In contrast, a toxic or unsupportive culture acts as a dissatisfier, leading to disengagement and reduced morale. Thus, the significant correlation between organizational culture and job satisfaction found in this study underscores the centrality of workplace culture in enhancing employees' emotional well-being and productivity in public organizations in Anambra State.

The second hypothesis, which stated that pay perception will significantly correlate with job satisfaction among public sector workers in Anambra State, Nigeria, was also accepted. The results indicated a significant positive correlation between pay perception and job satisfaction, showing that employees who perceive their pay as fair, equitable, and commensurate with their efforts are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs. Pay perception goes beyond the absolute amount of compensation, it encompasses fairness in distribution, transparency in pay processes, and the perceived adequacy of rewards relative to others performing similar work.

This finding supports Serreqi (2020), who reported that employees' perceptions of equitable pay strongly influence their overall satisfaction, commitment, and retention within organizations. Similarly, Azeez and Ezeh (2022) found that fair pay and clear reward systems positively correlated with both job satisfaction and organizational commitment among Nigerian civil servants. Kim (2017) also noted that employees' evaluation of pay fairness significantly impacts motivation, work engagement, and organizational citizenship behaviours. Conversely, the present finding contradicts the results of Ezeh and Olawale (2021), who found no significant relationship between pay perception and job satisfaction among federal employees, possibly due to structural pay disparities or low transparency in compensation systems within federal institutions.

This relationship aligns with Vroom's Expectancy Theory (1964), which posits that employees' motivation and satisfaction depend on the perceived connection between their efforts, performance, and rewards. When employees believe that their contributions will be acknowledged and adequately rewarded, they are more likely to demonstrate commitment and positive work attitudes. On the other hand, perceptions of unfair pay or reward inequity often fealed to frustration, lower morale, and decreased job satisfaction. Thus, organizations that prioritize transparent, fair, and performance-linked compensation systems can foster higher levels of satisfaction and engagement among their workers.

Overall, the findings of this study demonstrate that both organizational culture and pay perception are key correlates of job satisfaction among public sector employees in Anambra State. A supportive, transparent, and people-oriented culture, when coupled with equitable pay systems, nurtures emotional stability, enhances organizational commitment, and promotes job satisfaction. These findings emphasize the need for public sector managers to cultivate a culture that values inclusiveness, communication, and fairness while ensuring that reward systems are merit-based and transparent. Such initiatives not only improve job satisfaction but also strengthen productivity, reduce turnover, and promote sustainable organizational growth across public institutions in Nigeria.

Conclusion

This study examined organizational culture and pay perception as correlates of job satisfaction among public sector employees in Anambra State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that both organizational culture and pay perception had significant positive correlations with job satisfaction. This indicates that the work environment, defined by shared values, norms, and practices, alongside employees' perception of fairness and equity in compensation, plays a crucial role in determining how satisfied employees are with their jobs. It is therefore concluded that organizational leaders and policymakers in the public sector should recognize the importance of fostering a supportive and inclusive organizational culture while ensuring that compensation structures are transparent, fair, and commensurate with employees' efforts. When these factors are appropriately addressed, employees are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward their work, demonstrate stronger commitment, and contribute more effectively to organizational goals. Improving organizational culture and pay systems can help reduce job dissatisfaction, enhance employee morale, and promote overall productivity within public institutions. By creating an environment that values equity, communication, and recognition, organizations in Anambra State can strengthen the bond between management and employees, promoting trust, cooperation, and long-term organizational success.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Public sector organizations should intentionally promote a positive and inclusive organizational culture by encouraging collaboration between leaders and employees. Regular social events, team-building activities, and open forums can strengthen relationships, build trust, and enhance a shared sense of purpose among employees. Such initiatives foster unity and belonging, thereby improving morale and overall job satisfaction.

2. Organizations should institutionalize recognition and reward programs that celebrate employees' hard work, commitment, and outstanding performance. Regular acknowledgment through awards, commendations, or incentives reinforces a culture of appreciation, motivates employees, and strengthens their emotional attachment to the organization.

3. To improve pay perception, management should adopt transparent and equitable compensation systems that reflect employees' skills, responsibilities, and contributions. Clear communication about pay policies and periodic reviews of salary structures help build trust and reduce perceptions of inequality. This approach enhances employees' sense of fairness and, in turn, their satisfaction and engagement.

4. Employees should be given opportunities to voice their opinions and participate in decisions that affect their work and welfare. Participatory management fosters openness and mutual respect, leading to a more engaged and satisfied workforce. It also helps align employees' expectations with organizational goals, reducing dissatisfaction and turnover.

5. Leaders in public organizations should practice adaptive or "liquid" leadership—an approach that tailors management styles to individual needs and situations. This form of leadership encourages empathy, communication, and responsiveness, allowing leaders to better understand and support employees' concerns, including those related to compensation and workplace culture. Such leadership practices enhance motivation, promote psychological safety, and improve job satisfaction across all levels of the organization.

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