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## **INFLUENCE OF GENDER, WORK ENVIRONMENT, LENGTH OF SERVICE AND AGE OF ACADEMIC STAFF ON ATTITUDE TO WORK**

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### **Abstract**

*Workers attitude to work is a thing of concern to all management of organization. The present study investigated the influence of four socio-demographic variables (gender, work environment, length of service and age) on attitude to work of academic staff in two universities. The study employed an ex-post facto research design using accidental sample to select 100 participants for the study. Questionnaire on the attitude to work self report was used as an instrument to collect data and response from the participants. Four hypotheses were tested in this study and data collected were analyzed using independent t-test and one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Results showed that socio-demographic variables have no significant influence on attitude to*

*work. Findings were discussed in line with the existing literatures. Based on findings, it is concluded that socio-demographic variables are important in attitude to work of academic workers.*

### **Keywords**

Attitude to Work, Gender, Work Environment, Length of Service, Age, Academic Staff

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## **1. Introduction**

Attitude as a concept is all about individual way of thinking, acting and behaving. It has a serious effect on employees' work performance. The foundation of every organization is a positive attitude which leads to higher performance and productivity. According to De Simone & Harris (1998), internal factors such as motivation, ability, attitude, knowledge and skill have possible influences on workers' behavior. In a broad sense, attitude is defined as a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favors or disfavor. Job attitude on the other hand is a particular instance as an entity. Job involves an individual's current position, work or occupation, and even the individual's employer as its entity. Nevertheless, an individual's attitude to work might not necessarily be the same as those exhibited toward the employer (Watt & Greguras, 2004).

Research demonstrates that interrelationships and complexities underlie what would seem to be the simply defined term job attitudes. The long history of research into job attitudes suggests there is no commonly agreed definition (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012) because there are both cognitive and affective aspects. Attitudes develop as a result of learning experiences or even simply by adapting, mimicking or imitating the opinions of co-employees, friends and managers. This act of imitation in turn plays a vital role in developing positive or negative attitude at the work place. According to Guerreror & Sire (2000), the consequences of negative attitude towards work can create problem in applying the prescribed job design, which means there will be failure in accomplishing organizational goals. Aremu (2003) is of the opinion that poor attitude is a performance that has fallen below expected standard and it has been observed among employees in both public and private establishments. Even Adebule (2004) sees this opinion of the fallen standard of workers attitudes as a universal one. Aremu (2003) stressed that poor attitude is not only frustrating to the owners and the customers, its effects are equally grave on the society in terms of dearth of manpower in all spheres of the

economy and politics. Johansson (1991) reported that women express a more instrumental attitude to work while Ellingsæter (1995) found that men have more instrumental attitude to work than women.

### **1.1 Work Attitude**

A work attitude is a set of evaluation of one's job that constitute one's feelings toward, beliefs about, and attachment to one's job. Overall, job attitude can be conceptualized in two ways namely, as affective job satisfaction that constitutes a general or global subjective feeling about a job, or as a composite of objective cognitive assessments of specific job facets, such as pay, conditions, opportunities and other aspects of a particular job. Employees evaluate their advancement opportunities by observing their job, their occupation, and their employer. Attitudes to work vary between age groups and between people in different sectors. Therefore, the importance of salary, work conditions, and other work values cannot be underestimated because people work for different reasons.

Global job attitudes are attitudes developed towards a job through the organization, working environment, affective disposition, aggregate measures of job characteristics and the social environment. They depend on the broad totality of work conditions. Infact, job attitudes are also closely associated with more global measures of life satisfaction (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012)

### **1.2 Work Environment**

The term work environment is used to describe the surrounding conditions in which an employee operates. Typically, work environment is divided into external and internal work environment. External work environment include factors such as the customs, traditions, norms and laws of the community within which the organization operates, weather condition, government policies, economy, and the likes. On the other hand, internal environment consists of the buildings, furniture, layout and physical conditions under which employees operate. It is generally seen as the surroundings especially things concerned with the operation of the organization. The work environment can be composed of physical conditions, such as office temperature, or equipments such as computers. It can also be related to factors such as work processes or procedures. The work environment can involve the social interactions at the workplace, including interactions with peers, subordinates, and managers. Various researches have linked work environment to employee's productivity, quality output, level of wastage and

turnover rate. Poor work environment has been linked to lateness, disobedience, absenteeism, and several negative attitudes (Hicks, 1974). Yusuf & Metiboba (2012) reported a significant relationship between work environment and worker's attitude to job concluding that work environment has an impact on the worker's attitude to job. Also Akinyele (2007) concluded that conducive work environment allows employees to exert themselves to their roles.

### **1.3 Length of service**

It refers to duration of service or employment, Often used to indicate how long an employee has worked at a company or an individual has belonged to an organization. Three types of length of service have been identified namely, overall length of service, continuous length of service and special length of service (The Great Soviet Encyclopedia, 1979). Overall length of service is the total time spent at a job or some socially beneficial activity regardless of the nature of the activity and the length of the intervals between work periods. This determines pension eligibility of the workers. Continuous length of service is the amount of continuous work performed by an employee at a single organization. It also includes time spent at a previous job or at another activity at different organizations. Special length of service is based on the nature of the job, the branch of the economy, the working conditions, and the climatic conditions. It may be overall or continuous.

Age is the length of time of existence while gender is refers to the personal sexual identity of an individual.

Previous studies on demographic factors as it relates to attitude to work had yielded conflicting result. As such, scholars hold conflicting views with regard to the influence of demographical factors on attitude to work. While some believe they lead to poor attitude, others advocate that it has nothing to do with poor attitude. This study, therefore, looked into these two positions by paying close attention to the following questions:

- Does age influence attitude to work?
- Does gender influence attitude to work?
- Will the length of service influence attitude to work?
- Will work environment influence attitude to work? In this study, four hypotheses were tested namely:
- Gender will significantly influence attitude to work.

- Work environment will have significant influence on attitude to work.
- Workers with short length of service will significantly report positive attitude to work than workers with long length of service.
- Younger workers will significantly report positive attitude to work than older workers.

## **2. Method**

### **2.1 Research Design and Procedure**

The study employed the ex-post facto research design since there was no actual manipulation of the variables. The independent variables in the study are demographic factors (namely gender, age, length of service, and work environment) while the dependent variable is attitude to work.

The study population consists of academic staff from two universities in Ekiti State namely, Federal University Oye-Ekiti and Ekiti State University Ado-Ekiti. The two educational institutions were selected because they are the public universities available in Ekiti State. A sample of 100 academic staff selected from the two universities through accidental sampling technique participated in the study. They consisted of 66 male and 34 female with age ranged between 28 years to 56 years and a mean age of 35.6.

### **2.2 Research Instrument**

Attitude to work was measured using a scale adopted from Ravi Van gala (2011) Attitude Scale (AS). It is a 20-item attitude to work scale. The scale has 5-point Likert response format ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Higher scores indicate positive attitude to work. The instrument was subjected to both face and content validity. The Test-retest reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.76 while its Cranach's Alpha coefficient was 0.55.

### **2.3 Statistical Method**

The data collected were subjected to analysis using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Hypotheses stated were tested using t-test for independent group to determine group difference and one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

### 3. Results

**Table 1:** *t-test for independent group showing gender and attitude to work*

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	p
Attitude to work	Male	66	48.80	12.93	98	1.84	>.05
	Female	34	43.82	12.64			

The table revealed no significant influence of gender on attitude to work ( $t=1.84$ ;  $df=98$ ;  $p>.05$ ). This suggests that male participants ( $X=48.80$ ) were not significantly different from female participants ( $X=43.82$ ).

**Table 2:** *One-way ANOVA showing the influence of work environment on attitude to work*

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Attitude to work	Between Groups	187.283	2	93.642	.550	.579
	Within Groups	16504.507	97	170.150		
	Total	16691.790	99			

The result presented in Table 2 shows that work environment did not significantly influence attitude towards work ( $F(2, 97) = 0.55$ ;  $p>.05$ ). The result indicates that participants who perceived work environment averagely were not significantly different in attitude towards work from those who perceived work environment good.

**Table 3:** *t-test for independent group showing length of service and attitude to work*

Variable	Length of service	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	p
Attitude to work	Long	23	45.26	11.11	88	-0.11	$p>.05$
	Short	67	48.69	13.30			

Result from Table 3 shows that length of service did not have significant influence on attitude to work. ( $t=-0.11$ ;  $DF=88$ ;  $p>.05$ ). This suggests that workers with short length of service ( $X=48.69$ ) were not significantly different in attitude to work from workers with long length of service ( $X=45.26$ ).

**Table 4:** *t-test for independent group showing age and attitude to work*

Variables	Age	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	p
Attitude to work	Older	36	46.86	12.11	78	-1.78	<.05
	Younger	44	46.93	12.37			

Table 4 shows that age did not have significant influence on attitude to work ( $t=-1.78$ ;  $DF=78$ ;  $p>.05$ ). This result suggests that old workers ( $X= 46.86$ ) were not significantly different in attitude to work from young workers ( $X=46.93$ ).

#### **4. Discussion**

Findings from this study shows that gender did not have significant influence on attitude to work. This indicates that male participants were not significantly different from female participants in attitude to work. The plausible explanation for this is that both male and female academic staffs performs the same tasks of teaching, research and community development, and same performance measurement and indices are used to promote them. Also, both male and female academic staffs are exposed to equal opportunities in terms of benefit and work load. Therefore, being male or female does not influence their attitude to work. This finding is in contradiction with previous research findings of Johansson (1991) and Ellingsæter (1995) who reported significant influence of gender on attitude to work.

Furthermore, finding from this study revealed that environment did not influence attitude to work significantly. The finding indicates that participants who perceived work environment averagely were not significantly different in attitude toward work from those who perceived work environment as good. A possible explanation for this finding may be due to the learned helplessness. The work environment of the institutions studied may not be too conducive for the

academic staff but they tend to accept it and make do with what they have. Finding from this study contradict previous findings of Yusuf & Metiboba (2012) and Akinyele (2007) who reported that environment influences workers' attitude to work.

From this study, workers with short length of service did not report significant positive attitude to work than workers with long length of service. This suggests that workers with short length of service were not significantly different in attitude to work from workers with long length of service. An explanation for this finding may be that workers with short length of service imbibe the culture and norms as laid down by the workers with long length of service who are seen as role models and mentors, thereby having no reason to exhibit more positive attitude to work than the long tenured workers. As such, if the long tenured workers do not exhibit positive attitude to work, the short tenured ones would not exhibit positive attitude to work.

Findings from this study also showed that young workers did not report significant positive attitude to work than old workers. This suggests that old workers were not mentoring the young ones in the area of work dedication, punctuality, and work commitment. Therefore the attitude to work of the young workers was not significantly different from that of the old workers. This finding can be linked to organizational structure and culture that exist in the educational institutions selected.

## **5. Conclusion and Recommendation**

The study concludes that gender, work environment, length of service and age have no significant influence on attitude to work. It is therefore recommended that demographic factors should be effectively managed in work organizations because they are important factors in work management.

## **6. Limitation of the Study**

The study employed ex-post facto design that does not give room for manipulation of variables. Therefore, no cause-effect relationship can be inferred or established.

The study had a small sample size which was as a result of participants' low response rate. For instance a sample size of 100 was eventually obtained out of the 210 initially proposed for the study.



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