

## Executive Unconscious-Bias and Employee Job Satisfaction in Government Parastatals in Lagos State Nigeria

Fatunmbi Oladotun Muideen\*

Administrative Staff College of Nigeria, Topo-Badagry, Lagos, Nigeria

\*Corresponding author: Muideen FO, Administrative Staff College of Nigeria, Topo-Badagry, Lagos, Nigeria, Tel: +234 816 482 4000; E-mail: mdotfat@yahoo.com

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### Abstract

The study investigates executive unconscious-bias and job satisfaction in government parastatals in Lagos State, Nigeria. The descriptive survey research design was adopted while the simple random sampling technique was used to draw 120 sample respondents. Questionnaire rated on a 6-point Likert scale, was the main instrument for data collection, 120 copies of questionnaire. The descriptive statistical techniques of Percentiles and Pearson Correlation were used for data analysis with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software for editing and encoding. The result reveals that there is a weak negative relationship between executive-unconscious and job satisfaction among employees of the selected parastatals in the state ( $R=-0.193$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). The study recommends that it is imperative for executives to examine themselves and be self-aware of their unconscious biases so they can consciously work on them.

**Keywords** Executive unconscious-bias; Job satisfaction; Government parastatals

### Introduction

Unconscious bias has been shown to affect the ways managers deliver their duties in organizations, from decision making to communication and quality of support and supervision given to employees. Kyko [1] identified among other factors, biased boss as a factor contributing to a toxic work environment which in turn leads to low productivity of workers. Nwagboso et al. [2] found that there is a significant relationship between employee job satisfaction and leadership behavior. Also, research has confirmed the impact of levels of relationship with immediate supervisor and level of relationship with co-workers on job satisfaction.

The strategic role of leadership to achieving employee job satisfaction and sustain performance has been emphasized by many researchers. However, not much has been done to investigate the effect of implicit bias on leadership behavior and its impact on job satisfaction and employee performance, most especially in Nigeria. Therefore, the existence of implicit bias in an organization, which could affect leadership behavior, with inferred impact on job satisfaction and employee performance needs to be investigated.

Leaders without the right attitude and behavior will find it extremely difficult to positively influence their employees, who are more than critical resources but partners in the achievement of the organization's goals and objectives. The business environment is changing as a result of many societal forces. The issues of globalization, diversity and inclusion are creating very dynamic and culturally diverse organizations that require unbiased leaders to successfully manage. Many factors influence the performance of an organization, and there is little doubt that the quality of leadership is one of the most critical determinants of organizational success [3]. Leadership behavior plays a very important role in enhancing employee job

satisfaction, work motivation and work performance [3]. Good leadership behavior accelerates the development of most organizations.

### Statement of problem

Leadership behavior affects how satisfied the employees would be, which can in turn affect how well they perform on their job. Different researches have been carried out to show the effect of leadership on job satisfaction and employee productivity. Leadership styles have been noted among other factors, as a critical variable responsible for employee job satisfaction and performance [4-9]. Employee job satisfaction is influenced by the internal organization environment which includes organizational climate, leadership styles and personnel relationship [10-14]. The quality of the leader-employee relationship – or the lack thereof – has a great influence on the employee's self-esteem and job satisfaction [15-20]. Negative leader-employee relations reduce productivity and increase absenteeism and the turnover to the organization can be quite high [21-23].

### Objective of the study

The objective of the research is to investigate the effect of executive-unconscious bias on employee job satisfaction in government parastatals in Lagos State, Nigeria.

### Research questions

How does executive unconscious-bias affect employee job satisfaction in government parastatals in Lagos State, Nigeria?

### Research hypothesis

**H<sub>0</sub>:** Executive unconscious-bias has no significant effect on employee job satisfaction in government parastatals in Lagos state, Nigeria.

### Significance of the study

Leadership has been identified as one of the main factors affecting productivity in every work organization [24]. Therefore, to enhance employee work performance and organizational effectiveness, the issue of unconscious biases must be taken very seriously [25].

Employee's effectiveness is increased on the job when he gets personal attention and strong response from the supervisor. Supervisor's and manager's role is important in uplifting the performance of employees at work [26-33].

### Literature Review

Nwachukwu [13] identified supervision, subordinates, the environment and outcome as the major variables that influence productivity. Productivity is rarely measured directly but inferred from changes in employee's attitude and behavior such as organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior and job satisfaction [34-45].

The fundamental factors influencing the effectiveness of an organization are leadership and job satisfaction [46-50]. Leadership is considered to be one of the most important determinants of employee's job satisfaction. It extensively influences employee's motivation and dedication.

There is a significant relationship between employee job satisfaction and leadership behavior [51]. They investigated the relationship between leadership behavior (independent variable) and employee job satisfaction (dependent variable) among selected paramilitary workers in Benin City, Edo State. It was found that noticeable leadership behaviors were transformational and transactional and the employees were to an average extent satisfied with their work [52-55].

Pandita and Domnic [14] reviewed various variables affecting job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction. Supervision was identified as one of the variables. According to their study, supervision plays a very important role in evaluating and enhancing the performance of each individual employee [56-60]. A supervisor or leader by all means has to be neutral and his/her individual preferences should never come into deciding or evaluating the performance of an individual. House et al. [15] also observed that subordinates reflect a greater amount of job satisfaction for having leaders or supervisors, who are high on consideration [31-65].

### Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. 120 respondents were randomly selected from some government parastatals in Lagos State, Nigeria. A structured questionnaire, divided into two parts A and B, was used in collecting the required data from the respondents. Part A contained items on the demographic variables and Part B contained items to measure the active variables of Executive unconscious-bias and Job satisfaction. The questionnaire was rated on a six-point Likert Scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree while the descriptive statistical techniques of Simple Percentile and Regression Analysis were used to analyse the data.

### Results and Analysis

H0: There is no significant relationship between leader-unconscious bias and employee job satisfaction.

LUB–Leader-Unconscious Bias

JS–Job Satisfaction.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	-.193 <sup>a</sup>	0.037	0.026	16.789

<sup>a</sup>Predictors: (Constant), LUB

Table 1: Model summary.

The model summary table shows that there is a very weak negative relationship between leader-unconscious bias and job satisfaction among staff of the institution with regression coefficient of -0.193 and

the adjusted R-square of 0.026. The result also revealed that only 3.7% variation in job satisfaction can be explained by leader-unconscious bias (Table 1).

ANOVA <sup>a</sup> Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	956.316	1	956.316	3.393	.042 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	24805.34	88	281.879		
Total	25761.66	89			

<sup>a</sup>Dependent variable: JS.  
<sup>b</sup>Predictors: (Constant), LUB.

Table 2: ANOVA model.

The ANOVA table indicates F-value of 3.393 and p-value of 0.042. This implies that the test is significant, that is the model is adequate

and sufficient in relating job satisfaction and leader-unconscious bias (Table 2).

Coefficients <sup>a</sup> Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	52.121	5.482		9.507	0
LUB	-0.233	-0.126	-0.193	-1.842	0.042

<sup>a</sup>Dependent Variable: JS

**Table 3:** The model is coefficient model.

$$JS = 52.121 - 0.233LUB$$

The hypothesis is significant because the p-value of 0.042 is less than the significance value of 0.05, hence the alternative hypothesis is accepted and we then conclude that leader-unconscious bias has significant relationship with job satisfaction. The leadership-unconscious bias contributes negatively to job satisfaction among staff of the institution (Table 3).

## Conclusion

Unconscious biases have been shown to influence virtually everything in the work place, from decision making, to recruitment and selection, promotion, compensation and benefits, training and development, and termination.

Unconscious biases affect the quality of supervision by the leaders in work organizations resulting in negative consequences on the employee performance. It is therefore imperative that managers and leaders take without levity the issues of unconscious biases as it affects the employees' tasks accomplishment and employees' job satisfaction in order to heighten the level of output and their general performance. People and institutions not only have a moral responsibility for their implicit bias, but a business responsibility; institutions need to be efficient and effective, and decisions and actions need to be taken based on evidence and fact, rather than stereotypes and hunches. Therefore, it is imperative for leaders to examine themselves and be self-aware of their unconscious biases so they can consciously work on them.

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