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Destruction of Economic Infrastructure by armed Conflict: Implications on Job Satisfaction among Workers in Juba, South Sudan

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Abstract

Armed conflict is one of the major antecedents that breed several devastating consequences that affect people's livelihoods, moral standing, education and health. Armed conflict results in the displacement of people, violence in the community, destruction of economic infrastructure and destruction of interpersonal relationships. The purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of the destruction of economic infrastructure by armed conflicts on job satisfaction among employees. A qualitative research methodology was employed to carry out the study. Data was collected using interviews. 10 participants who had the opportunity of working in the city of Juba, South Sudan during the armed conflicts between government and opposition political parties' forces participated in the study. All the participants were drawn from the city of Masvingo in Zimbabwe. The city of Masvingo is one of the cities in Zimbabwe that contributed a significant number of citizens who had an opportunity of working in South Sudan during the war. Data was analysed using thematic data analysis method. The study found out that job satisfaction among employees in armed conflict societies is influenced by the destruction of the economic infrastructure. The destruction of the economic infrastructure affects key antecedents to job satisfaction such as salaries and wages, health and safety, productivity, opportunities for promotion and growth, industrial relations, flexible work arrangements and team cohesion.

Keywords: Job Satisfaction, Armed Conflict, Society, Destruction, Economic Infrastructure

JEL Classification: G21, G41, J3, J5

Paper Classification: Research Paper

Introduction

Nyanga, & Sibanda (2018) argued that in any social organization or community, conflict is unavoidable. The interaction of people at organizational and societal levels propels both

functional and dysfunctional conflict. Conflicts at organizational and community levels usually do not degenerate into armed conflict, while conflicts at the national level between two or more political parties usually degenerates into armed conflicts. Dava, Chigora, Chibanda, & Sillah (2013) reported that armed conflict can be influenced by the perceived unfair distribution of natural resources or different religious orientation, different political ideologies and many others. The parties to the conflict can arm themselves with guns, knives, machetes, bows and arrows and much other military ammunition which can be used to kill or injure opponents and also destroy the economic infrastructure.

Studies (Nyanga 2018, Nyanga & Sibanda 2019, Dava, Chigora, Chibanda, & Sillah 2013) on the destruction of economic infrastructure in both natural and artificial hazards have been escalating over the past decade. Most studies provided new information, insights and knowledge about the extent to which the economic infrastructure is destroyed by the war and how it affects the economic activities in the country. As the need for more researches to be carried out on the destruction of infrastructure continued to surge, a huge amount of research has been published in different forums such as books, journals and periodicals. As such the concept of infrastructure in disaster-prone areas has commanded extensive research interest hence the number of publications has developed exponentially. Studies (Dava, Chigora, Chibanda, & Sillah 2013) established that the destruction of the economic infrastructure includes damages of the physical components of essential infrastructure such as transport, water reticulation, bridges, and energy and power systems. It is therefore necessary for communities to develop linkages to reduce the risk of the destruction of infrastructure. Most research investigated how physical damage disrupts the provision of vital social services, such as social vulnerability, disaster recovery and other sectors of the economy but it, however, did not address human resource management issues such as employee motivation and satisfaction. During the war, economic infrastructures such as electricity and water infrastructure, education and health facilities and agricultural systems are damaged, which in turn lead to the reduction in productivity and the generation of revenue. The destruction of infrastructure exacerbates numerous forms of socio-economic effects on health, politics, technology, social, economy and education. Employees working in armed conflict society are directly or indirectly affected by the ravaging effects of the war. Researchers have, however, not done a lot of research on how the war affects the management of human capital operating in war-torn societies. The aim of this study was to investigate the implications of the destruction of the economic infrastructure to employee satisfaction.

Statement of the Problem

The researcher observed that while there is a lot of research on the destruction of economic infrastructure, there is paucity on studies that investigated the relationship between job satisfaction and the destruction of the economic infrastructure. Most employees in armed conflict societies such as South Sudan, Somalia, Iraq, Pakistan and Mozambique registered very low job satisfaction levels (Nyanga 2018). The low satisfaction has been attributed to several war related factors which include among others political violence, sexual assaults and displacement of people. The destruction of the economic infrastructure such as roads, railways and banking systems directly and indirectly affected employees' attitudes towards their work. The destruction of economic infrastructure left employees operating under unbearable conditions where they use disrupted transport and communication, power outages, financial institutions, distribution and marketing systems. It remains unclear to what extent the destruction of the economic infrastructure affects job satisfaction among employees in armed conflict societies.

Aims and Objectives of the Study

1. To establish the effects of the destruction of the economic infrastructure by armed conflicts on job satisfaction;
2. To identify economic infrastructure destroyed by the war and show how it affects job satisfaction; and
3. To find ways of increasing job satisfaction among employees operating in an armed conflict society.

Review of Literature

Job satisfaction is one of the organizational behavior constructs that have been under discussion among several scholars (Papavasili, Kontogeorgos, Siskou & Chatzitheodoridis 2019, Mocheche, Bosire & Raburu 2017, Bowen 2018, Akbayrak, 2017, Nyanga 2018). The subject on job satisfaction is always under scrutiny by the business community because it plays a critical role in the development, growth and realization of organizational goals. Satisfied workers put to full use their skills, expertise and effort to the realization of organizational goals. It has, therefore, become essential for organizations to ensure that their workers are appropriately motivated and satisfied. Job satisfaction is the degree or extent to which an employee likes or dislikes his/her work (Nyanga 2018). It is an attitude an employee develops about his/her work after making an appraisal of his/her job and its attributes. The attitude an employee develops about his/her work is either positive or negative. Studies (Papavasili, Kontogeorgos, Siskou & Chatzitheodoridis, 2019; Mocheche, Bosire & Raburu, 2017; Bowen, 2018; Daniel 2009) have also shown that there is a relationship between job satisfaction, self-esteem, organizational performance and commitment. Job satisfaction is required by workers in small or large organizations or organizations in armed conflict or peaceful societies (Nyanga & Sibanda 2019).

Economic infrastructure refers to all the facilities and services established by the country in order to facilitate business activity production and consumption. To add more, Dava, Chigora, Chibanda, & Sillah (2013) defined economic infrastructure as the internal facilities of a country that make business operations move smoothly, effectively and efficiently. Such internal facilities and services are crucial for the economic growth of a country since they have the power to attract both internal and external investors. The attraction of local and foreign investments creates employment opportunities and improves employees' conditions of service. Most corporations often use economic infrastructure such as gas, railways, airports, banking as indicators of whether the destination is good for investment or not. It implies that the growth of any economy or business in any country is dependent on the availability of functional and reliable infrastructure. Furthermore, Nyanga, Sibanda & Kruger (2018) reported that the success and economic growth and survival of any country depend on the availability of functional and dependable infrastructure. The study also established that armed conflict in South Sudan destroyed a lot of economic growth-enhancing infrastructure such as roads and bridges, water purification stations, power generation stations, communication and internet infrastructure, schools, hospitals and construction equipment. The destruction of the economic infrastructure negatively affected the growth and operations of various business ventures in Juba in South Sudan. However, while economic infrastructure plays a pivotal role in the growth of the economy, it is essential to establish how it relates to other human capital functions such as job satisfaction, motivation, rewards and opportunities for promotion. There is a possibility that the destruction of infrastructure also affected employees in various ways. The purpose of this study was, therefore, to unravel how the destruction of the economic infrastructure affects employee satisfaction and the general welfare of workers.

Altay & Ramirez (2010) carried out a study on the impact of the disaster on firms in different sectors. It was established that disasters have a significant effect on firms and their infrastructure. Economic infrastructure systems give services such as water, energy, transport and communication. Economic infrastructure refers to all assets, systems and networks to facilitate the provision of vital services for socio-economic activities. The disruption of the provision of such services affects all the productivity variables such as material, finance, technology and human capital. Furthermore, man-made disasters also have a detrimental effect on organizational performance, economic growth and poverty eradication. Economic infrastructure can also be viewed as the framework of mutually supporting systems that provide a dependable flow of products and services necessary for the economic security and stability of a nation. Economic infrastructure includes among other issues transport and communication networks, water reservoirs, information technology networks, materials, food and agriculture, energy, healthcare services, financial services and others. The study also established that the destruction of infrastructure significantly hampers productivity. The results of the study did not, however, show how the destruction of economic infrastructure affects the human capital. Furthermore, Nyanga & Sibanda (2019) observed that domestic workers in armed conflict society find it very difficult to commute to and from work because of the destruction of roads and bridges. Destruction of infrastructure is, therefore, a key factor in organizational performance, job satisfaction and employee motivation. Dava, Chigora, Chibanda, & Sillah (2013) showed that a lot of economic infrastructure such as road networks, dams, information technology and financial services were destroyed by the civil war that erupted in Mozambique in 2013. The study revealed that the destruction caused a lot of disturbances and disruptions to the economy especially the agricultural, manufacturing and banking sectors. The economy was affected by the destruction of roads, bridges, information technology systems, and energy and power infrastructure and communication networks.

Several studies (Nyanga, Mudhovozi & Chireshe 2012; Gukurume & Nyanga 2012; Albanese 2002) revealed that employee satisfaction is a crucial antecedent to organizational performance and growth. It was established that job satisfaction heavily depends on excellent working conditions, supply of relevant tools of the trade, good management, living wages and salaries and good corporate governance. Economic infrastructure services are so ingrained in contemporary life that they tend to be both ubiquitous and taken for granted. The findings imply that economic infrastructure determines employees' conditions of service and other job satisfaction variables such as salaries and wages. For instance, the business of construction requires efficient transport and communication system for raw materials, employees, customers, water for bricklaying, electric power for welding and fabrication of steel. The study established that outages in any one system such as power or water affect other systems and employees. Armed conflict results in the destruction of the economic infrastructure which consequently results in several outages such as electricity and water. Such outages directly and indirectly affect employees hence it is prudent to establish through this study how job satisfaction is affected by the destruction of infrastructure and outages caused by the fighting between government and opposition forces. Mashavira, Nyanga & Nyanga (2019) argue that human resource development is one of the key pillars of organizational development and growth. The destruction of economic infrastructure significantly distorts the process of human capital development since most human capital development activities hinge on the availability of effective economic infrastructure. Human resource development is one of the key facets that influence job satisfaction and employee motivation.

Chang (2003) evaluated the extent to which disasters destroy urban infrastructure and how the destruction of infrastructure affects organizational performance and the general wellbeing of

society. He established that disasters have huge economic and societal costs that directly affect firms. It follows that heavy fighting between armed forces destroyed the economic infrastructure and bred insecurity in people (Nyanga, 2018). Another study by Nyanga & Sibanda (2019) reported that armed conflict significantly bars employees from accessing various important services such as water, power and communication and transport. War disrupts internal and external distribution and supply networks of key services and goods to the extent that no meaningful business activity could take place. For example, the collapse of some major bridges in Mozambique and South Sudan, disrupted traffic flows and impeded emergency response systems, commuting and freight movement, which in turn negatively affected economic growth. Fighting and destruction of infrastructure disturb the emotional and psychological disposition and wellbeing of employees which in turn affects job satisfaction. Papavasili, Kontogeorgos, Siskou, & Chatzitheodoridis (2019) argued that during economic crisis job satisfaction among municipal workers is significantly affected. In the same vein employees working in armed conflict, societies are exposed to the economic crisis which significantly affects job satisfaction. Patel, Gibson- Fall, Sullivan, & Irwin (2017) documented the assail of health workers and health facilities in war-torn societies. The study established that health workers were attacked by armed forces and the armed forces destroyed infrastructure for various health centres using various weapons. The attack on workers demoralizes them and reduces their level of job satisfaction. Studies (Mocheche, Bosire, Raburu, 2017, Kadir; Shenoda, & Goldhagen; 2019, Bowen, 2018, Akbayrak, 2017) have established that there is a strong relationship between job satisfaction and self-esteem. An employee's self-esteem plays a major role in an employee's performance; hence, it is essential for it to be kept at appropriate levels.

The review of related literature clearly demonstrated that there is a knowledge gap in the relationship between job satisfaction and the destruction of the economic infrastructure. Most studies on the destruction of infrastructure by war focused on the economic effects of the destruction of infrastructure and did not cover how the destruction of infrastructure affects human capital. There is a void in the literature on how employee satisfaction and motivation is affected by the destruction of infrastructure and other war-related consequences. It is this knowledge gap, which the current study sought to fill.

Research Methodology

The study employed qualitative research methodology, where an interview was conducted on participants who were selected using purposive sampling technique. The population of the study comprised all the people in Masvingo who worked in South Sudan during the civil war between government and opposition forces. The population of the study was approximately 150. The 10 participants who were selected to participate in the study worked for non-governmental, quasi-governmental organizations and private and public limited companies in Juba in South Sudan. The interview guide comprising open-ended questions solicited data on demographic characteristics of respondents, level of job satisfaction, the extent to which infrastructure was destroyed by the war and effects of the destruction of economic infrastructure to job satisfaction. The interview guide also solicited information on approaches to improve employee satisfaction in armed conflict societies. An in-depth interview provides finer details of the effects of the destruction of economic infrastructure on job satisfaction. The method was also preferred because job satisfaction is a subject most people who operated in an armed conflict society are not willing to discuss with strangers for fear of victimization by either government forces or their previous employers. Thematic data analysis was used to analyze data. Related responses were collated and categorized to identify important themes.

Findings and Discussion

The study showed that organizations operating in armed conflict areas are dominated by males employees. It was estimated that approximately 76% of employees in armed conflict areas were male while 24% were female. It was observed that most potential female employees prefer to stay home and take care of children rather than working and leaving their children in the custody of domestic workers. Children are prone to several forms of abuses by armed forces and domestic workers (Nyanga & Sibanda 2019). Some skilled women relocated to neighboring countries in search of better economic fortunes and for working in safer environments. For example, a significant number of women in Juba relocated to neighboring Uganda as either refugee or seeking employment. Of the 10 participants who were interviewed, only two were female and the rest were male. In terms of educational qualifications one participant had a doctoral degree, five participants had a master's degree, and the other four were bachelor's degree holders. The demographic data basically shows that most people who relocated to South Sudan from the city of Masvingo in search of better economic fortunes were highly skilled and appropriately qualified for the jobs they were doing.

The study revealed that economic infrastructure such as electricity is vital for people and businesses hence its destruction negatively affects workers' attitudes towards their work and organizations they work for. One of the respondents remarked, 'The destruction of transport and communication systems affect employees commuting to and from work because they won't be able to report for duty on time and also get home in time to do family chores'. Furthermore, a power outage caused by the destruction of power and energy infrastructure, directly and indirectly, affects job satisfaction since job satisfaction heavily depends on infrastructure systems in and outside the organizations' premises. The findings are in sync with Chang (2003) who argued that the disruption of infrastructure distorts the management of businesses and society in general. For example, the destruction of the transport systems which convey people and goods to the business district distorts the supply of goods and services and also the movement of people to and from work. The disruption of the movement of vehicles such as cars, buses, trucks and trains due to war-damaged road and rail networks significantly reduces employee satisfaction since it raises employees' stress levels and anxiety. The delay or insufficient forms of transport make employees wake up as early as 4 am for them to get to work on time. Employees also arrive home as late as 9pm because of the unavailability of transport to ferry them back to their places of residence. The attack on public transport such as buses, taxis, increase of transport checkpoints and limited access to certain areas of the country significantly reduce employee satisfaction. The transport system in armed conflict areas exposes workers to unsafe work conditions by making them travel at night to and from work. The findings are in sync with Douglas (2018) who propounded that the disruption of transport and communication systems in a country significantly affects business operations by denying employees room to report for work on time and denying customers access to business centers. Furthermore, the destruction of the transport and communication systems also stimulates delays in the delivery and supply of raw materials and finished products.

Furthermore, the findings of the study indicated that employees operating in an environment with vandalized and destroyed economic infrastructure develop a negative attitude towards their work, organization and the management team. Employees develop a negative attitude towards their work because they feel that management expects them to produce expected results even if they work with inadequate resources and infrastructure. For instance, conventional infrastructure carrying telephone service such as copper wires and telephone switches, broadband internet and

cellular networks in Juba was destroyed, making it difficult for employees to perform their duties. Such economic infrastructure is what people; businesses and government rely on, so short supply of such services frustrates employees and reduces their level of satisfaction.

The study also revealed that the destruction of economic infrastructure such as communication systems, energy and power, transport and banking systems affects the disbursement of wages and salaries to employees. Salaries and wages are normally disbursed through bank accounts, but since the banking system was destroyed or disrupted, access to salaries are hampered. An inefficient banking system is characterized by a limited number of working ATMs and unavailability of cash. Employees receive their salaries well after paydays because of long queues in banks and also unavailability of cash in banks. Most banks in war-torn zones are on sanctions hence they reduced and restricted their operations, which meant that employees delayed or do not get financial services as and when they need them. The displacement of staff, lack of electricity, lack of access to internet services and destruction of bank branches impacted negatively on the banking system. Armed conflict societies usually host a large population of employees from the Diaspora who work for humanitarian organizations. Such workers receive their salaries from the sending countries in US dollars but because of the breakdown of the banking system and money transfer agencies, salaries have not been easy to access. Employees receive their salaries late or even go for several months without receiving their salaries. Receiving salaries later than the stipulated pay date significantly reduces worker satisfaction. The results are synonymous with the findings by Nyanga, Mudhovozi & Chireshe (2012) that established that career development, wages and salaries are key variables that influence job satisfaction. The following are some of the remarks made by participants: Participant 9 'It was disappointing that we would go several months without getting our salaries owing to the destruction of e-banking systems and the system of transferring money from other countries to South Sudan.' Participant 7 'The whole banking system was not functioning properly because of poor internet connectivity. We would get our salaries very late and that scenario disappointed most of the workers.' The study further found out that during the war the informal economy increases to the extent that it, directly and indirectly, affects workers' remuneration. The proliferation of Small to Medium Enterprises (SME) which became major employers after the closure of multi-national companies results in the reduction of employees' remuneration. Salaries and wages significantly reduce because most organizations especially SMEs could not afford to manage big wage bills because of armed conflict-induced low productivity, closure of companies and retrenchment of company operations or limited capital. The findings agree with Lephoko & Roos (2006) who argue that salaries, wages and other economic benefits significantly influence worker satisfaction. The destruction of economic infrastructure results in the reduction of productivity which in turn leads to organizations failing to pay their workers living wages. Employees who receive low salaries and wages generally experience low job satisfaction.

All the respondents unanimously agreed that the deterioration of the economic infrastructure due to war resulted in an estimated 79% of the population losing employment. Agriculture, Manufacturing, Construction, service industries such as education and health which were the main employment sectors in Juba were significantly affected by the destruction of the economic infrastructure. The destructions resulted in many organizations reorganizing, laying off, and / or retrenching their workforce. Loss of employment by a workmate causes uncertainty among remaining employees regarding their future in the organization. The anxiety and uncertainty that employees develop result in the development of a negative attitude towards their work and start to seriously search for employment locally or abroad. For instance, one of the respondents remarked "People lose jobs willy-nilly hence it is not necessary for me to help my organization

realize its goals because it is not prepared to help me realize my own goals. Loss of jobs by colleagues also instills emotional pressure in me because of fear of losing my job. This makes me unhappy and unsettled at work". The findings are consistent with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Herzberg's Two Factor Theories which indicated that job security is a fundamental condition that influences job satisfaction (Nyanga, 2018). One of the consequences of the destruction of economic infrastructure by armed conflict is that it takes away job security among employees. Chii & Gursoy (2009) found out that job insecurity destabilizes employees and reduces their level of happiness in and outside work premises. The study further revealed that the destruction of economic infrastructure by heavy fighting between government and opposition forces significantly deprives workers access to sources of income. Sources of income became limited because of the high unemployment rate propelled by the reluctance by most investors to invest in a war-torn country characterized by logistical challenges such as dysfunctional communication and transport, banking and information and technology systems.

The destruction of the economic infrastructure in armed conflict societies results in continuous depreciation of the local currency which means that the United States dollar becomes the highly sought-after currency. The depreciation of the local currency is caused by loss of economic infrastructure and mismanagement of resources. For instance, in Juba, production and sales of goods and services reduced significantly, employees' income also significantly reduced, tax payments to government also nosedived and organizations temporarily or even permanently closed. Participant 4 remarked, 'Loss of electric power, communications infrastructure, road network, information technology and efficient banking system results in negligible inconveniences to instantaneous shutdown of operations of organizations which consequently result in the devaluation of the local currency'. The low purchasing power of the local currency results in some suppliers of raw materials and traders reluctant to accept local currency. The low purchasing power of the local currency meant that workers failed to get basic commodities since goods were in short supply. Inadequate foreign currency to buy raw materials, to produce goods coupled with the destruction of the agriculture system result in the short supply of goods and services. Participant 8 said 'I had to come back home from Juba because inflation was very high to the extent that I could not buy basic commodities such as meal-mealie. I had to look for alternative sources of income especially from organizations that would pay me in US dollars.' The depreciation of the local currency induced suffering among employees and consequently affected their job satisfaction.

Furthermore, the depreciation of the currency was also caused by the destruction of infrastructure which in turn resulted in the increase in the costs of inputs, fuel and transport. The increase in the costs of inputs leads to higher costs of goods and services. The increase in costs of goods and services makes employees unable to afford essential services such as staple food, water and electricity. According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, food is one of the physiological needs of employees which if employees fail to access lowers their satisfaction level. One of the respondents said, 'I cannot work happily for a company which gives me money that is not enough to buy food for my children.' This implies that job satisfaction is affected by an increase in the cost of production of goods and services. The findings show that the destruction of the economic infrastructure causes extreme poverty among employees. The large increase in prices of basic goods, inflation and decreased household income severely affects consumption among employees in armed conflict areas. The study also found out that the destruction of the economic infrastructure by armed conflict-affected financial and trade cooperation within the regional blocks such as, East African Community (EAC). The destruction of infrastructure in a war-torn country makes it very difficult for the affected country to trade with other countries. The disrupted

infrastructure cannot support the movement of goods and services thereby impeding trade. Trade with the regional block can also be impeded by sanctions that can be imposed on a country in armed conflict. The imposition of sanctions results in the depreciation of the local currency and loss of jobs due to company closures or suspensions of operations. Financial sanctions imposed on a country are usually meant to forbid transactions with individuals, companies, and quasi-government enterprises. The sanctions, however, end up having far-reaching ramifications on business transactions and employee satisfaction.

Conclusion, Suggestions and Limitations of the Study

Firstly, the study concluded that the destruction of economic infrastructure induces low job satisfaction among employees working for organizations operating in armed conflict societies. The destruction of the economic infrastructure leads to several inconveniences to employees' welfare and conditions of service, productivity and organizations in general. Secondly, the study concluded that almost all the job satisfaction variables such as salaries, opportunities for training and development, opportunities for promotion and good working conditions are severely affected by the destruction and the distortion of the economic infrastructure such as roads, banking, water and information technology networks and systems. Thirdly, the study concluded that low job satisfaction among employees working in armed conflict areas leads to devastating effects on growth and survival of organizations, economic recovery and productivity. Fourthly, it was concluded that besides the destruction of the economic infrastructure, there are other war-induced ramifications that impede job satisfaction among employees working for organizations in war-torn areas.

In light of the findings of the study, the following recommendations were given:

1. To propel job satisfaction among employees working in destroyed economic infrastructure the government should rapidly restore destroyed infrastructure and services to minimize the negative impact it poses to employees and businesses;
2. Organizations should develop mitigatory measures to reduce the impact of inconveniences caused by the destruction of economic infrastructure. For instance employers can provide transport for employees and also have flexible work arrangements such as a compressed work-week, flextime and job sharing to reduce commuting costs for employees;
3. Organizations should provide alternative economic infrastructure services such as internet facilities which give room to employees to telecommute thereby reducing commuting costs and inconveniences; and
4. Employers should provide employees with other job satisfaction variables such as financial and non-financial rewards, which can serve as compensation for operating in armed conflict societies.

The study was limited to Juba because of financial resources constraints; otherwise, it could have been extended to other cities or countries in armed conflict. It is suggested that future research cover a wider geographical area and also use both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods so as to get views and perspectives from different participants. It is further suggested that future studies focus on how other forms of destructions caused by war affects job satisfaction.

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