

EFFECT OF WORK ENVIRONMENT ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE: A CASE STUDY OF UMARU MUSA YARADUA UNIVERSITY KATSINA

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Abstract

This study investigated the effect of work environment on employee performance at Umaru Musa Yaradua University Katsina. With the objective of the study in mind, this research paper focused on examining the effect of inequity on employee morale and performance in the study area, identifying key factors that have a positive impact on employee performance, and ascertaining how the equity theory of motivation can be applied in the study area to influence job performance. To achieve the study objectives and for this seminar paper, primary data was collected and analyzed as well. From the research findings, if the inputs of employees are recognized and rewarded equally, it will go a long way in motivating them and increasing their performance.

Keywords: Work Environment, Motivation, Employee Performance.

1.0 Background to the Study

Every organisation requires hard-working employees that get the job done because employee performance is the key to success. The process of accomplishing a task and performing at a high level can be a source of satisfaction, with feelings of mastery and pride for an employee. It is believed that one of the most important factors of employee performance is to achieve goals, therefore every individual employee must work towards the vision and mission of his organisation.

However, organisations should not view employees as a revenue generation tool, or assume that poor performance indicates a poor employee. Although there might be exceptions, high-performing employees get promoted easily within an organization and generally have better career opportunities than low-performing employees (VanScotter et al, 2000). Rather than employers assume that poor-performing employees are a liability, they should evaluate the deficiencies to know if the problem is a talent issue or a management and development problem. The process of evaluation helps employers to establish where they can help their employees to grow so that they can perform better.

Since employees will not perform in a vacuum, a lot of factors need to be put in place by the employers to make the environment conducive. Those factors set in place impact employee morale, productivity, and performance both positively and negatively (Chandrasekar, 2011). A positive work environment is expected to result in less employee turnover, hardly any cases of fraud, and preferable safety practices. It is easier to attract and retain qualified employees in conducive work environments (Cunnen, 2006).

By creating a good working environment, an organization stands to benefit from minimizing the possibility of work accidents, optimizing the use of effective and efficient equipment and raw materials for production, creating comfortable and productive working conditions, and directing the participation of all parties to create a healthy working environment.

According to Tripathi (2014), the work environment can be referred to as the environment whereby people work, and it includes physical setting, job profile, and market condition. However, it has a significant impact on their ability to undertake the tasks that they have been asked to do. This can affect performance, productivity, and employee health and well-being. Certain factors affect the work environment and they are classified into two categories, those that are driven by procedures, protocols, and management requirements and the factors that arise from premises, office, or factory design. Management driven factors include the development of organisation plans such as the allocation of responsibilities at all levels of the organisation, the definition of job descriptions, and the degree of access to the management and administrative support needed by employees to complete their tasks; working patterns, office shifts, break times, absence or holiday cover; and health and safety policies, provision for training, developing safe working practices and adequate supply of protective clothing and equipment.

Other aspects of the work environment are the policies which include employment conditions. Each aspect is interlinked and has an impact on employees' overall performance and productivity. The quality of the employees' work environment has the most impact on their level of motivation and subsequently performance.

1.1 A brief history of Umaru Musa Yaradua University Katsina

Umaru Musa Yar'adua University, formerly known as Katsina State University, was established in September 2006. The University was conceived to serve as a nucleus for the socio-economic, technological, and political development of the State by producing highly skilled human resources through conventional face-to-face and distance learning modes. The University commenced its academic programs in January 2007, with good infrastructure put in place and has significant ICT facilities, to meet the objectives for which it was established. Today, the University has a total population of twelve thousand nine hundred and eighty (12,980) people. Eleven thousand eight hundred and fifty-six students (11,856), five hundred and fifty-two (552) Non-academic staff, and five hundred and seventy-two (572) Academic staff. The university's momentum of growth and development achieved from its planning has been significantly sustained.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

There appear to be concerns that many employees working in organisations are poorly motivated due to the management's inability to put in place reward systems that will be used to compensate employees equally. When employees put in their best input they expect to get rewarded according to their outputs, But when they notice that other employees get more recognition and rewards for the same amount of work, they get frustrated and dissatisfied, which may lead to poor performance in the workplace. John Stacey Adams, a workplace behavioral psychologist in 1963 developed the Equity Theory of Motivation, which states that individuals are motivated by fairness. This means that if an individual identifies an inequity

between themselves and a peer, they will adjust the work they do to make the situation fair in their eyes.

Rewarding employees equally is a challenge for many organisations including Umaru Musa Yaradua University, Katsina where the study is domiciled. This can be seen as a leadership problem because great leaders value people equally and treat them equitably.

Several studies have been conducted on work environment and employee performance in different sectors in Nigeria. For example, Oluchi (2011) investigated the effects of internal environment on employee performance in Unilever Nigeria Plc, Aba; Kolade and Oladipupo (2019) conducted a study on work environment and employees' performance, empirical evidence of Nigerian Beverage Firm; Afolabi et al (2020) investigated the impact of work environment on employees' performance in Federal Polytechnic, Offa, Kwara State, Nigeria; Taiwo (2010) investigated the influence of work environment on workers' productivity in some selected oil and gas industries in Lagos state, Nigeria. However none of the above studies have been conducted in the study area to the best of the researcher's knowledge, hence posing a contextual gap this study investigated.

1. The effect of inequity on employee morale and performance in the study area.
2. The key factors that have a positive impact on employee performance in the study area.
3. How equity theory of motivation can be applied in the study area to influence job performance.

2.0 Review of Related Literature

The work environment encompasses all the elements that can affect the day-to-day productivity of an employee as well as when, where, and how the work is done. A conducive and supportive work environment contributes to conditions that warrant employees to perform effectively, to make the best use of their knowledge, skills, and competencies, and the resources available to provide high-quality organizational service.

Jackson and Suomi (2004), view the work environment as one of the most important social spaces other than the home, which establishes a central concept for several things; the employee and his family, the employing organization, and the customer of the organization and the society at large. According to Egwu (2011), the work environment also includes factors such as conditions, nature of the job, location and the size of the organization, fellow employees as well as local, state, and federal regulations that apply to an organization.

A good work environment is important to every organization because it helps people to concentrate better at their jobs, and provides a good work approach for both the employees and employer. Therefore, the significance of a good work environment not only finds its place in employees' job search criteria, but employers nowadays adopt many procedures to change the office atmosphere.

Opperman (2002) defines the work environment as a composite of three major sub-environments: the technical environment, the human environment, and the organizational environment. Technical environment refers to tools, equipment, technological infrastructure,

and other physical or technical elements. The technical environment creates elements that enable employees to perform their respective responsibilities and activities, and the human environment refers to peers, others with whom employees relate, team and workgroups, interactional issues, leadership, and management. This environment is designed in such a way that encourages informal interaction in the workplace so that the opportunity to share knowledge and exchange ideas could be enhanced.

According to Brenner (2004), the ability to share knowledge throughout organizations depends on how the work environment is designed to enable organizations to utilize the work environment as if it were an asset. This helps organizations to improve their effectiveness and allows employees to benefit from collective knowledge. Furthermore, he argued that a work environment that is designed to suit employees' satisfaction and free flow of exchange of ideas is a better medium for motivating employees towards achieving higher performance.

Chandraseker (2011) reports that the quality of the employee's workplace environment mostly has an impact on their level of motivation and performance. An employee's level of engagement, level of innovation, and collaboration are to a great extent determined by his immediate environment. Senata et al (2014) reveal that a comfortable work environment provides an employee with a sense of security and peace. An employee may feel at home and carry out his duties effectively if he likes his environment. Also, when employees are physically and emotionally fit, they will have the desire to work and their performance outcomes shall be increased. Moreover, a proper workplace environment helps to reduce the number of absenteeism and thus can increase the employees' performance which leads to increased productivity at the workplace (Boles et al. 2004).

2.1 Employee Performance

Employee performance depends largely upon the different factors that contribute to the work environment. The work environment is a combination of employees, policies, and procedures which can be managed effectively with the help of environment-friendly policies and employees that are positively motivated. Awadh&Saad (2013) defines employee performance as the degree of achievement to which an employee fulfills the organizational mission at his workplace. Sinha (2004) views employee performance strictly as a behavior and a separate entity from the outcomes of a particular job which relates to success and productivity. An increase in an individual's level of productivity is attributed to his openness and willingness to try and achieve new aspects of his job.

According to Sabir et al. (2012) performance is the attainment of specified duty against preplanned or recognized standards of correctness, entirety, cost, and speed. High performance is a step towards the achievement of organizational goals and productivity.

Frese and Sonnentag (2001) opined that individual performance is highly important for an organization as a whole and the individuals working in it. For organizations to meet their goals and deliver good products and services, it requires highly performing employees.

Armstrong (2009) views performance as a function of expertise and motivation. He further states that the factors that affect the level of individual performance are motivation, ability,

and opportunity to participate. Stup (2003), identified certain factors that aid in the success of employees' performance. These include the physical environment, tools, relevant tasks, performance expectations, and feedback on performance, among others. He added that to have a standard performance, employers have to get the employee's tasks done on track to achieve the organizational goals.

2.2 Factors that Affect Employee Performance

(a) Leadership

Leadership style affects a vast number of factors in every organization. Such factors include; employee performance, employee productivity, employee turnover, organizational success as well as job satisfaction. Leadership is the process by which an organized group of people are governed, influenced, or directed to achieve specific goals in an organization. According to Adebakin and Gbadamosi (2011) organization is made up of a group of people who exist specifically to accomplish specific goals and objectives. A leader's role is to guide and provide direction to his people by coordinating the activities of the individual members constituting the group. Therefore, a leader's image is seen as a reflection of the quality of leadership he provides in the organization and through his employee's attitude to work.

(b) Incentives

Incentives come in two forms namely financial incentives to nonmonetary incentives. Some employers adopt the use of incentive systems to increase employee performance and engagement levels in their organizations. Recognizing hard-working employees and rewarding their performances supports long-term improvements to business profitability. Sheetz (2020), defines incentive as any beneficial or valued item, action, or event that motivates an employee to perform better.

(c) Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is a system of shared beliefs about what is important, what behaviors are important, and about feelings and relationships that are internal and external (Kinnie et al., 2006). It is believed that organizational culture can enhance employees' performance if what sustains it can be understood. Thus, the culture of an organization familiarizes employees with the organization's history as well as current methods of operation that guide employees on expected and accepted future organizational behaviors and norms.

(d) Organizational Structure

Frend (2019) defines Organizational structure as a system used to describe a hierarchy within an organization. This structure identifies each job, its function, and where it reports within the organization. However, this structure is developed to establish how an organization operates and assists in obtaining the organization's goals to allow for future growth. The structure is illustrated using an organizational chart.

According to Clawson and Pitts (2008) Organizational structure is the framework for reporting relationships in an organization. They view organizational structure as a powerful determinant of organizational behavior, they believe decisions about organizational structure to be the central determinant of organizational behavior.

(e) Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal is considered to be one of the most important human resource management functions. It is defined as periodic evaluations of an employee's job performance against a set of expectations and goals. Performance appraisal is essential to organizations as it gives updates on the performance of the employees and also identifies training needs and comes up with plans for employee development (Livy, 2007).

(f) Wages and Salary

The potential influence of wages and salaries on employees' performance is a key issue addressed by personnel economics. Assuming that employees compare their wages with those of their co-workers when determining their level of effort, wage dispersion should influence this level and hence average firm performance (Afanjo, 2002).

According to Esien (2002) "important distinctions existed between wages and salary in the past, but today, the words are used interchangeably, reflecting the convergence of the method of paying skilled and unskilled employees that have happened over 40 years. The main difference between a salary and wages is that a salaried person is paid a fixed amount per pay period and a wage earner is paid by the hour.

2.3 Empirical Review

Kishiwa (2017) studied Work Environment and Employee Performance: A case study of Tanzania Wildlife Protection and Fund. Findings from this study revealed that in service organizations such as Tanzania Wildlife Protection Fund, the institution's performance is reflected in service delivery, innovation, creativity, and quality of work done. However such innovations and creativity are done by employees who are satisfied with their jobs and the work environment. Incentives influence such performance by offering pay to influence future behavior or to course a repeat of a particular behavior. Though incentives to motivate employees are numerous, some are more effective than others.

Financial incentives improve task performance significantly, but the effectiveness depends on organizational conditions. A meta-analysis of 72 field studies indicated that organisational behavior using monetary incentives improved task performance by 23% whereas social recognition did so by 17% and feedback by 10%. However, after combining all the three motivational reinforcers, performance improved by 45%.

Nanzushi (2015) also did a similar study on the Effect of Workplace Environment on Employee Performance in Mobile Telecommunication Firms in Nairobi City, Kenya. The study found out that employees were satisfied with their physical work environments aspects like furniture, spatial layouts, lighting, and noise levels. These features of the physical work environment assist in boosting employees' performance. The reward system of the mobile telecommunications firms tends to be more financial than non-financial.

Also, the results on management and leadership style revealed that the management role modeled high performance. However, they do not involve employees in their decision-making in the organization. According to Armstrong (2001), one of the greatest failings which

result from the “top-down” type of management is for management to ignore the knowledge that exists at the other levels or departments in the organization

In another study by Zafar et al (2017) the aim was to analyze the various factors that affect employee performance, in the context of Greenwich University, Karachi. The hypothesis was proven through the use of Multiple Linear Regression, run on the SPSS software. The components with the most impact on the employees’ performance at Greenwich University were Leadership, stress, training, and development.

3.0 Methodology

A survey research method was adopted for the purpose of this study to enable the researcher to obtain reliable data from respondents. This facilitated the successful completion of the study. The target population for this study is 200 non-academic staff of Umaru Musa Yaradua University Katsina randomly selected, which included both senior and junior staff.

Primary data was the only data used for the study, it was collected using questionnaires. A five Likert scale was used to assess the extent to which the respondents agree or disagree with a statement.

3.1 Method of Data Analysis

Data collected for the study were analysed and presented using simple Percentage Frequency Distribution

3.2 Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Data analysis on question 1:

S/N	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	The management of UMYU engages with employees to satisfy their needs and this encourages the employees to work effectively.	26 (15%)	28 (16%)	39 (21%)	42 (24%)	43 (24%)
2	Employees are rewarded equally for their dedication and commitment to work.	27 (15%)	33 (19%)	30 (17%)	45 (25%)	43 (24%)
3	The management of UMYU motivates employees to carry out the tasks that are assigned to them.	30 (17%)	25 (14%)	23 (13%)	45 (25%)	55 (31%)
4	Fair policies have been put in place to reward all employees equally.	35 (20%)	29 (16%)	30 (17%)	38 (21%)	46 (26%)
5	Employees are treated in a way they feel valued and appreciated.	26 (15%)	30 (17%)	38 (21%)	44 (25%)	40 (22%)

Source: Field Survey, March 2022

Table 2: Data analysis on question 2:

S/N	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	If monetary incentives are introduced as a form of reward, employees will perform better.	62 (35%)	50 (28%)	28 (16%)	23 (13%)	15 (8%)
2	Employees will be motivated if adequate facilities are put in place to make the workplace comfortable.	30 (17%)	49 (28%)	43 (24%)	35 (20%)	21 (12%)
3	In UMYU, the organization's culture improves the active participation of employees.	38 (21%)	56 (31%)	20 (11%)	28 (16%)	36 (20%)
4	The management of UMYU provides a clear chain of command that is easily recognized by the employees of the establishment. This entails that before everyone starts working, they are aware of what will be expected of them.	58 (33%)	49 (28%)	27 (15%)	20 (11%)	24 (13%)
5	The employees of UMYU will perform better if there is adequate training and development staff.	60 (34%)	54 (30%)	20 (11%)	24 (13%)	20 (11%)

Source: Field Survey, March 2022

Table 3: Data analysis on question 3:

S/N	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	An employee's loyalty demonstrated in the workplace should be recognized by his employers.	70 (39%)	84 (47%)	15 (8%)	6 (3%)	3 (2%)
2	The flexibility shown by an employee such as accepting assignments at very short notice or with very tight deadlines should be rewarded by employers.	55 (31%)	65 (37%)	30 (17%)	20 (11%)	8 (4%)
3	Workplace inequality should be reduced by employers, by recognizing an employee's input and compensating them with a better output such as Job security, benefits, and wage.	56 (31%)	47 (27%)	30 (17%)	29 (16%)	16 (9%)
4	Organisations should put formalized HR structures in place, to succeed in changing the composition of organisational workforces at all levels.	51 (29%)	49 (28%)	33 (19%)	24 (13%)	21 (11%)
5	The management of organisations should practice effective communication to make the organisation's policies, business processes, or job functions clear to all employees.	52 (29%)	58 (33%)	36 (20%)	26 (15%)	7 (3%)

4.0 Discussions and Findings

The study examined the effect of the work environment on employee performance at Umaru Musa Yaradua University Katsina. Based on findings from this study, it can be concluded that the workplace environment affects employees' performance both positively and negatively. This indicates that it is the responsibility of employers to provide a conducive work environment to make their employees comfortable to perform their duties effectively. Employees could use their full attention and energy to perform their tasks if the workplace environment is comfortable (Vischer, 2007).

Leadership style has a significant effect and is positively related to employee performance in Umaru Musa Yaradua University Katsina. Several studies have discussed the impact of leadership on employee performance. Ologbo&Saudah (2011) asserts that the leadership style of a manager and support considerably add to employee engagement. Findings from a study by Wang, et al. (2011) revealed that a leader's task-related behavior is the key to achieving organizational performance. The majority of the respondents (112) in the study agreed that introducing monetary incentives as a form of reward would motivate employees to perform better. This is supported by Hameed et al (2014) who reported that money remains the most significant motivational strategy.

5.0 Conclusion

Based on findings from this study, it can be concluded that employee performance is a result of motivation and how an employee can adapt to changes in the workplace environment. Therefore the best way for organizational management to achieve the desired outcomes is to introduce a form of reward that recognizes all hard-working employees to motivate them by rewarding them equally. It is also the responsibility of the organization to create a friendly work atmosphere for their employees to make them comfortable to discharge their duties effectively.

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