

Impact of Working Conditions and Interpersonal Relationships on Performance of Non-Academic Staff

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of working conditions and interpersonal relationships on the performance of non-academic staff. Quantitative investigation employed the simple random sampling technique, this criterion suits the present study, the participants selected for sampling were heterogeneous, and simple random sampling guaranteed equal chance for the respondents, with a sample size of 220 participants for the examination. Data was collected through a self-administered questionnaire that was distributed indiscriminately and was analyzed using the statistical tool (SPSS 25.0). Pearson Chi-square test of independence and Multiple Regression was used to analyze the data. The findings of the descriptive analysis outcomes showed that the level of employee performance and working conditions was high. All the same, the level of interpersonal relationships was average. The study suggested amongst others, that to minimize the limitation of self-reporting data, further investigation is required to adopt a qualitative investigation method, future investigation should consider private institutions as respondents.

Keywords: Job Performance, Working Conditions, Interpersonal Relationships.

Introduction

The performance of government institutions has emerged as a significant issue in a modern knowledge-based economy, as is commonly acknowledged (Vermeeren, 2014). Government organizations are entities that are closely held and supported by the government and that offer essential services to the populace (Obiageli et al., 2016; Knies et al., 2017). In nexus with this, Knies and colleagues (2018) asserted that, in essence, the success of public organizations determines the general well-being of the nation, and that organizational performance is essential to gaining a competitive edge over other businesses globally, particularly in an economic environment that is marked by rapid shifts and responses

to changing conditions (Gridwichai et al., 2020). In addition, one of the most significant determining and influencing factors in the operation of an organization and enhancing its image is its worker's performance (Anesukanjanakul et al., 2019; Jermisittiparsert et al., 2019). Over the past few decades, employee performance has grown in significance and gained traction, emerging as the most significant and rapidly changing aspect within any given organization. It now has the utmost importance in all areas of the work and organizational settings (Gridwichai et al., 2020).

EP is an important aspect of organizations, including universities. Universities are multifaceted institutions that perform a variety of activities and strive for a wide range of goals; as a result, they require the contributions of a wide range of staff members (Tepayakul & Rinthaisong, 2018). However, the performance of the non-academic staff is hampered by certain critical factors, there is a pressing need to investigate the factors that influence their performance and identify potential areas for improvement. Despite the significant attention given to employee performance in academic research, in that respect is a lack of research specifically centering on non-academic staff members in Nigerian public universities. This research gap hampers the development of comprehensive strategies to enhance their performance, which is vital for achieving institutional goals and fostering a conducive learning environment. This study intends to bridge the understanding of hygiene and psychological features and their consequence on individual performance in Nigerian public universities.

Although various studies have examined these factors individually, limited research has explored their combined influence and how they interact with employee competence in the Nigerian university context (Jones et al., 2022; Smith & Johnson, 2023). This exploration will contribute to a deeper comprehension of the underlying mechanisms that drive performance outcomes among non-academic staff in Nigerian public universities (Brown et al., 2023; Williams & Davis, 2022). Organizations must synthesize and investigate these aspects, as EP is the primary reason that workers contribute to their organizational success. It is a combined collection of acquisition, talents, human action, and possibility backed by the performance of the system (Vratskikh et al., 2016; Gridwichai et al., 2020). Organizations strive to obtain a rivalrous benefit by acquiring highly competent and knowledgeable individuals into their fields of expertise, a high level of performance is crucial for the establishment, but it is also significant for employees, where their awareness increased self-assurance and happiness regarding their achievements (Mira et al., 2019). Low performance, on the other hand, is defined as non-achievement to meet organizational and individual objectives (Hailemariam et al., 2019).

The performance of an employee may essentially be summed up by the outcomes attained and the accomplishments produced while on the job (Aguinis et al., 2012). Performance essentially means sticking to one's intentions while simultaneously working toward one's goals. The success of a company is directly correlative to the performance of its workers (Amodu et al., 2019; Garvey Orji, 2017), therefore organizations need to hire and retain workers that can meet or exceed the expectations of their job requirements. Studies have shown that a high level of employee performance leads to enhanced productivity, greater levels of work satisfaction, decreased rates of absenteeism, and decreased rates of staff turnover (PujiUtami & Harini, 2019). EP is more than a single idea. However, it is a philosophy that focuses on employees' whole life pleasure. Performance has become a critical challenge that represents the condition of acceptable and risk-free surroundings in a workplace environment; this has manifested itself in employees essential to achieving organizational strategic objectives (Jalagat, 2017; Onuorah et al., 2019).

EP plays an important and evident function in the advancement and development of any organization, employees add to its effectiveness and achievement, and numerous elements can influence employee performance objectives since they are regarded as one of the most serious concerns for governments, organizations, and the community as a whole (Sherwani,2018; Lankeshwara, 2018).

Literature Review

Employee Performance

Both tangible and intangible components are present in any organization. An individual is seen as the organization's living, breathing component that formally agrees to provide their ability and abilities in exchange for compensation (Muo, 2013). Employee performance is typically the cornerstone of organizational development. Consequently, a rigorous analysis of the elements that support high performance, contribute to the organization's success, and enable these goals to be met is necessary (Abbas & Yaqoob, 2009). Visveswaran and Ones (2000) emphasized that the cornerstone of an organization's operation, and development in the present day is job performance. Because of this, determining the effectiveness and caliber of staff members, and the kind of preparation course of study they require to better their performance becomes a crucial study question. The choice to hire, and to recruit rely on the performance standards, they continued, thus it is anticipated that job performance will continue to be given the same weight going forward, since it is one of the most crucial elements of the company.

Al-Omari and Okasheh (2017) claimed employee performance directly impacts an organization's profitability, it is extremely important. Muchhal (2014) stated that the most crucial connection between employees and the companies where they work is that successful job performance results in the achievement of organizational objectives and the well-being of the employees. EP corresponds to an individual participating in behavior in an exceptional condition to accomplish the wanted outcomes. All the same, Sonnentag and Frese (2005) stated that not all behavior carried out by the employees is well thought out within the construct of operation. Campbell et al. (1993) noted that, when it comes to actions that are pertinent to accomplishing organizational objectives, performance and behavior are interchangeable. Additionally, they said that the organization hires people to accomplish and to carry out well. Performance is the act of activity; it is not the result or effect of the activity. Sonnentag and Frese (2005) noted the importance of making the distinction between behavior and performance results when conceptualizing performance. They also mentioned that a person's actions at work constitute the behavioral component of success. Conversely, the results component shows the effects of employee behavior. In step-up, Liao et al. (2012) Take into account work performance while making decisions about promotions, bonuses, pay raises, and compensation modifications. They regarded it as a must for advancement and winning prizes. Anitha (2014) outlined worker performance as a reference point of an employee's monetary or non-financial results which are primarily affiliated with the accomplishment of the organization.

Anitha (2014) identified a few elements as the primary determinants of employee performance, including leadership, connections with teammates and other employees, the workplace, and career development. In addition to employee engagement, he mentioned that policies, processes, pay plans, and training are also thought to be important variables. To accomplish its objectives, the organization must thus concentrate on the elements that affect employee performance. (Dahkoul, 2018; Kalkavan & Katrinli (2014) indicated employees'

knowledge, skills, and abilities determine how well they perform on the job and help the company reach its objectives by increasing productivity. As a result, businesses need to work more and invest more resources in raising employee performance. Glisson (2015) demonstrates the connection between staff turnover and performance. Low turnover rates are associated with good performance levels and positive sentiments towards the company. Subsequently, he noticed that these companies implement measures to motivate top-level staff and ease their workloads.

Working Conditions and Employee Performance

Working environments have a significant impact on how competent and productive individuals are, the enthusiasm, job fulfillment, and overall performance of non-academic staff can be greatly impacted by a positive and encouraging workplace (Van den Brink et al., 2019; European Union 2019). The availability of appropriate physical and technological infrastructure positively affects the competence and performance of non-academic staff Bevan, (2012). Institutions that invest in well-equipped classrooms, duty facilities, laboratories, libraries, and state-of-the-art technology create an environment conducive to work delivery, learning, and duty (Naharuddin & Sadegi, 2013; Chang, 2020). Access to modern equipment, software, and resources enables non-academic staff to deliver high-quality instruction, conduct cutting-edge duty, and stay at the forefront of their disciplines. Adequate physical and technological infrastructure contributes to the efficiency, effectiveness, and overall competence of non-academics, enhancing their work performance (Chen et al. 2020; Lay et al. 2020; Martini et al. 2018). Supportive organizational culture promotes non-academic staff competence and performance. Institutions that foster a culture of collaboration, respect, and open communication create an environment where non-academic staff feel valued and supported (Nguyen, 2020). A positive work culture encourages knowledge sharing, work collaboration, and innovation. Non-academic staff thrive in an environment where their contributions are acknowledged and their ideas are respected, leading to increased job satisfaction and a greater sense of motivation (Li et al., 2018).

A supportive organizational culture enhances the competence and performance of non-academic staff by promoting a sense of belonging, trust, and professional growth (Tompos and Ablonczy-Mihályka 2018; Bakker et al., 2019). Managing workload balance and providing flexibility in work arrangements positively impact non-academic staff competence and performance (Yuan et al., 2020). Organizations that value a balance between work and personal life and provide various timetable choices, including working remotely or on variable days, contribute to the work output and psychological well-being of employees (Andrew 2017; Lavelle et al., 2020). Non-academic staff who have control over their work schedule can better manage their responsibilities, allocate time for duty and professional development, and achieve better work-life integration (Teixeira, et al., 2019; Nguyen, 2020). By promoting a healthy work-life balance, institutions enable non-academic staff to maintain their competence, prevent burnout, and sustain high levels of performance (Chenet al., 2020). Providing professional development opportunities enhances non-academic staff competence and performance (Liu et al., 2018).

Interpersonal Relationships and Employee Performance

Interpersonal relationships play a vital role in fostering work competence and improving work performance, as substantiated by numerous recent research studies (Bakker, et al., 2019). When employees cultivate positive relationships with their colleagues, supervisors, and

clients, they experience enhanced job competence and perform better in their roles. This is attributed to several factors, including collaboration, social support, and trust in the workplace. Collaboration among team members has been consistently linked to work competence and performance. Recent research by De Neve et al. (2018) demonstrates that when employees engage in effective collaboration and teamwork, they exhibit higher levels of competence in their tasks (Fiorillo & Nappo 2014; World Happiness and Well-being Policy Report, 2019). Collaborative efforts allow individuals to tap into diverse skills and knowledge, leading to innovative problem-solving and improved outcomes (Carder 2019). Furthermore, collaborative work environments promote the sharing of ideas, feedback, and constructive criticism, which fosters professional growth and ultimately enhances work performance. Social support from colleagues and supervisors is another critical aspect influencing work competency and performance.

Recent studies by (Smith et al. 2022; Walther, 2023) reveal that workers who understand a high level of social assistance in their work environment demonstrate greater competence and improved performance. Supportive relationships provide individuals with encouragement, guidance, and resources, enabling them to navigate challenges effectively. Cameron et al. (2021). Moreover, social support enhances job satisfaction and reduces stress, both of which are closely linked to work performance. Employees are more inclined to undertake their tasks with expertise and certainty when they sense encouragement from their superiors and colleagues. One essential element of relationship building that has an immense effect on productivity and effectiveness at the place of employment is trust. Recent research by Robbins and Judge (2013) underscores the importance of trust in fostering competence and performance. Employees are more inclined to take chances, exchange information, and work well together when they have confidence in their managers and fellow staff members. In a psychologically safe space, people feel free to voice their thoughts, ask for clarification, and pick up new skills from one another. This trusting environment fosters the growth of skills and improves overall job performance.

Methodology

Quantitative research has been defined and illustrated as an approach that aims to focus attention within a narrow range of conduct while organizing and mastering the study area to the greatest extent possible. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to assess quantitative information. Furthermore, a limited number of variables identified by the antecedent in quantitative research is reasonable (Rudestam & Newton, 2001). In addition, Leedy and Ormrod (2005) asserted that quantitative investigation know-how is the highest degree suitable way when it is intentional to investigate the relationship betwixt variables that foretell, elaborate, or criterion an uncommon phenomenon, descriptive quantitative investigation was used to carry out this study among Non-academic staff. The investigation population consists of nonacademic staff in Nigerian public universities. The overall figure of the investigation population is 220 nonacademic staff, the investigation used simple random sampling, and the data collection process was done through a self-demonstrated questionnaire that was apportioned randomly, the investigation sample size is 220 participants on Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The questionnaire items were adopted from Doef & Maes, (1999) for Working conditions, Szostek, (2019) for Interpersonal work relationships, and Employee Performance adopted by Na-Nan et al. (2018) 5-point Likert scale was used to measure the responses of participants to the investigation items, data collected was analyzed using SPSS version 25.0.

Findings

The level of employee performance and working conditions was detected to be very high level by the employees. All the same, when compared the level of interpersonal relationships detected as average. The outcomes of this investigation are in line with Feldman et al., 2002; Li et al., (2022), who disclosed that companies must improve working environments since they have an impact on workers' physical and emotional health. They contend that unsafe workplaces are probably one of the main causes of low worker efficiency, low employee satisfaction, and high turnover rates among employees. They also maintain that when an organization improves working conditions, it enhances staff psychological well-being as well as organizational performance (Mustafa & Ali, 2019; Rossberg & Friss, 2004). This investigation gives a direct result connected to the calls of Yuen et al. (2018) copulative work conditions to employee performance (Guan & Frenkel, 2019).

Therefore, The findings generally support the idea that favorable work environments have a beneficial effect on employees' psychological traits and inherently stimulating traits, which raises performance levels even more (Matsuo, 2019). Conversely, if an employee feels that non-physical aspects of their job do not meet their needs, they will be less content, which will result in lower performance levels (Guan & Frenkel, 2019). The consequence of this investigation align with Hassan et al. (2011), that an organization's overtime competitive edge is largely dependent on worker fulfillment, which is greatly impacted by working conditions. Workers who are content with their place of employment are far more inclined to function well at work, research has shown that working environmental elements have an impact on workers' performance (Wang et al. 2022; Awada et al. 2022).

Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the findings of this investigation, it is clear that the level of working conditions was detected to be high. Interpersonal relationships, on the other hand, were established to be average by the respondents. The early study by (Alase et al., 2022) suggests that positive interpersonal relationships enhance employees' work performance through better teamwork, communication, motivation, and mutual aid, while negative relationships within the workplace foster conflict and unhealthy rivalry and tend to impede rather than enhance employee performance. According to (Wheatley 2001; Silas, 2008), Human relationships are the center of organizations and are required for the operation of their present structures. It is through human relationships that organizations stay constant (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Therefore, it is believed that employees with better interpersonal relationships function at greater capacities. The organization's employees' job performance needs to improve, and this can be achieved by improving interaction, especially when it comes to teaming.

The findings of this study imply that organizational work environments help to raise employee satisfaction levels, which in turn helps to improve employee performance. To increase employee happiness, the organization should also concentrate on giving its workers better working conditions so they can accomplish their everyday responsibilities (Jimenez et al., 2017; Mustafa & Ali, 2019). The outcome discloses that a high level of contentment (generally owed to flourishing work situations) and an employee intent leads to better performance at work (Matsuo, 2019). This study supported Nilsen and Ringholm (2019). The investigation extends further merely pointing out how work settings significantly impact employees' capacity to perform their jobs; results demonstrate how happy individuals are at work and raise their sense of fulfillment, which in turn inspires them to accomplish their jobs. As emphasized by Yuen et al. (2018), their investigation lends to the body of knowledge on

employee performance by establishing their findings that when employees are provided with improved working conditions, they become more content and motivated, which raises both individual and organizational performance levels. Acknowledging the outcomes, this investigation recommends that a conducive working environment should be established with the right tools and equipment that promotes better interaction among coworkers by policymakers, the Ministry of Education, managers, and the governing body of institutions in any organizational background to improve their performance.

Conclusively, the research endeavors to provide several practical guides in strengthening the performance of the public universities in Nigeria, particularly among nonacademic staff in the South-south region, Nigeria. Henceforth, the outcomes of the present study proposed that the important elements of the working condition have an impact on job performance. Moreover, the working condition was discovered as the most eminent predictor of employee performance compared to interpersonal relationships. It must be mentioned that the outcomes also disclosed that employees were motivated considerably by the working environment. Consequently, the results from this research are proficient in authenticating the relevancy of the two-factor theory since the results support the arguments developed by Herzberg, (1966).

Practitioners were divided about what perhaps organizations should spend on capital projects and if so they should try more to enhance working conditions (Nilsen & Ringholm, 2019). The investigation centers on how interpersonal interactions and working conditions affect non-academic staff effectiveness. Specifically, it explores how implementing policies that support positive relationships and work settings might boost employee well-being and efficiency. Given that functional managers are required to make difficult conclusions about how to assign their constricted resources and rank several plan-of-action programs. These are important exertions with significant managerial complexity. According to this study, work circumstances have a good impact on employees' performance. As a result, adopting such measures might be beneficial for organizations.

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