

WORK ENVIRONMENT AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN SELECTED PRIVATE BUSINESS ORGANISATIONS IN RIVERS STATE.

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Abstract

Work environment boost employee's performance hence boosting organisational performance. This study focuses on work environment and employee performance. The objective of the study was to investigate the effect of workplace environment on employee performance in selected private business organisations in Rivers State. The target population was all the employees at Kemnoulli Nigeria Limited, Lolomari & Company Nigeria Limited and Anchor Maric Nigeria Limited. The total number was 1,626. The sample size included a total of 164 employees. Descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The researcher used stratified random sampling technique in selecting the employees. The study used primary data which was collected by the use of semi structured questionnaire. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics that included frequencies, mean scores, standard deviation and percentages. From the findings, the study concluded that there is a significant relationship between work environment and employee performance and that work environmental factors that influenced employee performance were supervisor's support factors, social factor and work-life balance factor. The study recommends that private business

organisations that wants to experience increase in productivity and quality service need to encourage supervisors to support employees, give adequate attention and support to their social needs and implement work life balance culture so as to enable them improve in their performance.

Keywords: Work Environment; Employee Performance; Supervisors' Support; Social Support; Work life Balance, Productivity, Quality Service.

1.0 Introduction

The success of any organization is closely linked to the job performance of its employees. The standard of the employees' work environment affects their motivation level and thus performance (Heath, 2006). When employees have the desire, physically and emotionally to work, then their performance shall be increased (Boles et al., 2004). They also stated that having a pleasant work environment assist in reducing the number of absenteeism and as a result can increase the performance in today's competitive and dynamic business world. The work environment that is set in place affects employee morale, productivity and engagement - both positively and negatively (Chandrasekar, 2011). She adds

that factors of work environment play an important role towards the employees' performance. The factors of work environment give an immense impact to the employees' performance either towards the negative outcomes or the positive outcomes.

In Nigeria, the private business organisation is said to include any self-employed person or any employer of labour who does not belong to the government or public sector (Jerome 1999, Oyeranti, 2004). Put differently anyone who is an employer or self-employed and who does not belong to the government or public sector is believed to be operating private business organisation (Olayiwola and Busari, 2001).

Rivers State is one of the seven states in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria and the sixth-most populous state in the country. Its capital and largest city, Port Harcourt, is economically significant as the centre of Nigeria's oil industry. It is home to oil and gas exploration and exploitation activities with main investment opportunities including agribusiness, light manufacturing, healthcare, tourism, energy, mining, transportation, construction etc. Private business organisations in Rivers State have continued to evolve over time, with standards rising at a steady rate, and this come along with stiff competition among the practitioners. The activities of these private business organisations are quite challenging because they deal primarily with people that are involved in the production of goods and rendering of services. This simply means that the management of the private business organisations must strive to ensure that employees are well catered for in their place of work. One of the ways of achieving this is for the organization to provide conducive work environment for the employees. When work environment is properly put in place, there is boost in the morale of employees, and this enhances their performance

(Shikdar & Shawaqed, 2003). It will therefore be pertinent to clearly state that employees will underperform in an unconducive work environment.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The researcher observed that poor and unfriendly work environment affects employee's performance negatively and that organisations are reluctant in creating conducive work environment for employees and this has led to poor performance of employees. Several studies have been carried out in the area of work environment as it affects the employee performance. A study on the factors of workplace environment that affects employee performance: A case study of Miyazu Malaysia was carried out by Naharuddin and Sadegi (2013). Also, Gitahi and Maina (2015) did a study on the Effect of Work Environment on the Performance of Commercial Banks Employees in Nakuru Town. Amusa et al (2013) focused on work summit and work performance of librarians in public universities in South-West Nigeria. Cynthia Nanzushi (2015) studied the effect of workplace environment on employee performance in the mobile telecommunication firms in Nairobi City County while Malik, Ahmad, Gomez and Ali (2011) carried out a study of work environment and employees' performance in Pakistan. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, these studies conducted do not establish the effect of work environment on employee performance in private business organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria. This research therefore intends to cover the existing gap in these previous studies by revealing the relationship between work environment and employee performance with specific focus on selected private business organisations in Rivers State using social support, supervisor support and work life balance as dimensions of work environment and using productivity and

quality service as measures of employee performance.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

- To assess the effect of supervisor support on performance of employees in private business organisations.
- To examine the effect of social support on the performance of employees in private business organisations.
- To analyse the effect of work life balance on performance of employees in private business organisations.

1.3 Research Hypotheses

- Ho1:** Supervisor support has no significant effect on employee’s performance in private business organisations.
- Ho2:** Social support has no significant effect on employee’s performance in private business organisations.
- Ho3:** Work life balance has no significant effect on employee’s performance in private business organisations.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The findings of this work will assist management of private business organisations to find ways to create an enabling work environment for employees in order to motivate them to perform. It will enlighten the managers on the various work environment factors that may impact on

employee performance and thus the necessary improvements. The work will add to existing literature on work environment and the factors that impact employee performance.

2.0 Literature Review

Every organization comprises of employees as well as the environment of work where these employees carry out their various jobs. The work environment plays a pivotal role in the performance of the employees in the organization. Several studies have revealed that the work environment is crucial in the performance of employees, and by extension the organization. (Naharuddin & Sadegi, 2003); (Chandra Sekar, 2011).

2.1 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. The dependent variable is employee performance and its measures includes productivity and quality service while the independent variable is work environment and its dimensions consist of supervisor support factors, social support factors and work life balance factors. The dimensions of the independent variable are expected to influence the measures of the dependent variable in the selected private business organisations in Rivers State.

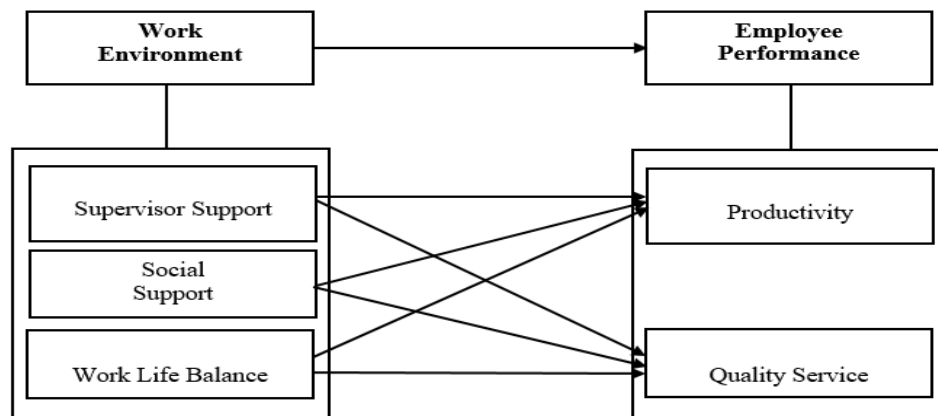


Fig. 1: Conceptualized framework for the hypothesized relationship between work environment and employee performance. Source: Researcher’s Conceptualisation (2019).

Supervisor Support – Supervisor support is the degree to which managers value their employee's contributions to the organisation, and also show concern about the employee well-being. When the standard of the supervisor support is high, the employee feels some sense of belonging as if it were in the organization. The supervisors are directly responsible to the employees in their jobs, whether as individuals or as a group (Elangovan & Karakowsky, 1999). A good supervisor will support his employees in all aspects so as to encourage them to succeed in their given duties. When employees are supported by their supervisors, they tend to put in their best and increase their performance in the organization. (Gagnon & Michael, 2004). In a study carried out in the United Kingdom on supervisor's role with a sample of 45 trainees (Axtell et al, 1997); and another study carried out in North Kuching City hall in Malaysia using 100 technical employees, in both studies, supervisor's role well implemented improved the employee performance to a great extent.

Social Support

The social support means the assistance that an individual receives from his/her co-workers, supervisor and colleagues to perform his/her work effectively. The literature reveals social support as the structure of relationships (Greenhaus and Parasuraman, 1994). It can be divided into two categories such as the work related social support and the personal social support. The current study deals with work related social support that may come from the work place within organizations including the supervisor and the co-workers. Employee performance is multidimensional and essential for organizational success (Campbell, 1990; Dyne et al., 2002). Abualrub (2004) found that, perceived social support from co-workers enhance job performance and decrease job stress. Similarly, it is suggested that supportive

management practices are crucial to achieve high performance (Drach-Zahavy, 2004). It is documented that people having social support at work are more productive than people who do not have social support at work (Castilla, 2005). The co-workers provide a sense of identity, support and friendship to other individuals (Bowler and Brass, 2006). In addition, it is found that coworker trust is related to individual willingness to share resources with other coworker (Dirks and Skarlicki, 2009). While the trust level among employees in an organization has a significant effect on the work behaviors of employees (Dar, 2010).

Work Life Balance

Work life balance is a combination of interactions among different areas of one's employed life, the pro and cons associated with the balance or imbalance can affect various levels of employees required roles. Work-life balance is defined as "people spending sufficient time at their jobs while also spending adequate time on other pursuits, such as family, friends, and hobbies" (Smith, 2010). It is a reflection of the needs for all employees to balance their work lives with their lives off the job, regardless of whether or not they have day-to-day family responsibilities (Galinsky, Bond & Friedman, 1996). Work-life balance has been defined by one researcher as satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum of role conflict (Clark, 2001), and by another as the degree to which an individual is able to simultaneously balance the temporal, emotional, and behavioural demands of both paid and family responsibilities (Hill, Hawkins, Ferris, & Weitzman, 2001). The two measurable aspects of balance between work and family roles in this study are work life conflict and extracurricular conflicts. The inability of employees to achieve balance between the work and home domains can have negative consequences for both the individual and the organisation

(Allan, Loudoun, & Peetz, 2007). Tausig and Fenwick (2001) measured perceived work-life balance using two items: the extent to which workers feel successful in balancing work and personal life, and the amount of conflict they face in balancing work and personal life. In response to this concern, an increasing number of banks now offer extensive work-life benefit programs for their employees. Work-life programs most commonly include factors such as flexible hours and part-time work.

Productivity

Productivity is expressed as a ratio of output to that of input (Stoner, Freeman and Gilbert Jr 1995). It is a measure of how the individual, organization and industry converts input resources into goods and services. The measure of how much output is produced per unit of resources employed (Lipsey 1989). Earlier research on productivity of workers has showed that employees who are satisfied with their work environment will have higher job performance than those who are not happy with their work environment (Landy 1985). Much of the success of any organization relies upon the productivity of its workforce, employee productivity is an important consideration for businesses.

Quality Service

Quality is the characteristic of products or services that bear an ability to satisfy the stated or implied needs (Kotler & Armstrong 2002). It is increasingly achieving better products and services at a progressively more competitive price (Stoner 1996). According to Gitahi (2014), supportive work environment help employees to perform normal duties more effectively, making best use of their knowledge, skills, competences and the available resources in order to provide high-quality services.

Work Environment and Employee Performance

Work environment is used to describe the surrounding conditions where an employee carries out his or her duties in the workplace. It can be in the form of physical conditions such as office equipment e.g. computers, the lightings in the office environment and temperature. It can also be perceived as work processes and procedures that are used in the organization. The work environment can also be viewed as social interactions at the workplace with subordinates, managers as well as peers. It is the surrounding in the workplace that comprises of the outside, the inside, tables, cubicles, etc. (Razaul, 2014). It is also seen as the mental state of the employee weather positive, negative or friendly. The work environment involves physical, geographical, locations and also the surrounding of the workplace of employees in an organization (Beiz 2001). In his position, he added security, employment benefits as well as additional motivation in the workplace. Employee performance is referred to as the accomplishment of works as outlined by the employer to the employee. It is defined as the actions by employees that contribute to the organizational goals, and these actions must be under the control of the employees Rotundo, 2002). Another scholar Sinha (2004) sees employee job performance as being related to the readiness and acceptability to accept new aspects of the jobs as indicated by the organization which will in turn bring about productivity of the employee. Employee performance measure the level of job accomplishment both in the main tasks and social objectives and responsibilities as may be expected from the employer (Hersey, 1993). These can only be achieved when the employee have the acquired skills, competence and ability to deal with the role conflict that may arise while carrying out the job role (Howell & Higgins, 1990).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Herzberg Two Factor Theory

The Two Factor Theory was advanced by Frederick Herzberg in 1959. This study is grounded on this theory that has been explored by various scholars to explain the relation between workplace environment and employee performance. Herzberg defined two sets of factors in deciding employees’ working attitudes and levels of performance, named motivation and hygiene factors (Robbins and Judge, 2007). He stated that motivation factors are intrinsic factors that will increase employees’ job satisfaction; while hygiene factors are extrinsic factors to prevent any employees’ dissatisfaction. The theory pointed out that improving the environment in which the job is performed motivates employees to perform better.

Affective Events Theory

The theory was advanced by Howard M. Weiss and Russel Cropanzano in 1996 (Phua, 2012). The Affective Events Theory explains the link between employees’ internal influences and their reactions to incidents that occur in their work environment that affect their performance, organizational commitment and job satisfaction. It proposes that positive-inducing as well as negative emotional incidents at work have significant psychological impact on employees’ job satisfaction. The impact results into lasting reactions exhibited through job satisfaction, organizational commitment and job performance.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Descriptive research design was used in collecting data from the respondents. The design is preferred because it is concerned with answering questions such as who, how, what, which, when and how much. This design uses both qualitative and quantitative data analysis. A descriptive study was carefully designed to ensure complete description of the situation, making sure that there was minimum bias in the collection of data and reduce errors in the interpretation of the data.

3.2 Population of Study

The target population of this study was all employees of Kemnoulli Nigeria Limited, Lolomari & Company Nigeria Limited and Anchor Maric Nigeria Limited. They were a total of 250 from Kemnoulli Nigeria Limited, 976 from Lolomari & Company Nigeria Limited and 400 from Anchor Maric Nigeria Limited.

3.3 Sample Size and Sample Design

Stratified random sampling procedure was used to arrive at the sample of employees who took part in the study. The researcher classified the employees into strata based on the job cadres. To arrive at the sample of the study, the researcher considered 10% of the total number of employees. This is in conformity with Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) who postulated that at least 10% of the accessible target population is appropriate for statistical reporting.

Table 3.1: Showing Sample Size

Strata	Total Population	Sample Size 10% of Total Population	Round off
Kemnoulli Nigeria Limited			
Top Management	15	1.5	2
Middle level	100	10	10
Low Level	135	13.5	14

Lolomari & Company Nigeria Limited			
Top Management	11	1.1	1
Middle level	178	17.8	18
Low Level	787	78.7	79
Anchor Maric Nigeria Limited			
Top Management	11	1.1	1
Middle level	22	2.2	2
Low Level	367	36.7	37
Totals	1626		164

Source: Field Survey, 2019

3.4 Data Collection

Primary data was used and it was obtained through semi-structured questionnaire. This method allows for the respondents to receive the same set of questions in exactly the same manner. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) open-ended questions are simple to formulate and flexible. The questionnaire had part A that consisted of the general information about the employees. Part B- F consisted of information on Factors of Work Environment and their effect on Employee Performance.

3.5 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics which includes frequencies, mean, standard deviation and percentages was applied to establish patterns and trends for easy understanding and interpretation of the findings.

4.0 DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Response Rate

A total of 164 questionnaires were issued. Out of these questionnaires 130 were returned duly completed. This represents 79.2% response rate. This was considered a representative sample for further studies according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) who report that a rate of 50% and above is acceptable.

Table 4.1: Supervisor Support

Statements	SA Freq (%)	A Freq (%)	D Freq (%)	SD Freq (%)	Mean	SDev
My supervisor gives me enough support to enable me perform my jobs without stress and within time frame.	70(53.9)	55(42.6)	3(2.3)	2(1.5)	3.48	0.62
My Supervisor is approachable whenever I need his assistance. This has helped me to carry out my jobs effectively and efficiently within time frame.	50(38.4)	60(46.2)	8(6.2)	12(9.2)	3.14	0.89

I am happy with my Supervisor's availability.	80(61.5)	40(30.8)	4(3.1)	6(4.6)	3.50	0.77
My supervisor gives me adequate feedback and rewards me appropriately. This has encouraged me.	70(53.9)	50(38.5)	8(6.2)	2(1.5)	3.45	0.68

The results in Table 4.4 indicate that the respondents strongly agreed that supervisor gives them enough support to enable them perform their jobs effectively (Mean = 3.48); approachable supervisor made the employees perform better at their job (mean = 3.014). The findings show majority of the respondents strongly agree that availability

of supervisor would make them better perform at their job (mean = 3.50). Respondents agreed that their supervisor gives them feedback and reward (mean = 3.45). In all the cases it should be noted that the supervisor support can spur employees, performance.

Table 4.2: Social Support

Statements	SA Freq (%)	A Freq (%)	D Freq (%)	SD Freq (%)	Mean	SDev
My organization provides opportunities and support for handling personal problem.	30(23)	70(53.9)	15(11.5)	15(11.5)	2.88	0.89
Financial support for moving to a new apartment motivates me to perform better at work.	60(46.2)	60(46.2)	10(7.7)		3.38	0.62
I am supported socially by my organisation.	40(30.8)	50(38.4)	30(23.1)	10(7.7)	2.92	0.92
My organization provides opportunity to discuss and support private worries and fears.	70(53.9)	35(26.9)	15(11.5)	10(7.7)	3.27	0.94

From the above results, the respondents agreed that their organisation provided opportunities and support for handling personal problem (Mean = 2.88). Many agreed that they have financial support when moving to a new apartment and that motivate them perform better at work (mean = 3.38). The respondents agreed that they were supported socially when need be

(mean = 2.29). Majority of the respondents strongly agreed that their organization provides opportunity to discuss and support their private worries and fears. (Mean = 3.27). The analysis indicates that social support encourage employees to better perform their duties. This is confirmed by the standard deviations that are all below 1 (range from 0.89 – 0.94).

Table 4.3: Work-life Balance

Statements	SA Freq (%)	A Freq (%)	D Freq (%)	SD Freq (%)	Mean	SDev
I am able to balance work priorities with my personal life.	40(30.8)	70(53.9)	8(6.2)	12(9.2)	3.06	0.86
My organization provides flexi-time to be able to balance my work and personal life.	20(15.4)	20(15.4)	50(38.4)	40(30.8)	2.15	1.03
My organization recognizes the need for leave in order to give employees time off work to relax and attend to personal issues.	70(53.9)	40(30.8)	10(7.7)	10(7.7)	3.31	0.91

The findings show that the respondents agreed that they were able to balance work priorities with their personal life as indicated by a mean = 3.06; they however disagree that their organizations provide flexi- time to enable them balance work and personal life (Mean = 2.15). They strongly agreed that they were given leave to attend to personal issues (Mean = 3.31).

4.2 Discussion of Findings

Findings from the study show that supervisor’s support factor, social support factor and work life balance factor play essential role in positively influencing the employee’s performance. These results are consistent with McCoy and Evans (2005) who found out that elements of physical work environment need to be proper so that the employees would not be stressed while doing their work.

The study sought to determine the effect of supervisor’s support on employee’s performance. The findings revealed that the respondents agreed that supervisor’s support would make them better perform at their job. The finding is in line with the work of Lelebisi, (2012) who argued that supervisor’s support is helpful in developing

an environment that increases the employee performance.

The study also sought to determine the effect of social support on employees’ performance. The findings revealed that the respondents agreed that social support would make them better perform at their job. The finding is in line with the work of Abualrub (2004) who found that, perceived social support from co-workers enhance job performance and decrease job stress.

Finally the study sought to determine the effect of work life balance on employees’ performance. The findings revealed that the respondents were able to balance their work priorities with their personal life. However their organizations were not flexible enough to allow them balance their personal life and work. It was found that the organizations recognized the need to attend to personal issues. The findings revealed the need to reconcile the competing claims of work and home. Clark (2000) found out that a balanced work life is associated with increased job satisfaction and organizational commitment which in increases employees’ performance.

5.0: Conclusion

The most essential resource for an organization is the human resources (employees). They make sufficient contribution to the existence of an organization, attention should therefore be paid to them. Organizations can only attain their goals and objectives through its employee's performance. Employees will strive to perform when they feel that their immediate environment condition corresponds with their obligations. The type of work environment in which they operate will determine whether they perform or not, it's through their performance that organizational performance can be actualised. The work conditions will determine the employee's comfort to work and boost their performance. Employee's performance is deemed as a function of ability and motivation. The study revealed that the supervisor's support factor, social support factor and work life balance factor contributes immensely to employee's motivation to work and consequently improves their performance. It can therefore be concluded from the study that for an organization to have a competitive edge over others, increase productivity level and provide quality service, it must provide a positive work environment that will boost employee performance. Hence, there is a significant relationship between work environment and employee performance in the selected private business organisations in Rivers State.

Recommendations

The research findings support the Two Factor Theory which stress that that environment in which the job is performed motivates the employees to perform better.

- i. The study recommends that private business organisations need to encouraged supervisors to support employees, give adequate attention and support to their social needs and implement work life balance culture so

as to enable them improve in their performance.

- ii. Private business organisations should also ensure that the work environment is comfortable enough to support employee performance by improving the working conditions. Improving the working environment will increase employee performance. When the work environmental supports are sound, employees are better equipped to do what is expected of them and will however lead to the achievement of organizational goals.
- iii. Employee performance should be given serious attention by private business organisations. Since the work environment is at the core of influencing employees' performance, these organisations should work hard at availing every needed resource in making sure that the work environment supports their employee performance.

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