



Influence of Labor Relations Strategies on Employee Effectiveness in Selected Universities in South-South Nigeria

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Citations - APA

Abome, I. S., Nwadukwe, H. & Ekoriko, E. A. (2025). Influence of Labor Relations Strategies on Employee Effectiveness in Selected Universities in South-South Nigeria. *Contemporary Journal of Social Science and Humanities* 6(1), 22-29. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14823166>

All of an organization's objectives can only be met by its workforce. Efficient employee relations tactics foster both individual and group dedication to attaining superiority and aid in establishing a nurturing workplace. This study looks at how employee performance is affected by labor relations practices in a few South-South Nigerian universities. The cross-sectional research design was used in this study. The Southern Region of Nigeria's Federal, State, and Private Universities were the sources of the study population. Ninety university staff members served as the sample. A structured questionnaire that was self-administered was used as the data gathering instrument. Descriptive statistics were employed in the analysis of the data. The results showed that employee performance is highly impacted by promotions. The study also showed that worker performance in South-South Nigerian universities was impacted by employee training. The study suggests that university administration pay more attention to how these are carried out. More time and resources should be allocated to training since it would enhance employee performance if it were successfully implemented.

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ABSTRACT

Keywords: Labor Relations; Employee Effectiveness; Efficient Employee Relations; Nurturing Workplace

Introduction

The interaction between employers and employees is known as industrial relations. According to Rose (2008), employee relations is the study of controlling the employment connection between employers and workers, both individually and collectively, as well as determining important issues and policies at the labor, organizational, and industrial levels of the workplace. Unions, collective bargaining, and collective agreements have come to be emphasized as a result of industrial relations' historical focus on labor management organizations and the formulation of labor laws. Government, technology, demographic, management, and ownership changes inside firms are all factors that impact employee relations, in addition to those influenced by political, economic, and social institution shifts.

An organization's goals for how it should handle its relationships with employees and their unions are outlined in an employee relations plan. The employee relations strategy will come from the company plan, just like all other HR strategy components, but it will also work to support it. For instance, the employee relations strategy may emphasize involvement and participation processes, include implementing continuous improvement programs and total quality management, if the business strategy is focused on achieving competitive advantage through innovation and providing quality to customers (Abdullah, Tari, and Akhtar, 2018).

Establishing stable, cooperative relationships with employees to reduce conflict, fostering employee engagement and communication, and cultivating reciprocity and shared interests in accomplishing organizational goals through the creation of an organizational culture based on shared values between management and employees are all aspects of employee relations strategies. These days, collective bargaining and conflict resolution are less important components of Kenya's employee relations strategy than engagement, commitment, involvement, and collaboration. As a result, employee relations strategy stands out as the best framework for handling labor relations in contemporary businesses and enhancing overall productivity. An approach to human resource management known as an employee relations strategy places a focus on skill development, job enrichment, and incentive programs.

All of an organization's objectives can only be met by its workforce. The nature of interpersonal relationships at work is therefore essential to an organization's ability to be managed effectively. The success of the organization is determined by how its diverse human resources are integrated in comparatively fixed relationships and well-defined social relationship patterns throughout the entire company. If businesses wish to compete in a dynamic and changing environment, they must foster a pleasant work environment that makes work engaging and flexible and inspires and develops workers (Diamantidis and Chatzoglou 2019). Efficient employee relations tactics foster both individual and group dedication to attaining superiority and aid in establishing a nurturing workplace. Because organizations are inherently dynamic, management and staff must constantly assess how well the organization's vision is being realized and how relevant it is at any particular moment. Recruitment and promotion, staff development, performance reviews, job analysis and description, and incentives are all listed by Oguwa (2011) as crucial strategy components. clientele.

Universities are currently dealing with issues that have never been seen before by the public, including increased student enrollment, staff turnover, cheap capital costs, limited resources, labor disputes, and "brain drain." Staff are overworked as a result of the growing student body, which impairs performance and causes burnout. In Kenya, universities are becoming more and more significant to the country's social and economic advancement. Nonetheless, among many other issues, colleges must deal with issues like growing enrollment, quick growth, limited infrastructure, a shortage of personnel, low pay, little funding, and subpar research output (Ibua, 2017). Universities need to be strategic in order to handle these difficulties, and they need to understand that human resources are a vital resource (asset) that can provide them a competitive edge.

Public institutions in Nigeria are unable to accept all eligible applicants due to the surge in the number of people pursuing higher education (Chacha, 2004; Kalai, 2009). In response to this difficulty, the government has expanded the number of institutions and colleges it has established, varied the curricula it offers (Vundi, 2009; Chacha 2004), and introduced initiatives for self-employment. sponsor. Numerous difficulties have arisen as a result of higher education's explosive growth, particularly for public colleges. These include decreased research capability, rising student enrollment without commensurate facility improvements, and low Treasury support that forces these

universities to run on extremely tight budgets (Daniels, Radil and Goegan, 2017; Kalai, 2009). Furthermore, despite this being a crucial indicator of teacher competency, studies by Kaiser, Mayer, and Malai (2018) and Jerrim, Oliver, and Sims (2019) reveal a deterioration in teachers' efficacy in teaching, research, and publication. This is explained by the significant burden brought on by the large student body. As institutions, public universities in South-South Nigeria are dealing with issues that seem to be harmful to their ability to function.

Studies have been done on social interactions in general and employee performance in particular. Afroz (2018), Asfaw (2015), and Kiyana & Bett (2017) are a few of the studies that address the effect of training and development evaluation in businesses. Research has looked into professional training, training design, implementation methods, training and feedback, and the impact of training and development on organizational productivity. They concentrate on the banking sector, county governments, and administrative organizations. Nevertheless, research on the performance, growth, and training of staff members at public universities is lacking. The effect of training and development on staff performance at public universities is not well understood.

Furthermore, demoralizing teachers and non-teaching staff at public institutions is a result of weak labor relations, as seen by the ongoing strikes. Many go to research centers and universities abroad, adding to the much-discussed brain drain that is currently plaguing many Nigerian higher education institutions. Universities are suffering from a major brain drain as a result of superior training, promotion, and pay offered by both domestic and international universities. Furthermore, some workers leave the company to pursue their education elsewhere and never come back. As a result, South-South Nigerian universities now lack critical intellectual strength. The largest issue in the face of brain drain is attracting and retaining intellectual individuals. Building the capacity of the remaining academics is necessary to meet the growing demand for higher education in Nigeria. by means of employee relations tactics (Akporehe, 2022).

New tactics are needed to compete successfully in the ever-changing external environment, as traditional sources of competitive advantage are shifting. For instance, adaptability and industrial relations have become competitive weapons that help firms fight back against changes and the intensity of market competition that exists today. Employee comfort, positive working relationships, and tight collaboration toward shared objectives are all necessary for improved productivity (Khan, Haleem, and Kanwal 2017). To bring out the best in each person, management must cultivate positive relationships with staff members in the workplace. Thus, this study looks at how labor relations techniques affect worker performance in a few South-South Nigerian universities. The study's precise goals were to: (i) ascertain how employee performance is affected by promotions at particular South African universities. (ii) to investigate how staff effectiveness is impacted by training in a few South-South Nigerian universities.

Concept of Employee Relations Strategies

According to Rose (2008), employee relations is the study of controlling the employment connection between employers and workers, both individually and collectively, as well as the identification of issues with policies and practices in the workplace, industry, and organizations. According to employee relations, non-union employment arrangements and white-collar jobs should be accorded equal weight in the larger context of employment. According to Perkins and Shortland (2006), it deals with socioeconomic interactions that are based on agreements between people who undertake labor in return for social advantages like remuneration. According to Huang, Lee, and Rousseau (2014), employee interactions show the existence of psychological contracts that are distinct from other types of partnerships.

Pearce and Robinson (2019) assert that whether or not there is a union connection between them, businesses actively work to foster positive working relationships with their staff. Thus, proactive steps to foresee the requirements and expectations of employees are a hallmark of strategic managers. Employers should make an effort to provide their staff with difficult work, excellent supervision, and high wages. Customer and employee satisfaction are closely related. Managers value their concern for the well-being of their staff members and think that loyalty and performance are linked.

Concept of Employee Performance

Employee performance, on the other hand, refers to the efficient execution of a function or task performance to obtain favorable results, whereas performance refers to the act of doing, carrying out or finishing an activity, achievement, or recognized achievement (Abun 2021). The immediate improvement in the knowledge, skills, and capacities needed to carry out work-related tasks and, consequently, employee commitment is referred to as employee performance attained through training. Workers more closely match their objectives at work. an improvement-focused culture. learning, enhancing worker performance, and eventually giving the business a larger return on its training investment.

Performance is defined as what is accomplished as well as how it is accomplished (Saqib, Saleem, Bashir, Ali, 2017). To assess the degree of performance, management should assess employee performance against the established goals. The performance of a firm is primarily determined by the contributions made by its workforce. As a result, managers' top concern now is employee performance. An organization's output level is determined by the collective performance efforts of its personnel, and this, in turn, affects the organization's development and progress. Employees whose expectations and attitudes closely match the organization's vision are likely to contribute to the company's continued prosperity (Kantabutra, 2016). For employees to work efficiently and meet corporate goals, they require a variety of characteristics, including motivation.

Happy and contented employees perform better at work, and managers find it simpler to inspire top performers to meet objectives and be competent in their roles. This is accomplished through improved training initiatives. Acknowledging the part that training procedures play in assisting senior managers in fostering a more positive workplace, which raises employee motivation and performance. Setting the stage for success requires an understanding of the importance of sustainability to an organization's survival. In light of this, it makes sense to believe that an organization's ability to survive can be determined by the effectiveness of its people resources.

Theoretical framework

The human relations theory, first presented by Elton Mayo in 1933, served as the research's compass. Many people credit Elton Mayo as the creator of the Human Relations School of Business Organization and industrial sociology (Kaufman, 2008). His studies of groups and behavior at work have practical applications in sociology and organizational administration. He studied the Hawthorne Works of the Western Electric Company in Chicago, as well as a spinning mill in Philadelphia. The Hawthorne study by Professor Elton Mayo's findings showed that relationships had the biggest impact on productivity. Researchers discovered that relationships and being a part of a supportive team, where each person's work had a major influence on the team's performance, enhanced productivity. Consequently, researchers discovered that giving employees more attention from researchers raised their motivation and output—a phenomenon known as the Hawthorne effect. According to Mayo (1924), human relations assumes that men have social needs, want fulfilling relationships at work, and are more susceptible to peer pressure than to administrative control and higher authority. This idea clarifies how public universities go about putting social relations techniques into practice. This notion states that companies should prioritize employee interactions as a means of increasing employees' productivity.

Methods

Research Design

The cross-sectional research design was used in this study. For the purpose of measuring and evaluating data, the study design serves as a research model. According to Kothari (2004), a research design is an outline and framework for an investigation intended to provide answers to research questions. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) state that the goal of correlational research design is to offer answers to issues. As it turned out, it was appropriate for evaluating the impact

Area of Study

South-south Nigeria is also known as the Niger Delta region. Most oil wells are located in this area. Nigeria's South-South region comprises six states and is strategically located at the Y-tail of the Niger River which connects to the Atlantic Ocean via the Gulf of Guinea. Despite its relatively small territory, the south of the country is still the economic pillar of the economy: oil. Besides oil and gas, the region also offers other important resources with huge potential investment opportunities in tourism and agriculture.

Target Population

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), population refers to an entire group of individuals, events, or subjects that have common observable characteristics. The study population will be selected from Federal, State and Private Universities in the Southern Region of Nigeria to ensure fair representation, University of Benin, Benin City will represent the Universities of the Federation, Rivers State University of Science and Technology (RUST), represents the state. universities., and Benson Idahosa University replaced private universities. Universities of the University of Benin, Benin City, have 2245 academic staff (Human Resources Department, University Registrar, 2018), Cross River State University has 898 academic staff (Human Resources Department), while Western Delta University has 120 academic staff (Department registration 2019).

Additionally, a sample of 90 employees, or 30 from each university, was used. The data collection tool was a self-administered structured questionnaire. The data were then reported as descriptive statistics

Table 1: Mean responses of respondents on how employee performance is affected by promotion

<i>Items relating to promotion</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
<i>Promotions encourage employees to do their best knowing that good performance will be rewarded.</i>	90	4.60	.776
<i>Promotion opportunities in the organization affected employee overall commitment and loyalty.</i>	90	3.62	1.118
<i>Promotion also enables employees to advance themselves educationally and also in the gaining of new skills</i>	90	3.64	.865
<i>Promotion comes with increase in responsibilities and increases employee ability</i>	90	2.89	.827
<i>Employee skills increase with job promotion</i>	90	2.98	.783
<i>Seniority in positions is considered during promotions</i>	90	2.71	1.408
Total	90	3.6846	.57270

Descriptive statistical results are presented in Table 1 with a total number of respondents N = 90, giving the following results. Overall, employee promotions are found to be moderately common, as evidenced by an overall mean of 3.6846 and a standard deviation value of 0.57270 across a number of universities in South-South Nigeria. This therefore implies that universities in South-South Nigeria have adopted promotional strategies to a moderate extent, although more needs to be done to achieve this effect.

Table 2: Mean responses of respondents on how staff effectiveness is impacted by training few South-South Nigerian universities

<i>Items relating to training</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
<i>Relevance of content of modules of training</i>	90	3.16	1.170
<i>Training enhances job focus</i>	90	3.70	.880
<i>Employees are more inspired to meet their goals at work due to staff trainings</i>	90	3.60	1.079
<i>Trainings empowers staff to achieving degree of independence associated with work roles</i>	90	3.48	1.274
<i>Training within the organization gives employees the necessary skills to work intasks from start to the end</i>	90	3.24	1.301
<i>Training inclines staff to the organizational Vision</i>	90	3.60	.992
Total	90	3.5596	.45983

Descriptive statistical results presented in the Table 2 with a total number of respondents N = 90 give the following results. Overall, training is found to be moderately popular as shown by the overall mean value of 3.5596 and standard deviation value of 0.45983 in some universities in South-South Nigeria. This therefore implies that universities in southern Nigeria have adopted training strategies to a moderate extent.

Discussion

The conclusion that employee performance is greatly impacted by promotions is in line with earlier research conducted by Opisa (2008), Tuwei et al. (2013), Gathingu, Iravo, and Namusonge (2015), and Oguwa (2011). This study, however, defies earlier research by Gathingu et al. (2008) because it uses different variables and shows that, for contract employees, there is a significant relationship between employee performance and promotion, but not for permanent employees. Subgroup classification of personnel was not done in this study. This study represents a significant advancement in the empirical investigation and establishment of hitherto unexplored, particularly in the setting of universities, relationships between employee performance and promotion. similar to South-South University

The study's objective was to determine how worker performance in South-South Nigerian universities was impacted by employee training. Employee performance in South-South Nigerian universities has been demonstrated to be significantly impacted by training programs. The conclusion that employee performance is significantly impacted by training is consistent with research done earlier by Afroz (2018) and Kiyana & Bett (2017). These studies concentrate on the banking industry, administrative agencies, and county governments. They all miss the mark when it comes to instruction and output in public universities. Therefore, it is unknown what impact employee.

Conclusion

The first goal is to ascertain the impact of promotions on employee performance at universities in South-South Nigeria based on the analysis and findings of the influence of employee relations tactics on employee performance in South-South institutions. The study came to the conclusion that staff performance in South-South Nigerian universities is significantly influenced by staffing.

With regard to the second goal, it was to determine how staff performance in South-South Nigerian universities was impacted by training and development. The study came to the conclusion that staff performance in South-South Nigerian universities is significantly influenced by training.

Recommendations

1. University administration ought to concentrate more on the implementation of promotion strategies since it has been demonstrated that they have a positive effect on staff performance.
2. Training should receive more time and funding since it would enhance employee performance if it were implemented successfully.

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