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IMPACT OF WORK ENVIRONMENT ON EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE IN NIGERIAN PUBLIC SERVICE

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Abstract

It is not an overstatement that work environment is central to employees' performance as oxygen is to life. The workplace environment is the most critical factor in keeping an employee satisfied in today's business world. It has both positive and negative effects on workers performance, morale, productivity and commitment. This paper aims to bring to the fore salient information concerning the work environment factors which have influence on employees performance. In a bid to attract an optimal level of degree of reliability and consistency in research, a survey research was adopted. Structured questionnaires were used to elicit relevant information from respondents coupled with oral interviews. A sample size of 165 respondents was selected from Federal, State and Local Government employees. The study used simple random sampling techniques. The 5 –point likert scale of importance was used as a measurement scale to elicit information from respondents, while the methods of data analysis include frequency count, simple percentages, chi-square and Z-test analysis. The result indicates that good work environment has bearing on workers performance and that it has great influence on employee's safety and labour turnover in Nigerian public service. The study concludes among other things that poor work environment result in significance losses for workers, their ministries/departments and the national economy in general. It recommends that public authorities create a work environment that attracts keeps and motivate its workforce towards optimum performance for the good of the nation.

Keywords: work environment, employees' performance, productivity and commitment, public service, workforce, employees quality of life, morale.

Introduction

Work environment represents those processes, systems, structures, tools or conditions in the workplace that impact favorable or unfavourably on individual performance. The workplace environment is the most critical factor in keeping an employee satisfied in today's business world. Today's workplace is different, diverse and constantly changing owing to policies, rules, culture, resources, working relationship, work location, as well as internal and external environmental factors, all of which influence the ways those employees perform their job functions and schedule.

The factors of workplace environment give an immense impact on employees either towards the negative outcomes or the positive outcomes. The environment that employees are required to work-in can have a significant impact on their ability to undertake the tasks assigned to them which in turn affect their contribution and subsequent productivity. Workers are living in a growing economy and have almost limitless job opportunities. This combination of factors has created an environment where the business needs its employees more than the employees need the business.

When the employees are physically and emotionally up right, then come the desire to work which will ultimately lead to higher productivity. However, having a conducive workplace environment helps in reducing the number of absenteeism and this can increase the workers performance which will leads to the increasing number of productivity at the workplace. Therefore, the relationship between the workers, the work itself, the workplace environment) and tools of work had becomes the most important aspect in achieving positive performance and highest productivity. The factors of workplace environment that had been determined are job aid, supervisor support or relationship, promotion opportunity, performance feedback, goal setting, work place incentives, mentoring, motivation and also the physical work environment. It is against this background that the study examined the impact of work environment on employees performance in Nigerian public service.

Statement Of The Problem

It is widely accepted that the work environment has both positive and negative impact on employee performance. The work environment strongly influences the extent to which employees are engaged in their work and committed to the organization. (Becker 2002). Therefore, it is necessary to study the impact the work environment has on the performance of its employees in an organization. The workplace environments in most of Nigerian organization are unsafe and unhealthy. These include unconducive atmosphere, poorly designed workstations, lack of ventilation, excessive noise, insufficient safety measures and lack of personal protective equipment. Employees working in such environment are prone to occupational hazards which negatively influence worker's performance as well as productivity. Therefore, this study critically examines the work environment and its impact on employee's performance in Nigerian public service.

Objectives of the Study

- i. To examine the impact of work environment on employee performance in Nigerian public service.
- ii To investigate the factors influencing the employee performance in Nigerian public service.

Literature Review

The quality of employee's workplace environment mostly impacts on their level of performance and subsequent productivity. Most of Nigerian organizations are under the mistaken impressions that the level of employee performance on the job is directly proportional to the size of their take home. Although this may be true in a minority cases, copious employee surveys have revealed this is to be untrue. In fact, salary increases and bonuses for performance, in many instances, have a very limited short-term effect. It is the standard and quality of work environment that basically influence the employee performance and subsequent productivity.

According to Chapins (1995), environment is coined to be man's immediate surrounding which he manipulates for his extant. Wrongful manipulation introduces hazards that make the environments unsafe, distort the performance and impede the productivity rate of the workers. Therefore, the workplace entails an environment in which the workers perform his work. Obviously, an effective workplace is an environment where results can be achieved effectively and efficiently.

The environment that people are required to work-in can have a significant impact on their ability to undertake the tasks assigned to them. This can affect performance, productivity, employee health and wellbeing. The key factors fall into two categories, those that are driven by procedures, protocol and management requirement and the factors that arise from premises, office or factory design. The key factors in work place environment set in place impacts employee morals, performance and productivity both positively and negatively. If the circumstances are not good, it will negatively affects the performance of the employees in the form of delay in work completion, frustration and personal growth. A large number of work environment studies have shown that workers are satisfied with references to specific workspace features. These features preferences by workers are highly significant to their productivity and work space satisfaction, they are

lighting, ventilation rates, access to natural light and acoustic environment (Beckar, 1981; Humpheries, 2005; Veitch, Charles, Newsham, Marquardt & Geerts, 2004; Karasek & Theorell, 1990). Lighting and other factors like modern furniture has been found to have positive influence on employees health (Dilani, 2004; Milton, Glencross & Watters, 2000; Veitch & Newsham, 2000) and consequently on productivity. This is so because light has a profound impact on worker's physical physiological and psychological health, and on their overall performance at the workplace. Ambient features in work environments, such as lighting, temperature, existence of windows, free air movement etc. suggest that these elements of the physical environment influence employee's attitudes, behaviors, satisfaction, performance and productivity (Larsen, Adams, Deal, Kweon and Tyler, 1998; Veritch and Gifford, 1996).

According to Mike (2010), when the employees are physically and emotionally have the desire to work, then their performance outcomes shall be increased. Moreover, they also observed that by having a proper workplace environment, it helps in reducing the number of absenteeism and thus increase the employee's performance which will leads to the increasing number of productivity at the workplace. Some research had shown that there are some positive effects when applying a proper workplace environment strategy such as the machine design, job design, environment and facilities design.

Chandrasekar (2011), stated that the connection or relationship between the work, workplace, tools of work had becomes the most important aspect in the work itself. Nowadays, organizations must be aware of their potential workforce due to the competitive business environment. There are key factors in the employees workplace environment that could give a great impact towards the motivation and performance level. The factors of workplace environment also give a great impact towards the changes of lifestyle, work-life balance and also the health fitness whether toward the positive or negative impact (Chandrasekar, 2011).

The concept of workplace performance means all the factor of workplace environment that is being provided by the employer to their employees that could support the employees performance at work (Clements-croome, 2006). By having a high level performance of employees, it will increase the levels of the corporate productivity and this will increase the quality of service rendered to the public. Basically, the employees who have their performance affected by the workplace environments are those who always complaints on the discomfort and dissatisfaction at the workplace.

Methodology

In a bid to attract an optimal level of degree of reliability and consistency in research, a survey research was adopted. Structured questionnaire was used to elicit relevant information from the respondents coupled with oral interview. Secondary data were accessed from existing procedural agreements, approved conditions of service and annual reports. A total of 165 questionnaires were distributed among three broad categories (Federal, State and Local Government employees) while 120 was administered and returned. A simple random sampling technique applied was essentially a deliberate one for the purpose of analytical simplicity and representativeness. Two research hypotheses were formulated for the purpose of this study;

Ho1: work environment has no significant impact on employees' performance in Nigerian public service.

Ho2: work environment has no significant effect on workers safety and labour turnover in Nigerian public service.

The data collected was analyzed using frequency count, percentages, chi-square and Z-test analysis.

Analysis and Discussion

Table 1: Subject notion regarding the relationship between work environment and employees performance in Nigerian public service.

Statement	Category	Degree of response					
		SA	A	UN	D	SD	T
The relationship between work environment and employees performance in Nigerian public service.	Federal Civil Servants	3	0	3	12	12	30
	State Government Civil Servants	3	3	3	9	18	36
	Local Government Employees	3	6	6	24	15	54
	Total	9	9	12	45	45	120
	Percentage (%)	7.5	7.5	10	37.5	37.5	100

Source: Field survey, 2015.

The overall opinion as shown in table 1 above is the facts that there has been lack of close relationship between work environment and employees' performance in the area studied. In fact, Ninety (90) out of 120 respondents (75%) feel that work environment and productivity are two parallel lines. The subject feels that work environment has not been too conducive which affect the employees' performance and subsequent productivity.

Table 2: opinion regarding the effect of work environment on employees performance in Nigerian public service.

Statement	Category	Degree of response					
		SA	A	UN	D	SD	T
There is effect of work environment on employees performance in Nigerian public service.	Federal Civil Servants	24	6	0	0	0	30
	State Government Civil Servants	30	3	3	0	0	36
	Local Government Employees	36	9	3	3	3	54
	Total	90	18	6	3	3	120
	Percentage (%)	75	15	5	2.5	2.5	100

Source: Field survey, 2015

Result in table 2 revealed that 108 respondents representing 90% of the total respondents believed that work environment has high impact on employees performance. This implies that good workplace environment impacts employee morale, performance and productivity in Nigerian public service.

Table 3: Opinion concerning the effect of workplace environment on workers safety and labour turnover in Nigerian public service.

Statement	Category	Degree of response					
		SA	A	UN	D	S D	T
There is effect of workplace environment on workers safety and labour turnover in Nigerian public service.	Federal Civil Servants	21	6	0	0	3	30
	State Government Civil Servants	21	12	0	3	0	36
	Local Government Employees	30	18	6	0	0	54
	Total	72	36	18	3	3	120
	Percentage (%)	60	30	15	2.5	2.5	100

Source: Field survey, 2015.

The result in table 3 indicates overwhelming effect of workplace environment on workers safety and labour turnover in Nigerian public service. Out of the respondents, 108 (90%) feel this way. Organizations (public and private alike) that aspire to succeed in the globalization era have no choice but to take good care of the life wire (employees) safety in all its ramifications.

Table 4: Opinion regarding the level of employees' satisfaction towards the space and facilities provided in the Nigeria public service.

Statement	Category	Degree of response					
		SA	A	U N	D	SD	T
There has been an optimal relationship between employees satisfaction and facilities provided in Nigeria public service.	Federal Civil Servants	3	3	0	6	18	30
	State Government Civil Servants	3	0	3	9	21	36
	Local Government Employees	3	3	3	15	30	54
	Total	9	6	6	30	69	120
	Percentage (%)	7.5	5	5	25	57.5	100

Source: Field survey, 2015

Going by the result in table 4 above, it is glaring that the majority of the respondents are of the opinion that the relationship between employees satisfaction and facilities provided in Nigerian public service work environment has been far from being optimal. 99(82.5%) out of 120 respondents feel that optimality has been grossly lacking between the two variables under reference for most of the respondents. Facilities provided has failed woefully to satisfy the employees which implies that the facilities are grossly inadequate even when and where provided.

Table 5: Subject perception regarding the notion that environmental factors are conducive to work in Nigerian public service.

Statement	Category	Degree of response					
		SA	A	UN	D	SD	T
Environmental factors are conducive to work in Nigeria public service.	Federal Civil Servants	0	3	3	9	15	30
	State Government Civil Servants	3	3	6	3	21	36
	Local Government Employees	3	6	6	6	33	54
	Total	6	12	15	18	69	120
	Percentage (%)	5	10	12.5	15	57.5	100

Source: Field survey, 2015.

Majority of the respondents as shown in table 5 believed that environmental factors are not so conducive to work in Nigerian public establishments. A total of 87 (72.5%) out of 120 respondents are of the opinion that environmental factors are not too friendly in most of Nigerian public service work environment. Factors like absence of working tools, agitations by various interest groups, inconsistency in Government policies and insecurity bedeviled the public work operational environment.

Table 6: Respondents perception on the provision of safe work environment, identification and control of Hazards.

Statement	Category	Degree of response					
		SA	A	UN	D	SD	T
There are provision of safe work environment, identification and control of hazards in Nigerian public service.	Federal Civil Servants	3	3	0	6	18	30
	State Government Civil Servants	3	0	3	9	21	36
	Local Government Employees	3	3	3	15	30	54
	Total	9	6	6	30	69	120
	Percentage (%)	7.5	5	5	25	57.5	100

Source: Field survey, 2015

With the result in table 6 above, it is glaring that the provision of safe work environment, identification and control Hazards are grossly lacking in Nigerian public work environment. A total of 99 (82.5%) respondents out of the 120 feel that work Hazards and inability to fortify the general work environments positively characterized the Nigerian public service.

Table 7: Opinion concerning the factors influencing the employees' performance.

No	Variables	Number of Responses	Percentage %
1	Sufficient help and equipment	24	20%
2	Conducive work environment	36	30%
3	Interesting work	21	18%
4	Competent supervision	15	12%
5	Friendly and helpful co-workers	24	20%
	Total	120	100%

Source: Field survey, 2015.

The data in table 8 revealed that most of the subject are of the opinion that conducive work environment should be the over- roll variable in enhancing employee performance in Nigerian public service. This table shows that out of a total 120 respondents, 36 (30%) felt that superior attention should be on the conducive work environment. Next in ranks are sufficient help and equipment as well as friendly and helpful co-workers, which are both pegged at 20% each. Competent supervisor is the least factor to contemplate, perhaps because there is an inherent notion that employees excel under little supervisor.

Table 8: Opinion regarding workplace features and workers performance.

No	Variables	Number of Responses	Percentage %
1	Close office floor plan	11	9
2	Clean and decorative workplace	40	33
3	Lighting	12	10
4	Absence of noise in the workplace	21	18
5	Moderate room temperature/ventilation	24	20
6	Open office space	12	10
	Total	120	100%

Source: Field, 2015.

The result in table 8 revealed that most of the respondents feel that clean and decorative workplace is most vital and important in achieving highest performance as well as productivity. 40 out of 120 respondents representing 33% are of strong opinion in having clear and decorative workplace. Next in rank is moderate room temperature and ventilation with 20% of the respondents. Absence of noise with 18% of the subjects follows. Lighting and open office spaces are both pegged at 10% each. Close office floor plan is the least factor to contemplate with only 9% of the respondents.

Test of Hypotheses

1. Ho1: work environment has no significant impact on employees performance

Chi-Square Test**Test Statistics**

	Work_environment_and_employees_performance
Chi-Square	61.500 ^a
Df	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 24.0.

From the analysis above, it was revealed that the p value is less than 0.05. this implies that the null hypothesis should be rejected while we accept the alternative hypothesis which says work environment has significant impact on the employees' performance. Work environment such as clean and decorative workplace, lightings, office wares and worker safety devices have significant impact on employee productivity, efficiency and punctuality at work which in turn improve employees performance.

2. Ho2: work environment has no significant effect on workers safety and labour turnover in Nigerian public service.

Z-Test**One-Sample Statistics**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Workers_safey_and_empl oyee_turnover	120	1.76	.970	.089

Test of Hypotheses

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Z-Test**One-Sample Statistics**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Workers_safey_and_empl oyee_turnover	120	1.76	.970	.089

Workers safety and employee turnover

	Test Value = 0					
	z	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Workers_saf ey_and_em ployee_turn over	19.855	119	.000	1.758	1.58	1.93

From the tables above, the z-score value of 19.855 with a p- value of 0.000 shows that is less than the p value of 0.05 (at 95% significance level). The null hypothesis should be rejected while alternative hypothesis should be accepted. That is, work environment has significant effect on workers safety and labour turnover in Nigerian public service.

Conclusions

Sequel to the results and findings in this study, the following logical and sequential conclusions are made. Poor and unsafe workplace environment result in significant losses for workers, their organization and national economy. A conducive workplace environment that aids the performance of work automatically improves productivity. The workplace environment in a majority of Nigerian public establishments is unsafe and unhealthy. This includes poorly designed workstations, unsuitable furniture, lack of ventilation, inappropriate lighting, heavy noise, insufficient safety measures in fire emergencies, work hazards and lack of personal protective equipment where necessary. Employees working in such environment are prone to occupational disease and it impacts on employee's performance and subsequent productivity. How well the employees engages with the organization especially with their immediate environment influences to a great extent their error rate , level of innovation and collaboration with other employees, absenteeism and ultimately, how long they stay in the job.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the paper makes the following recommendations:

1. Through the introduction of modern technology, Nigerian public service should be made to create an investment in employees' quality of life. The physical environment at work should be such that will better the employees' health and safety at all cost.
2. The need to create a work environment that attracts keeps and motivate its workforce should be enhanced.
3. The workplace space features should be designed to promote collaboration and good interpersonal relationship without been detrimental to output.

Ref.