



Research Paper

An Appraisal of Employee Relations and Organizational Performance in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government of Rivers State, 2010 -2021

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ABSTRACT

This study examined how employee relations affect organizational efficiency. It was viewed that effective employee relation is a fundamental element of organizational performance, prosperity and sustainability. Good employee relations results in a highly committed, motivated and loyal employees in the organizations. The study relied on secondary data and content analysis as methods of data collection and analysis. The study unraveled that effective employee relations have a relationship with organizational efficiency both to the employee's career and the institution they work for and that good remuneration, pleasant co-worker relationship, coupled with good working conditions play an important role in getting employees to be satisfied on their jobs and subsequently directly reflecting in their intention to remain committed in an institution. Based on the fore-going, the study, recommends amongst others that Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Council should focus more on building effective and sustainable employee relations that will ensure their growth and survival.

KEY WORDS: *Appraisal, Employees, Relations, Organizational, Performance*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Employees are among an organization's most important resources and coined as most valuable assets. Employees are the central point in the triumph of every organization Amessa, & Drakeb, (2018). If the employees work together and carve up a good relationship with employers, they can attain their tasks much quicker. A good management of employee's relations is imperative in achieving organizational goal. It is required to have a sturdy relationship between employees and employers that leads to productivity, motivation, and better performance in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government.

There is this popular notion that employees within the Local Council are not well motivated hence the poor relations and subsequent poor performance in the council. There is therefore no doubt that the negative values as enumerated above appear to be lacking and thus have potentially serious consequences for overall organizational performance in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government.

Most organizations have realized that the performance of their workers plays a vital role in determining the success of the organization. As such, it is important for employers and managers alike to know how to get the best of their workers. Employee's commitment is considered as one of the greatest determinants of workers productivity.

Committed employees who are highly interested to contribute their time and energy to the pursuit of organizational goals are progressively acknowledged to be the primary asset available to an organization (Hunjra, 2010). They provide the knowledge that make most organizations very virile in the society. Furthermore, employees who share a commitment to the organization and their collective well-being are more suitable to generate the social capital that facilitates organizational learning.

It is therefore important for organizations to know the aspects that play important role or have big impact in boosting the commitment of their employees. Ali Rehman, Yousaf (2010) identified some determinant factors that affect employee commitment. Some of which are leadership style, organizational fairness, corporate social responsibility.

According to CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development) employee relations is a broad term that incorporates many issues from collective bargaining, negotiations, employment legislation to more recent considerations such as work-life balance, equal opportunities and managing diversity. It comprises of the practices or initiatives for ensuring that Employees are happy and are productive. Employee Relations offers assistance in a variety of ways including employee recognition, policy development and interpretation, and all types of problem solving and dispute resolution. It involves handling the pay-work bargain, dealing with employment practices, terms and conditions of employment, issues arising from employment, providing employees with a voice and communicating with employees (Drucker, 2019; Armstrong, 2018). Employee relations is concerned with maintaining employee-employer relation, which contributes to satisfactory productivity, increase in employee morale and motivation. Once there was a time when "Employee Relations" meant labor relations that is fragmented into Negotiate, Orchestrate, Dictate, HR professionals helped negotiate collective bargaining agreements. The provisions of the contract defined the relationship between management, unions, and workers.

Organizations may perform better and achieve their objectives if there is a awful relationship between employees and employer, therefore, it is very important for managers to create and keep good relationship with their employees. Effective employee and management relationship is imperative to the workplace whether at the time of recruitment, during an employees' tenure or at the time of separation (Rose, 2008). Good employer-employee relations are vital to the organization because it enhances employees to work better and produce more results (Burns, 2012). The application of human relations in managing human resource is critical in today's business competitive environment (Christen, Iyer&Soberman, 2006). Factors such as job satisfaction are achieved when there is a great working relationship between labour and management. Yes, organizations can have competent, qualified and motivated employees but if there is no peace and harmony at the workplace their performance will be in danger. Because the relationship between the employer and the employee is very crucial, employers need to pay attention to this relationship if they want their businesses to grow and succeed and that firms should actively seek good employee relations whether or not they are bound by union contracts (Pearce and Robinson (2009).

Organizations need employees who can peacefully work together towards the achievement of the set objectives and goals, and this can only be achieved if there is a good employee relation in the organization as the objectives of employee relationship is to achieve harmonious employee relations and minimize conflict practices in employment (Torrington & Hall, 1998).

Currently business organizations face turbulent times which demands highly skilled and dynamic manpower that have capacity to drive businesses and retain high level of customer. To achieve this, institutions and businesses should retained high rate of employee retention. Employee retention is not an easy task rather it requires strong employee relation management system in order to exploit the skills of employees which ultimately lead to better organizational performance. It is important to note that the performance of employee is enhanced by job satisfaction, compensation and benefits structure, reward plans, promotions, motivation, conducive working environment, training and succession planning. In line with this, several modern tools and techniques are mobilized by organizations to boost good employee relations and create competitive advantage over competitors. Indeed, this study endeavors to collect and review based on the facts and findings of various articles to draw logical statements about employees' relations and its effects on employee performance & to propose further studies to triumph over the drawbacks of earlier studies carried out on the issues of employee relations.

From the foregoing therefore, employee relationship has been discovered to have significant relationship with improved performance or productivity within Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government. The study therefore seeks to establish a relationship between improved performance and cordial relations among employees in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government.

1. The Effects of Employee Relations and Organizational Efficiency

An employee relation is a kind of interpersonal relationship concept which is drawn by western scholars in the 20th century to replace the industrial relation. It focuses on the right and responsibility, management and obeying caused by the interest between the organization and the employees as a total of cooperating, conflict,

strengthen and power relations and is influenced by economic, technology, legal system and socio-cultural background in a certain community/ Employee relations is defined as the relationship between employees and managers to enhance moral, commitment and trust of employees and to create suitable working environment which enables them to exert their at most effort for the achievement of organizational goals (Bajaj, Sinha, & Tiwari, 2013). An effective employee relation involves creating and cultivating a motivated and productive workforce.

Creating health employee relation in an organization is a prerequisite for the achievement of organizational goals. For this to happen, organizations have to develop strong employee relationship which involves motivating employees, participate them in decision making activity and create an opportunity for free flow of information in the organization and resolve conflicts or disagreements when they arise in the work place. This scenario makes employees to develop a sense of ownership in the organization and this in return initiated them to work hard. Health employee relation leads to more efficient, effective and productive employees which further lead to the increment of production level in the organization. Studies confirmed that companies which create conducive environment for work and create smooth relationship with employees are more productive that leads to get more financial outcomes

Employee relationship management is relatively a recent term defined as a strategy to effectively manage employees in a way they can attain organizational objectives. Employee relationship management includes various activities on which an organization implemented by the management so as to develop friendly cooperative relationship with its employees. It helps to create cohesive work environment in which all employees work together in collaboration to ensure the realization of its goals. Besides, it promotes commitment, facilitates employees in achievement of organizational objectives minimizes workplace conflict and increases trust (Bajaj *et al.*, 2013). Employees can contribute more when the managers of the organization understands the demands of each employee and tries to fulfill their needs as kind of concern which initiates them to dedicate for the realization of organizational goals. Whereas, when employees engage in conflict and misunderstanding with the management, no objective can be accomplished. So, to foster employees moral and to get more managers should build health employee relation to mitigate productivity gaps. Employee relation management also facilitates employee effectiveness and productivity when managers devoted to strengthen the relationship, employees are willing to produce quality products & services to the target customers of the organization.

2. Factors that Affect Effective Employee Relations and Organizational Efficiency n Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Council.

A lot of challenges were revealed by the respondents as they impact on employee relations and organizational efficiency. Respondents mentioned factors such as inadequate remuneration, ineffective communication or poor flow of information, nepotism, untimely appraisal system, lack of career path and growth, lack of clear-cut policies as well as inexperience. An employee is responsible for managing his or her career to a certain extent. Training pursued should be consistent with the goals and objectives of the organization that employs him or her otherwise; there would not be any career advancement

Training which benefits the individual should be utilized in the department he or she is working in. Lack of career path and growth was also reported as another constraint to career advancement especially after training.

Training directed at the weaknesses identified can enhance employee performance. Lack of recognition for employee-tailored development was advanced as a constraint and the dynamism in today's environment calls for continuous development of professional and managerial abilities. This should, however, be consistent with organizational goals and objectives. This involves clear identification of relevant needs and goals for management to support and encourage self-made development. Uncoordinated transfers and lack of adequate staff planning by management were reported as constraints to career advancement after training. From the responses presented and discussed above, it can be said that career development at Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Council does not represent the ideal picture of what it is supposed to be.

3. The role of Management in enhancing Employee Relations in Ogba/Egbema/NdoniLocal Government Council.

The role of management in the enhancement of employee relations can be summarized below:

Motivation: Motivation is defined as all internal and external driving forces that make the individual to perform an activity, what determines the limits and forms of activity and which gives activities oriented towards achieving certain objectives. Motivation is a critical factor for the success of the organization as it helps to maintain the continuity of the work in a powerful manner.. Motivated employees are a good asset of an organization. Best practices for promoting employee relations and having motivated employees are: leadership, growth and development, meaningful work, reward, financial benefits, good working condition, personal loyalty to employees, empowerment, creativity and innovation. Researches 'show that there is a positive relationship

between motivation and performance. In a similar way, motivation indeed has a monotonous effect on employee performance, when the employees will get some extra drive and exertion it is bound to improve standard performance. Furthermore, a study was done to find the effect of employee motivation on employee performance in which it was depicted that if employees are more motivated then their performance will increase Al-Khozondar, (2015).

Conflict Handling/Management: Conflict is a dispute that occurs when interests, goals or values of different individuals or groups are incompatible with each other. Maltreatment of employees, poor reward system of the organization, lack of group cohesiveness and favoritism are responsible for organizational conflicts; with the consequential impact on employee job commitment, service quality, customer satisfaction & organizational performance, whereas outcomes generate influence on job performance, thus creating turnover intentions and further generating organizational conflict. Sometimes conflict can also arise on the style of interaction with colleague or ethics and principles can also be the reason for conflict among workers. When employees' working together conflict is inevitable or natural but the existence of conflict is not a matter rather how to resolve in win-win approach.

It has been evidenced that the most separations are because of conflict over communication style and personalities and moreover these separations take place in case of conflicts are managed effectively (Chaudhry and *et al.*, 2013). Integration of all stakeholders' interest will go a long way in reducing conflict in organization and enhancing employee performance. To substantiate this, confirmed that there is a significant relationship between conflict management strategy and employee's performance.

Shared Goals and Values: The concept of shared goal indicates the communality among the employees and management of the organizations towards the central goal which is expected to be realized by the organization (Kontabutra and Avery, 2009). This coherence helps to understand how work is related across all units of the organization as well as aligning the work of employees with the strategic direction of the organization.. Sharing common goal enables employees to direct all their efforts to the accomplishment of that particular goal of the organization. However, this can be realized when there is interdependence and collaboration among the employees. Shared goal has a positive impact on employees' performance and organizational outcomes (Chinomana & Jandata, 2013). Shared goals direct employees to improve productivity. Many scholars agreed that the establishment of clearly achievable and mutually agreed goals that relates towards the vision of the organization motivates employees for its accomplishment (Nelson, 1997). This encourages team members to share the sense of common purpose and increases their awareness of the intended goals.

Mutual Trust: Trust is a critical variable which influence the performance, effectiveness and efficiency of the organization (Driks and Ferrin, 2002). Trust may grow, decline or remerge over the cause of relationship. As the relationship increases, people have more opportunities to observe and learn about each other and the judgment over the given action can be concluded as either trustworthy or untrustworthy (Huang and Guo, 2009). Trust promotes cooperative behavior, minimize conflict and develop employees' positive perceptions to their managers which in turn enhance employee job satisfaction in the organization. It also cultivates a positive work environment which consecutively and promote employee job performance in the organization.

Majority of the researchers visualize trust is consisting of two elements; integrity and reliability. Integrity is very vital in building organizations, because it to a large extent enhances trust, which is required to make the organization effective. In employee-employer relationship trust is the level of reliance one can place up on the information receive from another person and confidence in the relationship partner When employees fail to trust their managers, the flow of upward communication will be compromised; likewise, when managers distrust their employees who work with them, the downward flow of information will be negatively affected (Daniel, 2003). In line with this, study conducted by Abushawish (2013) revealed that there is a positive relationship between employee's openness and organizational trust. Managers' trust could also have greater impact on managerial decision-making process

4. The effect of Employee Relations on Employee Performance and Organizational Efficiency in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Council.

- i) Good employee relation creates pleasant atmosphere for employees which can increase their motivation. Increased employees moral can lead to increase workers performance as well. Organizations investigating in employee relation programs may experience an increase in performance which leads to increase in profit for the business.
- ii) Employees with higher level of satisfaction with the existing organization practices are more productive and resistive towards changing the current organization.
- iii) The study also revealed that improving the employee relations practices of an organization can improve the performance of employees and thereby the overall productivity of the organization. In similar way the

research conducted by (Kuzu and Ozihan, 2014 and Al-khozondar, 2015) revealed that there is strong relationship between employee relations and employee performances.

iv) It promotes teamwork which achieves organization goals. Teams are collections of people who must rely on group collaboration if each member is to experience the optimum of success and goal achievement.

v) Good employee's relationships boost employee morale and encourage discipline among employees. Hence reducing labor unrest like strikes which would affect organization performance.

vi) Good relationship with employees promotes motivation at work that is employees will be willing to work. Motivation helps to increase the amount of commitment, which improves performance and create a good company image.

II. CONCLUSION

From the findings of this study, it is unbiased to conclude that effective employee relations have a relationship with organizational efficiency both to the employee's career and the institution they work for managing employee relationship is imperative and precious to the organizational success and achieving spirited benefit. It is required to have a sturdy relationship between employees and employers that leads to productivity, motivation, and better performance in ONELGA.

Moreover, the study found that the use unfair labour practices is a major cause of poor employee relations in the small organizations in ONELGA. Maintaining harmonious relations is very important for the survival, prosperity and growth of the organization. Good and healthy employee relations lead to better organizational performance. The study also found that small organizations are aware of the benefits of maintaining good employee relations and correct remedial actions to minimize poor employee relations in the organization. Similarly, the study found that there is a positive significant relationship between employee relations and employee performance as well as between employee relations and organizational performance.

From the study we may conclude that the employees in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Council with higher level of job satisfaction which includes salary, work environment and growth opportunities were more productive at work, were able to complete their work on time and also were motivated to give opinions for organization's development and improve their own performance. Furthermore, it was discovered that Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Council exhibit and have fostered healthy employ relation by giving ample growth opportunities, work related training, regular salary hike and healthy work environment which has encouraged improved employee performance.

It can be deduced from the results and findings of the study that good remuneration, pleasant co-worker relationship coupled with good working conditions play an important role in getting employees to be satisfied on their jobs and subsequently directly reflecting in their intention to remain committed in an institution. Organizations and indeed Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Council must have concrete career development structures as well as retention policies for their staff in other to develop and retain them

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above summary and conclusions, the study therefore makes the following recommendations;

1. Every organizational should make a conscious effort to be instrumental in achieving a healthier relationship between employee to promote organizational goals.
2. Adequate remuneration and skills enhancement, timely appraisal, great communication should be embraced by employee to promote career advancement.
3. The management of an organization must pay attention to and identify the type of relationship that exists between employees be it positive or negative with the aim of making it better, make themselves available to motivate and develop employees and lastly manage all forms of conflict.
4. The employees should from time to time put together recreational activities to promote bond between themselves.
5. Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Council should devise ways of obtaining adequate facilities to enhance effective career management.
6. The promotion and promotion criteria in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Council need to be reconsidered in order to boost the morale of staff to put in their best to help in the achievement of organizational goals.
7. On transparency, it is recommended that there should be a culture of transparency in the reward system of Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Council and also ensure that the rewards or compensation meet the aspirations of the beneficiaries.

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