



Human Relations and Employees' Productivity in Rivers State Civil Service

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Abstract:

Human relations in the workplace are a major part of what makes a business work. Employees must frequently work together on projects, communicate ideas and provide motivation to get things done. Without a stable and inviting workplace culture, difficult challenges can arise both in the logistics of managing employees and in the bottom line. This study examined human relations and workers' productivity in Rivers State Civil Service. The study adopted McGregor X and Y Theories as to its theoretical framework. A survey design was used to carry out the study, while primary and secondary data were collected and analysed with the use of tables and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The sample size for this study consisted of five hundred (500) with self-administered questionnaires distributed to civil servants from five (5) selected ministries in Rivers State Civil Service; Ministry of Finance, Information, Sports, Education and Works and their responses were analysed to test the validity of the hypotheses formulated. The result obtained indicated that human relations have a huge impact on workers' productivity in Rivers State Civil Service. Consequently, the researcher recommended among others that the management of the Rivers State Civil Service should try as much as possible to provide a conducive human relations culture that encourages workers' productivity.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Relationships between employees and management are of substantial value in any workplace. Human relations is the process of training employees, addressing their needs, fostering a workplace culture and resolving conflicts between different employees or between employees and management. Understanding some of the ways that human relations can impact the costs, competitiveness and long-term economic sustainability of a business helps to underscore their importance. Human relations in the workplace are a major part of what makes a business work (Roos, 2015). Employees must frequently work together on projects, communicate ideas and provide motivation to get things done. Without a stable and inviting workplace culture, difficult challenges can arise both in the logistics of managing employees and in the bottom line. Businesses with engaging workplaces and a well-trained workforce are more likely to retain and attract qualified employees, foster loyalty with customers and more quickly adapt to meet the needs of a changing marketplace (Petryni, 2018).

The approach of human relations deals with the psychological variables of organisational functioning in order to increase the efficiency of organisations. It is the process of integration of man-to-man and man-to-organisations. Although land, labour, capital and enterprise are fundamental factors of production, without the willingness and cooperation of subordinates, management cannot produce anything. The management can obtain their cooperation through the human relations approach. To follow the human relations approach in an organisation is a major form of motivation. Modern managers realise this fact very well that a business organisation is a complex form of human relations and certain social variables. It studies those positive aspects which invoke a positive response in work behaviour (Vishakha, 2019).

Statement of the Problem

Lack of interest and focus results in errors and delays in job delivery among employees. Employees involved in constant disputes with their fellow employees and employers tend to spread negativity around and spoil the ambience of the organization. An employee may not feel like going to the office and eventually, his productivity suffers. He starts treating work as a burden. Another employer may feel highly uncomfortable at places where individuals sitting on adjacent workstations do not talk to each other. Employees not very satisfied and pleased with their work and management tend to change their jobs frequently. They find it difficult to adjust in such circumstances where one is at loggerheads with the other employee and thus fail to perform. Hence, employee retention becomes a major problem when employees do not share a warm relationship with others as well as the management. Sometimes, an organization invests so much of its time in training the new joiners so that they come at par with the other existing employees and it's really sad when the employees leave midway. Employees are reluctant to share their workload and are thus always overburdened and unhappy. They fail to accomplish tasks within the desired time frame and hence the organization suffers. Sometimes, employees are busy pulling each other's legs and thus waste all their time which should be ideally used in productive work. The output of the employees in such situations is a big zero. Despite all these, literature and research papers covering areas of interest in human relations and how they impact productivity are scarce. Hence, the need to investigate further to help proffer possible solutions is the major problem of this study.

Research Questions

The study raised the following research questions;

1. To what extent does the employer-employee relationship correlate with civil servants' productivity in Rivers State Civil Service?

2. To what extent does employee-employee relationship correlate with workers' productivity in Rivers State Civil State?

3. To what extent does management-employee relationship correlate with workers' productivity in Rivers State Civil State?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the correlation between human relations and employees' productivity in Rivers State Civil Service (2010-2020). Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. To determine the influence of employer-employee relationship on productivity of the Civil Service in Rivers State.
2. To determine the influence of employee-employee relationship on productivity of the Civil Service in Rivers State.
3. To determine the influence of management-employee relationship on productivity of the Civil Service in Rivers State.

Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant relationship between employer-employee relationship and productivity in Rivers State Civil Service.

H02: There is no significant relationship between employee-employee relationship and the productivity of workers in Rivers State Civil Service.

H03: There is no significant relationship between management-employee and the productivity of workers in Rivers State Civil Service.

II. Literature Review

The relationship among the employees plays an important role in deciding the fate of the organization. Employees must respect each other and come to each other's help whenever required and look forward towards achieving the organization's targets. If the employees do not enjoy a healthy relationship among themselves, problems are bound to arise and ultimately their productivity decreases. Employees are hence regarded as the most valuable element in an organization. They contribute immensely to the growth and development of any organization. Hagos and Zewdie (2018) suggest that the progress of any organization is hinged on the input made by the employees. Basically, employees are instrumental in the utilization of other resources such as technology, finance, information and other managerial tools in the achievement of organizational goals and objectives. Employees do not carry out these functions in a vacuum; they need to interact and synergize with others to get their jobs done, so there is a growing concern for managers in organizations to create a positive work environment. However, having a pleasant work relationship amongst employees makes it easier for employers to mobilize their energies with their employees to achieve results (Galer et al., 2015). According to Buckingham and Coffman (2017) a survey carried out on 2,500 organizational departments in 24 organizations has revealed that the existence of an effective employee relations is depended on the managers' leading and managerial practices.

Concept of Human Relations

Hicks and Byers (2018) posited human relations as 'the integration of people into work situation in a way that motivates them to work together, productively and cooperatively with economic,

psychological and social satisfaction'. Hence, paying attention to the human elements enhance greater performance and productivity. More so, human are social being, and the social environment of a business can be integral to its success or failure. Employees are often influenced by the context in which they work and this can have implications for productivity. Some effects of the social environment are easier to measure than others. Employers who take the necessary strides to create a positive and harmonious social environment in the workplace can set themselves up for future success (Lewis, 2019). Employee relations as described by BambooHR (n.d.) is an organization's concerted efforts to maintain a conducive working environment for a positive relationship with its employees. According to Chukwuyem, (2020) studies have shown that employees in an organization with a strong positive employee relations are more engaged, efficient in the performance of their duties, and less likely to leave the organization for another. In addition, an organization with healthy employee relations creates a bond that promotes trust, cooperation and esprit de corps between the employers and the employees.

Concept of Employees' Productivity

Workers' productivity can be defined as a person's ability to perform including the opportunity and willingness to perform as well. Willingness to perform means the desire of the workers in putting as much effort towards their job (Eysenck, 1998). However, Howell and Hall-Maranda (1999) has a different point of view regarding this workers' performance and productivity. Howell upholds that workers' performance is all about social standing. Further still, a reward system should be implemented based on the productivity of the workers. This is to motivate the workers in order to perform more on their task.

Bushiri (2014) stated that workers' productivity is dependent on the willingness and openness of the administration' itself in doing their job. He also stated that having this willingness and openness in doing their job, it could increase the workers' performance which also leads to increased productivity.

Employer-Employee Relationship

Employer-employee relationship is defined as the kind of relationship the employer himself exhibits towards his employees while controlling, directing or influencing their activities. According to Hannis, Osei, Shahryar and Aikhuele (2018), "employee relation is a study of the rules, regulations, and agreements by which employees are managed both as individuals and as a collective group, the priority is given to the individual as opposed to the collective relationship varying from company to company depending upon the values of management. As such it is concerned with how to gain people's commitment to the achievement of an organization's business goals and objectives in a number of different situations...". Appropriate employer-employee relationship practices in businesses are beneficial as they provide better solutions to conflicts, business processes and performance issues (Vickers-Willis, 2018). It enables better working conditions for efficiency, satisfaction, participation, retention, compliance, commitment, etc., thus avoiding any unnecessary employer-employee related issues. To establish strong relationships and achieve organizational growth, several studies have listed several drivers for business organizations. In his psychological contracts, Schein identified the existence of an implicit contractual relationship between employers and employees from a series of assumptions about the nature of their relationship.

Employee-Employee Relationship

Today, it's considered conventional wisdom that the employee-employee relationship in the workplace is a positive force that can help a small-business owner achieve goals. This outcome is predicated on productivity – and, specifically, that employees get such a charge out of working together that they

accomplish more. the employee-employee relationship is considered as a necessity in implementing TQM, because, through collective skills, experiences and judgement, teams that are flexible in response to challenges can reach superior outcomes than those attained by individuals (Ueno, 2015). Moreover, the employee-employee relationship is a way of achieving employee involvement in decision making within the organization as well as resulting in an increase in efficiency and a development of pride in good quality work; all of which contribute to productivity and quality improvement when they are appropriately organised and administered (Djellal, & Gallouj, 2018; Dobni, Ritchie, & Zerbe, 2015). However, it is thought that the investigation of the employee-employee relationship and how it affects productivity in a business organization is a topic that is under-researched.

According to Aremu (2016), a healthy employee relationship ensures a positive environment at work and also helps the employees to achieve their targets at a much faster rate. People are more focused, can concentrate better on their assignments and hence the output increases. Employees are not engaged in constant fights, are eager to help each other and do not take work as a burden. They enjoy every moment at work and do not take leaves often.

Management-Employee Relationship

According to Hersey and Blanchard (1977), as cited in Meier (2016), the management-employee relationship is the behaviour pattern that the management (through the roles of its managers) exhibits towards its employees while attempting to influence their activities. Employees can perceive this behavioural pattern. The management-employee relationship is of utmost importance in every institution or organisation because of its far-reaching effects on the accomplishment of objectives and organisational growth. It is believed that the effective functioning of social systems is largely dependent on the quality of management-employee relationships. As a result, management attitudes toward their employees have been consistently associated with employee output; as a result, individual managers' leadership styles are powerful predictors of organisational effectiveness.

III. Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on McGregor X and Y Theories. Various theories and models are used in planning to draught a strategy to improve the productivity of employees in organizations. It is also important for managers to recognise the nature, significance, and effectiveness of their relationships with their employees while planning their strategy to improve employee performance. Of such models, McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y are considered very relevant in explaining this correlation. As per the theory X model, a typical person dislikes work and avoids it if possible (The Economic Times, 2021; Sapru, 2013). The typical person lacks responsibility, has little ambition and seeks security above all. Most people must be coerced, controlled, and threatened with punishment to get them to work. With these assumptions, the managerial role is to coerce and control employees. As per the theory Y model, work is as natural as play or rest. People are not inherently lazy. They have become that way as a result of experience. People will exercise self-direction and self-control in the service of the objectives to which they are committed. The bottom line is that, under proper human relations conditions, employees learn to accept and seek responsibility. They have imagination, ingenuity, and creativity that can be applied to work. With these assumptions, the managerial role is to develop the potential of employees through effective human relations and help them release that potential toward common objectives as they relate perfectly with their employees (The Economic Times, 2021; Sapru, 2013).

IV. Research Methodology

The following are the methods under which the study was carried out:

Research Design

Research design connotes a blue print formulated to give a clear answer to a research question. Green (2008) regarded research designs as the specification of methods and procedures for acquiring the information needed. Chawla and Sodhi (2011) refer to research design as a plan structure and strategy of investigation so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions or problems. The nature of this study calls for an application of survey design that will help to identify and obtain information on the characteristics of a particular problem or issue. A survey design was used because it has the advantage of producing good responses from a wide range of people and, at the same time, providing a meaningful and accurate picture of events.

The Study's Population

The population of this study is all the staff in the Rivers State Civil Service, which is 46,188, according to the Ministry of Finance, where these data were obtained. Although this figure is erratic, as at the time of this study, it was 46,188 staff.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A simple random sampling technique was adopted for the study. Simple random sampling is also known as probability sampling. The questionnaires were administered to the workers personally after consent was granted by the permanent secretaries, respectively. The sample size for this study is 500 five hundred workers in five selected ministries: the Ministry of Finance, Information, Sports, Education, and Works in the Rivers State Civil Service.

Sources of data

The sources of data for this study are primary data (with structured questionnaires) and secondary data from journals, books, newspaper articles, and other publications.

Methods of Data Collection

Primary and secondary data were collected for the purpose of analysis through the use of questionnaires which were open-ended and self-administered to the respondents in five (5) selected ministries: Finance, Information, Sports, Education, and Works. Prior to the administering of the questionnaires, a letter seeking permission to do so was sent to the Permanent Secretaries of each of the ministries.

Methods of Data Analysis

Data from the answered questionnaires was organised and analysed using the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient in SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). The analytical tool adopted by the researcher in analysing the data collected for the study was descriptive statistics to test the three hypotheses that were put forward in the study.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1: To what extent does the employer-employee relationship correlate with workers' productivity in Rivers State Civil Service?

Table 1.0 Mean responses of workers on correlation between employer-employee relationship and productivity in Rivers State Civil Service.

	Items	Participants					
		Employer-Employee Relationship			Productivity		
		X	SD	Remark	X	SD	Remarks
1	Necessary for organizational growth	3.10	0.01	Accepted	3.17	0.02	Accepted
2	Increases synergy among workers	3.16	0.01	Accepted	3.20	0.01	Accepted
3	Employee job satisfaction is dependent on this	3.07	0.02	Accepted	3.10	0.02	Accepted
4	Promotes work efficiency	3.29	0.01	Accepted	3.23	0.01	Accepted
5	Influenced by organizational culture	3.18	0.03	Accepted	3.15	0.01	Accepted
	Grand Mean/Std dev.	3.16	0.03		3.17	0.04	

From the result in table 1.0 above, in response to research question 1 in items 1,2,3, 4&5 all the civil servants agreed that there is a correlation between work environment and productivity in Rivers State Civil Service. The mean responses showed that productivity and employer-employee relationship are correlated. The final grand mean also shows that the majority of the respondents generally accepted that employer-employee relationship and productivity are positively inclined towards organizational growth, synergy among workers, employee job satisfaction, work efficiency, and organizational culture.

Research Question 2: To what extent does employee-employee relationship correlate with workers' productivity in Rivers State Civil Service?

Table 4.0. Mean responses of workers on correlation between employee-employee relationship and workers' productivity in Rivers State Civil Service.

	Items	Participants					
		Employee-Employee relationship			Workers' Productivity		
		X	SD	Remark	X	SD	Remarks
1	Encourages job satisfaction	2.84	0.02	Accepted	2.90	0.01	Accepted
2	Increases synergy among co-employees	3.21	0.01	Accepted	3.19	0.01	Accepted
3	Promotes organizational efficiency	2.79	0.03	Accepted	2.86	0.02	Accepted
4	Promotes team work	3.09	0.01	Accepted	3.10	0.01	Accepted
5	Organizational growth is enhanced	3.11	0.05	Accepted	3.09	0.01	Accepted
	Grand Mean/Std dev.	3.00	0.05		3.03	0.04	

From the result in table 2 above, in response to research question 2 in items 1,2,3, 4, and 5, the majority of the civil servants agreed to a large extent that there is a correlation between employee-employee relationship and workers' productivity in Rivers State Civil State. The final grand mean also shows that both are positively inclined towards : job satisfaction, increase in synergy among employees, organizational efficiency, team-work, and organizational growth.

Research Question 3: To what extent does management-employee relationship correlate with workers' productivity in Rivers State Civil Service?

Table 4.0 Mean responses of workers' on correlation between management-employee relationship and workers' productivity in Rivers State Civil Service.

	Items	Participants					
		Management-Employee Relationship			Workers' Productivity		
		X	SD	Remark	X	SD	Remarks
1	Organizational efficiency is increased	3.45	0.02	Accepted	3.57	0.01	Accepted
2	Increases synergy among workers	3.16	0.01	Accepted	3.15	0.01	Accepted
3	Employee job satisfaction relies on this	3.08	0.01	Accepted	3.12	0.02	Accepted
4	Promotes organizational profitability	3.22	0.01	Accepted	3.18	0.01	Accepted
5	Organizational growth is enhanced	3.19	0.02	Accepted	3.16	0.01	Accepted
	Grand Mean/Std dev.	3.22	0.05		3.24	0.04	

From the result in table 3 above, in response to research question 3 in items 1,2,3, 4, and 5, the majority of the civil servants agreed to a large extent that there is a correlation between management-employee relationship and workers' productivity in Rivers State Civil State. The final grand mean also shows that both are positively inclined towards : organizational efficiency, synergy among workers, employee job satisfaction, organizational profitability and organizational growth.

HYPOTHESES TESTING USING Z-TEST

The previously stated hypotheses for the study are hereby tested below.

Test for Hypothesis 1

Table 7.1 PPMCC: Two Sample for Mean Scores in Hypothesis 1							
Variable	Mean Scores	Std.dev.	Obsrvn. N	Df	Pearson, r=	Z-r	Remark
Employer-Employee Relationship	3.16	0.01	356	354	0.911	3.86	Relationship is significant
Productivity	3.17	0.00	356				

From the result of the statistical analysis above (as indicated by the correlation coefficient, $r = +0.985$, the result shows that there is a very strong positive relationship between work environment and productivity of civil servants in Rivers State Civil State. Thus, it is logical to argue from the findings of the study that an improvement in the conditions of the work environment will in turn promote organizational productivity.

Test for Hypothesis 2

Table 7.2 PPMCC: Two Sample for Mean Scores in Hypothesis 2

Variable	Mean Scores	Std.dev.	Obsrvn. N	Df	Pearson, r=	Z-r	Remark
Employee- Employee Relationship	3.00	0.02	356	354	0.801	2.22	Relationship is significant
Productivity	3.03	0.01	356				

From the result of the statistical analysis above (as indicated by the correlation coefficient, $r = +0.801$, the result shows that there is a very strong positive relationship between organizational culture and productivity of civil servants in Rivers State Civil State. Thus, it is logical to argue from the findings of the study that a conducive organizational culture will in turn promote organizational productivity.

Testing of Hypothesis 3

Table 7.3 PPMCC: Two Sample for Mean Scores in Hypothesis 3

Variable	Mean Scores	Std.dev.	Obsrvn. N	Df	Pearson, r=	Z-r	Remark
Management- Employee Relationship	3.22	0.01	356	354	0.785	2.43	Relationship is significant
Productivity	3.24	0.01	356				

From the result of the statistical analysis above (as indicated by the correlation coefficient, $r = +0.785$, the result shows that there is a strong positive relationship between work environment and productivity of civil servants in Rivers State Civil State. Thus, it is logical to argue from the findings of the study that an improvement in the conditions of the work environment will in turn promote organizational productivity.

VI. Discussion of Findings

After reviewing this study, from responses to the research question 1, the result shows that employer-employee relationships are positively correlated. In other words, all the factors influencing the employer-employee relationship also positively influence workers' productivity, which is in agreement with the findings of Vickers-Willis (2018) that employer-employee relationship help to enhance efficiency, satisfaction, participation, retention, compliance, a commitment which are all positively correlated with workers' productivity. From the findings of the study, organizational growth, synergy among workers, employee job satisfaction, work efficiency, and organizational culture are all positively influenced by the employer-employee relationships and workers' productivity. Also, in collaboration with the findings of the study, the test statistics in the test for hypothesis 1, via Pearson Correlation (p) (0.911) revealed that there is a strong positive significant correlation between employer-employee relationship and workers' productivity.

In response to research question 2, it was revealed that the employee-employee relationships in the workplace impacts to a large extent on the productivity of the workers, as indicated by the majority of the respondents. the employee-employee relationship is associated with cordial relationships which are

necessary for the workforce of the organization. The Pearson Correlation (r) result was 0.801 which implies a high significant positive relationship between human relations and employee productivity. The finding is in agreement with that Ueno (2015) who asserts that the employee-employee relationship in the workplace is a positive force that can help business organizations achieve their organizational goals. This outcome is predicated on productivity – and, specifically, that employees get such a charge out of working together that they accomplish more. In other words, employees who are in a good human relationship with their co-workers tend to be more productive than those who are not. This is also in line with Olori and Dan-Jumbo (2017) investigation on the nexus between workplace discrimination and employee commitment in the Rivers State Civil Service, noting that when a negative employee-employee relationship set in, workers become disunited and productivity is reduced to the barest minimum. This is so true because respondents maintained they perform creditably when they are in a good relationship with their colleagues. The findings equally collaborate with that of Akers (2017) who found that developing effective human relation skills is crucial to establishing and maintaining productive business relationships and that human relations skills make working in groups and teams possible, thereby promoting team spirit.

Finally, in response to research question 3, the result shows that that management-employee relationship and workers' productivity are positively correlated. In other words, all the factors influencing the management-employee relationship also influence workers' productivity positively. To further collaborate these findings, Hersey and Blanchard (1977) as cited in Meier (2016) revealed that effective functioning of the social systems in an organization largely influences organizational productivity stating that managers' attitude towards their subordinates has been consistently associated with employee output; and hence, leadership styles of individual managers are powerful predictors of the organizational productivity. Also, based on the test statistics in the test for hypothesis 3, via Pearson Correlation (p) (0.785) revealed that there is a strong positive significant correlation between the management-employee relationship and workers' productivity.

VII. Conclusion and Recommendations

Clearly, the findings of this study have shown with statistical proof that the importance of human relations of employees with their employers, management and co-employees cannot be overemphasized as this plays a very significant role in determining the extent to which the firms can achieve their organizational productivity.

Based on the findings and conclusions thereof, the following recommendations were made:

1. The study recommends that government and organizations establish better policies that will promote good employer-employee relationships for better employee output.
2. To achieve productivity, employees must relate positively with one another. Hence, the management or the government must ensure that conflicts and fictions among employees are quickly resolved.
3. Management should improve their interpersonal interaction with their workers, having regular periodic meetings with workers to air their grievances handled at a node as to enhance industrial harmony, arresting possible unrest and discriminations due to poor human relations.
4. The government and management authorities should help create better human relations policies that ensure that workers' are socially, emotionally, and psychologically prepared to deliver their jobs satisfactorily.

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