Working environment, workers’ morale and perceived productivity in industrial organizations in Nigeria.

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship among working environment, workers’ morale and perceived productivity in industrial organizations in Nigeria. This was for the purpose of ascertaining the influence of working environment, workers’ morale and perceived productivity among industrial workers in Nigeria. The descriptive survey method was adopted for the study. A total of 311 respondents, from public and private organizations were selected for the study using stratified proportionate sampling technique. For data collection, the researcher utilizes three sets of questionnaire titled, Working Environment Scale (WES), Workers’ Morale Scale (WMS) and Workers’ Productivity Scale (WPS). The Regression analysis, Pearson Product Moment Correlation and t-test statistics were used for data analysis. The finding of the study revealed that a significant relationship exist among working environment, workers’ morale and perceived productivity. Also, it was found that working environment is significantly related to workers’ morale. Besides, working environment has significantly correlated with perceived workers’ productivity. Based on the findings of the study; it is recommended that the working environment which embraces organizational support programmes, training and development, substantive welfare package and conducive socio-political environment should be provided for workers. This will definitely facilitate improved workers’ morale and increased productivity at workplace.

Key words: Working environment, Workers, Morale, Productivity, Organization, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Working environment according to Akintayo (2006) refers to the immediate task and national environment where an organization drawn its inputs, processed it and returned the outputs inform of products or services for public consumption. The task and national environments include the supplier, customer, stakeholders, social-cultural, economic, technological, managerial and legal environment. The author submits that working environment of an organization tends to foster workers’ efficiency and effectiveness at workplace. Moreover, Clement (2000) and Stanley (2003) reported that workers’ perception of work itself and interpersonal relations at workplace tend to influence their morale. Similarly, in a cross –cultural study of teachers’ enthusiasm and discouragement included teachers from U.S. and six other nations: Teachers clearly identified students as primary and central factor that has an impact on both their professional enthusiasm and discouragement (Holland, 2000; Collins, 2003 and Williams, 2003). The authors submit that teachers were found to have universally treasured students’ responsiveness and enthusiasm as vital factor in their work morale and conversely perceived motivation in students as a source of discouragement.

Morale has been thought of variously as a feeling, a state of mind, a mental and emotional attitude (Mendel 1997). Washington and Watson (2000) submit that morale and satisfaction are interrelated. The authors defined morale as the feeling a worker has about his job based on how the worker perceives himself in the
organization; and the extent to which the organization viewed expectation, the end result of which lead to productivity on the part of the worker. Similarly, Bentley and Rampel (2003) conceptualize morale as the professional interest and enthusiasm that a person displays towards the achievement of organizational goals in a given job situation.

A report by Clovin (2001) on job satisfaction and morale among American teachers identified more administrative support and leadership, good intergroup relations, positive school atmosphere and teachers' autonomy, as working conditions associated with higher teacher satisfaction and morale. Odanye (2004) reported that favourable workplace environments were positively related to workers' job satisfaction regardless of workers' background characteristics or organizational demographics. Other scholars like Stenlund (1995), Adedeji (2002) and Olaoye (2003) submit that teachers in any school setting, who receive a great deal of parental and organizational support, are more satisfied than teachers who do not. The authors reported a strong relationship among teachers' working environment, job satisfaction, salary and benefits. Suzanne, Claudius and Patricia (2010) reported that interpersonal relationship, labour-management relations, motivation, workers' training and development account for thirty three percent of the total variance, which is a very high variance, in the determination of workers' morale and efficiency at workplace.

However, Linda (1998), Babajide (2001) and Ajala (2004) report that the leadership style and communication climate in organization has significantly influenced workers' morale. In essence, the level of workers' participation and involvement in making decisions that affect organizational interest tend to influence their morale. This implies that, knowledge and level of awareness of workers on issues and problems affecting organization where they have invested their talents and skills could also affect their morale, job satisfaction, and intention to stay or quit an organization. Kareem (2003) opines that productivity is often being sum up as the ratio of in-put and out-put and that organizational environment and job satisfaction tend to be related. In order words, a managers’ ability to create a positive organizational environment and culture can affect workers’ morale and their efficiency. Adams (1992) asserts that managers who control many of the contingencies in the work environment and are source of much reinforcement for working behaviour, are the keys to improving morale and satisfaction of the workers. Carrel and Gregory (2010) reported that organizational productivity is contingent on various factors which embrace personal (motivation, job satisfaction, good health and safety and productivity-oriented skills) and organizational climate (leadership styles, job security, compensation design and management, condition of service, nature of work and work load).

The literature reviewed in this study focused on the factors affecting the workers’ morale and satisfaction. Most of the studies reviewed in the study focused on influence of working environment on job satisfaction, workers’ efficiency and effectiveness at workplace in isolation. More so, most of the studies were conducted in developed countries of the world and are due for further verification since these studies were conducted almost a decade ago while few of such studies were conducted in Nigeria. However, the present study focused on investigation of relationship among working environment, workers’ morale and perceived productivity (taken together) at the same time. The dwindling nature of workers’ morale and productivity in most of industrial organizations in Nigeria necessitate further empirical verification on workers’ morale and productivity as affected by working environment.

Statement of the problem

This study investigated the relationship among working environment, workers’ morale and perceived productivity in industrial organizations in Nigeria. This was for the purpose of ascertaining the relevance of working environment and workers’ morale to productivity bargaining among industrial workers in Nigeria.

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were generated and examined for the purpose of the study:

There is no significant contribution of working environment, workers’ morale to perceived workers’ productivity.
• There is no significant relationship between working environment and workers’ morale.
• There is no significant relationship between working environment and perceived workers’ productivity.
• There is no significant difference between workers’ morale in public and private organizations based on working environment.
• There is no significant difference between workers’ productivity in public and private organizations based on working environment.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research method was adopted to investigate the relationship among working environment, workers’ morale and perceived productivity in industrial organizations in Nigeria. A total of 311 respondents were selected for the study using stratified proportionate random sampling technique. The respondents were selected from public and private organizations in South-Western Nigeria using stratified sampling technique. These organizations include Nigerian Breweries Plc.,

The proportionate random sampling technique was adopted to select respondents from industrial organizations on the basis of population. The age range of the respondents is between 20-65 with mean age of 21.43 and standard deviation of 11.13. The respondents consist of 187 (60.1%) males and 124 (39.1%) females. The 193 (62.1%) of the respondents have spent above ten years while 118 (37.9%) of them have spent below ten years with their organizations. The respondents who had spent above ten years on the job were ranked as experienced while those below ten years were ranked less experienced. Also, 232 (74.6%) of the respondents had attained University education while 79 (25.4%) of them had not. The respondents who had attained University education were rated as with high education while those who had not attained University education were rated as with low education.

The researcher utilizes three sets of questionnaire for data collection. The researcher adopted the questionnaire titled ‘Working Environment Scale (WES)’ which was developed by Akintayo (2002). The Workers’ Morale Scale (WMS) was developed by Clovin (2001) and Workers’ Productivity Scale (TCWPS) was developed by Jossey (2002).

**Working Environment Scale (WES) was utilized to collect data on working environment.** Section A of the questionnaire contains some demographic information, such as: Name of organization, status, age, sex, marital status, educational qualification, working experience, etc. Section B of the questionnaire contains 15 items relating to working environment, for instance, the following factors tend to enhance workers’ morale and productivity at workplace: socio-cultural environment, economic environment, political environment, legal environment, technological environment, supplier, customer, competitors, stakeholders, managerial environment, leadership behaviour, perception of work itself, autonomy on the job, organizational support system and interpersonal relations at workplace. The author reported 0.82 reliability co-efficient for the scale. Also, Workers’ Morale Scale (WMS) was utilized to collect information of workers’ morale. Section A of the questionnaire contains some demographic information, such as: Name of organization, status, age, sex, educational qualification, working experience. Section B of the questionnaire contains 15 items relating to working environment and workers’ morale at workplace. For instance, the following factors tend to enhance work morale: socio-cultural environment, economic environment, political environment, legal environment, technological environment, supplier, customer, competitors, stakeholders, managerial environment, leadership behaviour, perception of work itself, autonomy on the job, organizational support system and interpersonal relations at workplace. The author reported 0.78 reliability co-efficient for the scale. However, for the present study, 0.83 Cronbach alpha was obtained for the instrument.

**Workers’ Productivity Scale (WPS) was utilized to collect data on perceived workers’ productivity.** This scale contains section A and B. Section A of the questionnaire contains some demographic information such as: Name of organization, ownership of organization (public and private), age, sex, educational qualification, marital status, working experience, etc. Section B of the scale contains items relating to working environment and productivity of workers. For instance, in your organization, working environment has fostered: Increased productivity, increased level of efficiency on the job, increased profit margin of your organization, efficient service delivery, increased ratio of input to output ratio, etc. The author reported reliability co-efficient alpha of 0.86. For the present study, Cronbach alpha of 0.88 was obtained for the instrument.

The questionnaires were administered by the researcher and three trained research assistants. The researcher consulted the human resource managers of the selected organizations for support and assistance on the administration of the questionnaire. The personnel managers assisted in sustaining the interest and support of the respondents. All aspects of the questionnaire were explained to the respondents and the confidentiality of the information being supplied was guaranteed. However, out of 330 copies of the questionnaires being administered, the 311 duly completed copies were utilized for the study. It took the researcher complete two months to administer the questionnaires due to the geographical nature South-West Nigeria.

**Results**

The results of the data analyzed for the study were presented on the basis of the hypotheses generated for the study.

**Ho1:** There is no significant contribution of working environment and workers’ morale to perceived workers’ productivity

Table 1 reveals that there is a significant contribution of working environment and workers’ morale accounts for 23.2% of the total variance which is a very high variance in the determination of workers’ productivity (R Square = .232). This percentage is very high and statistically significant. This finding shows that working environment and workers’ morale have significantly influenced workers’ productivity in Nigeria.

**Ho2:** There is no significant relationship among working environment, workers’ morale and perceived workers
Table 1: Working Environment and Workers’ Morale as Predictor of Perceived Workers’ Productivity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Square</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>27.268</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>276.268</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Significant (P &lt; 0.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>59071.152</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>70.999</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>59347.420</td>
<td>310</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.357</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Summary of Correlation Table of Analysis on Working Environment, Workers’ Morale and Perceived Workers’ Productivity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working Environment</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>18.76</td>
<td>9.64</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>P &gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers’ Morale</td>
<td></td>
<td>18.62</td>
<td>9.36</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>P &gt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Workers’ Productivity</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>18.08</td>
<td>9.28</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>P &lt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results in table 2 show that there is a significant relationship among working environment and perceived workers’ productivity (r = 0.30; P < 0.05). The finding implies that working environment such as; economic, political, social, technological and legal environments have really enhanced workers’ productivity at workplace as perceived by the respondents. Thus, hypothesis one was not confirmed.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between working environment and workers’ morale

Results in table 2 show that working environment has significantly influenced workers’ morale (r = 0.36; P < 0.05). The finding implies that working environment has really boosted the morale of workers at workplace as perceived by the respondents. Thus, hypothesis two was not confirmed.

Ho4: There is no significant difference between workers’ morale in public and private organizations based on working environment.

Results in table 3 show that there was a significant difference between perceived workers’ productivity in public and private organizations as moderated by working environment. This finding implies that workers’ in private organization were perceived to be more productive than workers in public organizations as a result of variation in their working environment, t (311) = 8.23; P<0.05). The finding indicates that productivity of workers in private organizations were perceived to be very high while that of workers in public organizations were perceived to be low as moderated by working environment. Therefore, hypothesis five was not confirmed.

Ho5: There is no significant difference between workers’ productivity in public and private organizations based on working environment. Results in table 3 show that there was a significant difference between perceived workers’ productivity in public and private organizations as moderated by working environment. This finding implies that workers’ in private organization were perceived to be more productive than workers in public organizations as a result of variation in their working environment, t (311) = 8.23; P<0.05). The finding indicates that productivity of workers in private organizations were perceived to be very high while that of workers in public organizations were perceived to be low as moderated by working environment. Therefore, hypothesis five was not confirmed.

Discussion of findings

This study investigated the relationship between working environment, workers’ morale and perceived workers’ productivity in industrial organizations in Nigeria. The first hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between working environment, workers’ morale and perceived workers’ productivity. The finding of the study revealed that working environment and workers’ morale had significantly influenced perceived productivity in industrial organizations in Nigeria. The finding implies that the working environment such as; political, economic, social, legal and technological are significant factors through which workers’ productivity could be enhanced in terms of achievement of organizational goals. The finding
corroborates Akintayo (2002); Holland (2000), Collins (2003), Williams (2003) and Allport (2002) who reported that conducive work environment attenuated with good condition of service, opportunity for training and development, provision of adequate retirement benefits and interpersonal relations had significantly influenced workers’ productivity.

Hypothesis two predicted that there is no significant relationship between working environment and perceived workers’ productivity. The finding revealed that working environment has significantly influenced perceived workers’ increased productivity. The finding corroborates Godfrey (2003), Akintayo (2002), Kelly (2004) and Jossey (2002) who reported that technological innovation and economic environments are significantly related to social organization of the firm and have profound positive effects on organizational productivity, effectiveness and employee relations. The finding implies that technological, social and economic environments are correlated and that, even the computer integrated manufacturing system are both computer and human integrated and could positively influence effective utilization of skills for improved workers’ productivity in industrial organizations in Nigeria. Moreover, the finding showed that working environment that involves technological innovation has influenced retrenchment, downsizing and labour turnover in private organizations than in public organizations. The finding corroborates Okedara (1999) and Omole (2003) who reported higher rate of job insecurity in terms of downsizing and turnover in private organizations than in public organizations as a result of technological environment.

The third hypothesis predicted that there is no significant relationship between working environment and workers’ morale. Finding revealed that working environment has significantly influenced workers’ morale. The finding implies that working environment has really boosted the morale of workers at workplace as perceived by the respondents. This implies that since working environment requires new skill and methods of operation, the possessor of obsolete skills among the workers tend to be jittery and be suspicions and virtually being relief of employment. The finding corroborates Babajide (2001), Clement (2000) and Bently and Rampel (2003) who submitted that changes in working environment which include technological, political, economic, socio-cultural and legal, were found to have had a deleterious effects on workers’ morale with relative effects on effectiveness and efficiency of the workforce and with corresponding effects on workers’ productivity.

The fourth hypothesis predicted that there is no significant difference between workers’ morale in public and private organizations based on working environment. The finding revealed that working environment has really boosted the morale of workers in private organizations than in public organizations in Nigeria as perceived by the respondents. The finding implies that working environment in private organizations was more conducive to performance effectiveness than in public organizations. The finding corroborates Clovin (2001) and Kelly (2004) who reported that morale as a psychological construct tends to differ from organization to organizations depending on the provision of organizational support systems that are capable of galvanizing potentials of workforce towards increased productivity at workplace.

Hypothesis five predicted that there is no significant difference between workers’ productivity in public and private organizations. The finding revealed that workers’ in private organization were perceived to be more productive than workers in public organizations as a result of variation in their working environment. The finding indicates that productivity of workers in private organizations were perceived to be very high while that of workers in public organizations were perceived to be low as moderated by working environment. The finding revealed that working environment has significantly influenced increased productivity in private organizations than in public organizations as perceived by the respondents. The finding supports the submission of Mendel (1997); Williams (2003), and Linda (1998) who posited that provision of conducive working environment such as; introduction of automated machine, computer integrated manufacturing system, good condition of service, good physical facilities, appropriate workers’ incentives and other information technologies had greatly induced effectiveness and efficiency on the part of the workers in private organizations and virtually fostered increased productivity other than in public organizations.

### Table 3. Summary of t-test Table of Analysis on Differences in Workers’ Morale and Perceived Workers’ Productivity in Public and Private Organizations Based on Working Environment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workers’ Morale</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>23.45</td>
<td>10.03</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>6.73</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>21.64</td>
<td>9.47</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(P&gt;0.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers’ Perceived</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>22.48</td>
<td>11.56</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>8.23</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productivity</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>21.35</td>
<td>10.73</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>P&lt;0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the same vein, Akintayo (2006) submits that technological innovation, as a result of its substitute to human energy, especially computer system and information technology, such as: wireless and cabled telephone including inter communication system has facilitated higher productivity through efficient service delivery and maximum production of goods and services in work organizations in Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The finding of the study established that conducive working environment and workers’ morale have significantly contributed to perceived workers’ productivity in industrial organizations in South-West Nigeria. In essence, working environment tends to influence the morale of the workers vis-a-vis their productivity at varying degrees depending on the types of organization. The implication of the findings is that for promotion of workers improved morale and their productivity at workplace, there is a need for conducive working environment which involves effective organizational support programmes, job incentives, training and development programmes, flow of information across board for sustainable goal achievement.

Also, for effectiveness and efficiency on the job, appropriate strategies for promoting the workers’ morale and productivity need be entrenched in the cardinal goals of the organization. The management style of the managers needs to foster workers’ participation in decision making process in order to boost their morale, efficiency and productivity in any work organization.

Based on the findings of the study; the following recommendations are made: The working environment which tends to attenuate the organizational support programmes, provision of adequate pension payment, substantial welfare package and provision of adequate pension schemes for workers should be provided. This will definitely facilitate improved workers’ morale and productivity in work organizations. The physical social infrastructures and political climate of the organizations should be friction free. In essence, democratic style of management that could be people-oriented and production-oriented should be adopted by the managers in managing organizational resources. This will afford the workers opportunity to participate actively in decision making process and virtually sustain their interest, morale and productivity at workplace.

Training and development programmes that could build the capacity of the workers in terms of updating their skills and knowledge of the jobs towards adjustment to changes in working environment should be introduced on regular basis in order to boost their morale and virtually fostered improved productivity among the workforce.

References


