

The Environment and Its Impact on Employees' Productivity: A Study of the Rivers State Office of The National Identity Management Commission

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Abstract

This paper interrogated the nexus between the workplace environment and employees' productivity with focus on the Rivers State office of the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC). The literature on human resource management seems to have glossed over the influence of working environment on employees' productivity in an organization particularly, the National Identity Management Commission. Data for the study were drawn from both primary and secondary sources. Descriptive survey and reinforcement theory were employed by the authors to analyze the variables in the study. Findings of the study revealed that the internal working environment negatively influenced employees and this gave rise to negative behavioural dispositions such as absenteeism, lateness to duty, playing truancy at work etc. The authors recommended that certain provisions of the organization's internal policy particularly, areas that deal with remuneration of employees should be implemented, training and development of employees be given serious attention, adequate and functional office equipment should be provided from time to time to stimulate the commitment of employees towards increased productivity and an effective recognition and compensation plan should be put in place to address the needs of members of staff amongst others.

Keywords: *internal policy, working environment, productivity etc.*

Introduction

One of the basic objectives of any institution or organization is customer satisfaction, and this can better be achieved if there is high productivity, continuous and sustained growth in such institution or organization. The role of the work environment as a determinant in this pursuit cannot be overemphasized. Mike and Shikdar (cited in Bishiri, 2014) captured it when they said the workplace denote an environment in which the employee performs his/her responsibilities, but that an effective workplace refers to an environment where results can be actualized as expected by management of the organization.

Studies have shown that set goals and objectives of any organization can better be actualized if the workplace (environment) is conducive and staffs are well motivated. The work environment encompasses myriads of factors which influence the way employees perform their duties in the organization (Chandrasekar, 2011). This implies that the work environment affects employees either positively or negatively. It is in this view, Opperman (2002), argued that work environment entails the processes, systems, tools or conditions in the workplace that impact favourably or unfavourably individual productivity. He further opined that the concept of work environment includes the physical, psychological and social aspects that make up the working conditions of employees in an organization. It suffices to note that all

aspects of work environment are correspondingly significant when considering job satisfaction and the welfare of employees.

The need for national identification and easy coordination of the activities of the citizenry resulted in the establishment of the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) in 2007, through an act of the National Assembly with offices in all the states of the federation and the federal capital territory (FCT). The establishment of NIMC raised concerns among scholars and public analysts about how effectively and efficiently the commission can carry out its assigned responsibilities because conducive work environment has been an issue in Nigeria's public sector, and over the past few years, empirical studies have been undertaken by scholars interrogating the influence of work environment on employees' productivity in an organization or commission. For instance, Chandrasekar, 2011; Duru and Shimawua, 2017; Opperman, 2002; Smith, 2013; Tahir and Awan, 2015; Mali, 2008; Brenner, 2004; Ajala, 2012; etc in their separate studies significantly established the impact of work environment on employees' productivity. Flowing from the above, this study examined the productivity level of the Rivers state office of the NIMC and its nexus with the work environment.

Statement of Research Problem

The NIMC came into existence following the enactment of Act No. 23

of 2007. The Act provided for the establishment of NIMC, with specific functions that include the creation of the National Identity Database, registration of eligible citizens and legal residents (with the aim of issuing them the unique National Identification Number), as well as the General Multi-purpose Smart Cards, integration and harmonization of existing databases in Government Ministries, Department and Agencies (MDAs), and management of the National Identity Database etc (NIMC handbook, 2012).

While the establishment of NIMC is a very commendable initiative, empirical studies reveal that the commission have not lived up to expectation. Following the directive of the Federal Government on NIN-SIM linkage, Nigerians were made to visit the various NIMC offices across the country. This study was necessitated by the difficulties one of the researchers went through to get registered. The employees of NIMC like in some other parastatals demonstrated poor attitude to work and some staff performed their duties grudgingly.

The NIMC has different categories of staff that include; Coordinators, supervisors, enrollment officers, system support personnel, drivers etc. oftentimes and very recently, instances of absenteeism, increasing penchant of lateness to duties, poor working relationship between staff or between staff and customers have been reported in the

media hence, this study attempts to interrogate the causative factor with focus on the work environment in the NIMC.

Research Objective

The paper interrogates the impact of the work environment on employees' productivity in the NIMC's Rivers state office. It aims at investigating whether the nature of work environment has led to low employees' productivity, absenteeism, increasing penchant of lateness to duties etc. among employees. The paper also proffered useful suggestions that will enhance the performance of the workers.

Significance of the Study

The dominant literature established a correlation between motivation and employees' productivity in public sector organizations however, not much has been done on the impact of work environment on employees' productivity in the NIMC especially, in the Rivers state office. Therefore, the significance of this paper lies in the fact that it clearly demonstrated the influence of the internal work environment of public sector organizations on her employees' of the NIMC with reference to the Rivers state office which has not been adequately addressed in the literature of human resource management. The knowledge so acquired will help the NIMC and other public organizations in doing away with aspects of her internal environment that are not

friendly to her employees in order to elicit their full commitment towards the actualization of the organizational goals and objectives.

Scope of the Study

This paper interrogates the nexus between the working environment and employees' productivity in the NIMC. However, in doing this, the discussion is limited to the internal working environment of the Rivers state office of the organization. Specifically, the paper examines the influence of the organization's internal working policy on her employees' productivity.

Research Proposition

This paper is guided by the following proposition:

There is significant influence of the internal working environment of NIMC on her employees' productivity.

Literature Review

This section of the paper attempts to analyze the various literature related to working environment which has influence on employees' productivity. Also, the paper identified some gaps by other scholarly works relating to the subject matter which it aims to bridge with a view to contributing to existing knowledge in the field.

The work environment encompasses myriads of factors which impact either positively or negatively on the way employees perform their statutory responsibilities in an organization. Kohun (cited in Bishiri,

2014: 8) defines working environment as the totality of forces, actions and other influential factors that are currently and, or potentially contending with the employee's activities and performance. Working environment is the sum of the inter-relationship that exists within the employees and the environment in which the employees work.

Brenner (2004) was of the opinion that "the ability to share knowledge throughout organizations depends on how the work environment is designed to enable organizations to utilize work environment as if it were an asset. This helps organizations to improve effectiveness and allow employees to benefit from collective knowledge". In addition, he argued that working environment designed to suit employee's satisfaction and free flow of exchange of ideas is a better medium of motivating employees towards higher productivity.

Opperman (2002) defines working environment as an aggregation of three major sub-environments: the technical environment, the human environment and the organizational environment. Technical environment refers to tools, equipment, technological infrastructure and other physical or technical elements. The technical environment creates elements that enable employees perform their respective responsibilities and activities. The human environment refers to peers, others with whom employees relates, team and work

groups, interactional issues, the leadership and management. This environment is designed in such a way that it encourages informal interaction in the work place so that the opportunity to share knowledge and exchange ideas could be enhanced. This is a basis to attain maximum employees' productivity. Organizational environment on the other hand was noted to include systems, procedures, practices, values and philosophies. The author further argued that management has control over the organizational environment. Adequate and effective control over issues of the organizational environment largely influence employees' productivity in such situation.

An internal working environment that does not provide suitability for her employees to grow may engender negative tendencies by them such as absenteeism and lateness to duty etc. However, Boles, Pelletier, Lynch (2004) have argued that absenteeism can be reduced by comfortable working environments and can increase staff productivity. There is a link between the state of the workplace in any organization and the morale of employees. This can affect performance either positively or negatively (Chandrasekar, 2011). The author argues that the work environment is critical to staff performance and productivity. She anchored her argument on the Two Factor Theory of Herzberg. Herzberg (1986) drew his conclusion from the

fact that, aspects of the work environment that satisfy employees are different from aspects that dissatisfy them. Herzberg therefore categorized the factors into two groups; and called one; satisfiers and the second group dissatisfiers. The theory opines that work environment should be improved for enhanced employees' performance and high productivity in the organization. There will be general contentment when there is a feeling that the performance of assigned roles and duties are performed within conducive environments.

Chandrasekar (2011) avers that the type of work environment plays a crucial role in determining whether staff will meet targets. The author proceeds to note that the said environment includes physical and psychosocial components. Physical and tangible components include office layout, design and conduciveness. The psychosocial components on the other hand include social support, role assignment and working conditions. All of these can be influenced and affected by internal organization policies which in turn determines the working conditions. As such, employee performance and increase in staff productivity can be affected by working conditions.

In their study, Shikdar and Shawaqed (2003) averred that when people are working in an environment that suits their physical and mental abilities, the right fit between the person and work task is easily accomplished than the other way

around. Other empirical studies include Naharuddin and Sadegi (2013) who carried out a study on the factors of work environment that impact on the employees' performance in Malaysia. The authors found that supervisor support as a single variable is not significant enough in improving employees' performance. They also noted that job aid and physical work environment on the other hand had a significant impact towards employees' performance. Amusa, Iyoro & Olabisi (2013), conducted a study on work environment and job performance of librarians in public universities in the South-West Nigeria. The study revealed that there is a strong relationship between work environment and job performance in libraries.

Ajala (2012) in his study also demonstrated the essentiality of the work environment to staff productivity and output. The author notes that the evaluation of the self as a focal area is best done in the workplace. In this light, the workplace has the potential to affect morale either in a positive way or in a negative way. This impact on morale can have consequences on productivity and organizational output. Iyoro (2005) on his part maintained that maximum willingness of employees to perform duties and increased productivity is shaped by motivation.

While the studies reviewed above have succeeded in establishing the relationship between work environment and employees'

productivity in an organization, they however neglected how the internal working environment (such as the NIMC internal policy) and other administrative procedures and non-availability of office equipment have significantly influenced employees' productivity in the Bayelsa State office of the NIMC. This study is an attempt at bridging that existing literature gap.

Employee Productivity

The productivity of an organization's employees has been predicated on two factors: the capacity of the staff in question and how well they have been motivated in performing assigned tasks (Oloke, Babalola & Ojelabi, 2017). Mathis and John argued that productivity is the cumulative of quality and quantity of work done juxtaposed with the cost and quantity of resources used (cited in Kamau, 2011). It is underscored by efficient and effective coordination and use of necessary resources like labour, capital, time, technology, etc. in the pursuit and actualization of the set goals and objectives of the organization (Abah & Nwokwu, 2016).

Within the context of this study, productivity is seen as the outcome of how resources are combined effectively in achieving pre-set goals. Put differently, it is how the cost of and resources available are used to determine the quantity and quality of work done. Furthermore, it is the coordinated deployment of available resources both human and material to

achieve pre-determined set goals and objects.

It also implies the number of people identity documentation carried out by enrollment officers, reduced number of machine breakdown recorded due to regular servicing carried out by system support staff, and improved quality of work supervision in the Enrollment Registration Centers (ERCs) by the Supervisors etc. Once this is obtained in the NIMC, productivity is said to have been attained.

Theoretical Framework

This paper adopted the Reinforcement theory postulated by B.F Skinner in 1957.

Skinner (1957) opined that every behaviour is a function of its consequences. The theory proposes that a new behaviour is a function of the consequences of an earlier behaviour. Rewards and punishment are seen as central to influencing behaviour. In this light, all behaviour is determined to some extent by the rewards or punishments obtained from previous behaviour, which has the effect of reinforcing current actions. To predict and control behaviour, person's history and current environment is to be studied. Behaviour is a function of environmental contingencies of reinforcement, establishing operations such as deprivation or satiation (Skinner, 1957). There are basically three cardinal principles of the reinforcement theory viz: stimuli,

response and outcome. The understanding of these tenets will guide managers of the NIMC on the most appropriate tenet and strategic application of the theory for desired employee's productivity in the organization.

Stimuli implies the work environment and how this impacts employees' behavioural disposition in the NIMC. Response refers to how employees respond to the work environment, especially the psychosocial environment as a result of NIMC staff interaction with the work environment as the stimuli. Finally, there is the outcome which defines the corresponding relationship between the stimuli and the response in the NIMC.

According to Denisi and Griffin (2011) the theory suggests a response an employee gives is a function of expectation. Noting that the employees are the most important tools of the organization, manager can through good management strategy earn the loyalty of his workforce, the employees will definitely see themselves as stakeholders in the organization and will be most likely to protect their interest by way of doing away with negative tendencies which in the long run will increase their productivity.

In application, managers at the NIMC must identify certain areas in her internal policy that are incongruous with positive stimuli with a view to eliciting the full commitment of employees towards the realization

of the organizational goals and objectives. Furthermore, the requisite office equipment that will facilitate the discharge of the official responsibilities of the employees should be provided for to enable them perform creditably well.

Research Methodology

The research design applied for this paper is descriptive survey and it was

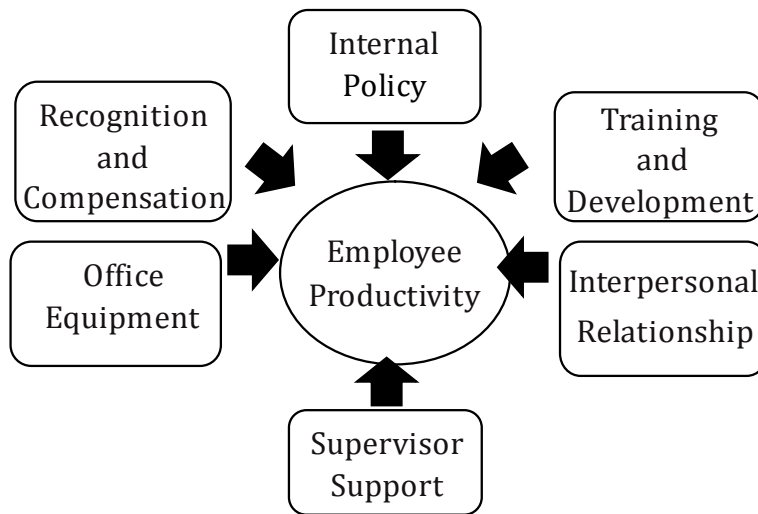
combination of field survey and personal observation. Both primary and secondary was used to conduct the research. The primary data consisted of questionnaire and personal observation and focus group discussions (FGDs). This was complimented by secondary data sourced from journals, articles, magazines, bulletins and other scholarly works.

Conceptual Model

The conceptual model of this paper is presented in the figure below:

Figure 1:

Factors Constituting Working Environment And Their Impact On Employees' Productivity In The NIMC



Source: Tahir and Awan, (2015).

Internal Policy: This defines a set of rules and procedures governing the conduct of employees in an organization. It specifies the

relationship between the employer and the employees in the NIMC.

Training and Development: This means a planned and systematic

modification of behaviour through learning which involves the participants achieving new skills and competencies to discharge their duties in the organization.

Interpersonal Relationship with Co-workers: This means a good enduring relationship with co-workers at the same hierarchy in the organization.

Good Working and Office Equipment: This involves the supply of working equipment which aid the discharge of official responsibilities by the employees. Within the context of NIMC, it consists of functional systems, internet facilities, generating system and other hard wares required by enrolment operators for the smooth registration of eligible Nigerians and other legal residents.

Effective Recognition and Incentive Plan: This involves a deliberate and planned system of rewarding hard work in the organization. The aim is to encourage hard work with a view to stimulating employees towards the realization of organizational goals and objectives.

Supervisor Support: This refers to the role played by supervisors in ensuring that employees under them are given the requisite support in discharging their duties.

Suffice to say here that within the context of NIMC, productivity is measured by the total number of identity documentation of citizens and legal residents carried out by each

enrollment operator. This is supported by effective supervision of machines and equipment by system support personnel and supervisor(s). The logic is that, effective supervision by supervisors and system support personnel reduces incidence of systemic breakdown which in the long run, leads to increased productivity by the operators or officers.

Instruments of Data Collection: The primary data were sourced via the use of questionnaire and FGD with staff of the Rivers state field office of the NIMC. The questionnaire was categorized into two sections namely- A and B. Section A involves bio data of the respondents, while section B dwelled on the research question. The responses were rated in the scale as follows: Agree (A), Strongly Agree (SA), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD) and Neutral (N).

Sample Procedure and Sample Population: The number of staff for Rivers State office is 140. Thus, the total population of this research is 140.

Data Analysis: Out of the 140 respondents, 100 were men while 40 were women that participated in the study. Their percentage was 95% and 5% respectively. For their level of education, 70 respondents had bachelors, 31 respondents had HND, while 39 respondents had master degree and above. The respondents belong to different age grades. The data collated were tabulated and analyzed in percentage.

Table 1: Gender Distribution

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	100	95%
Female	40	5%
Total	140	100%

Table 2: level of Education

Level of education	Frequency	Percentage
HND	31	22.1%
B.SC	70	50%
MSC & above	39	27.9%
Total	140	100%

Table 3: Age Group

Age	Frequency	Percentage
25-30	5	4.3
31-40	66	56.8
41-50	32	27.5
51-60	12	10.3
61 – 65	11	0.8
Total	140	100%

Table 4:

Q1: Organizational internal policy stimulate staff towards improved productivity.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	1	0.71%
Strongly Agree	80	57.14%
Disagree	30	21.4%
Strongly Disagree	19	13.6%
Neutral	10	7.1%
Total	140	100%

Source: field work 2022

Good training and development plan help staff to perform creditably well?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	50	35.7%
Strong agree	70	50%
Disagree	15	10.7%
Strongly Disagree	5	3.6%
Neutral	Nil	0%
Total	140	100%

The provision of good working and office equipment help to increase staff level of productivity

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	50	35.7%
Strongly Agree	90	64.2%
Disagree	NIL	0%
Strongly Disagree	NIL	0%
Neutral	NIL	0%
Total	140	100%

Effective recognition and compensation plan help to increase staff level of productivity?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	60	42.9%
Strongly Agree	80	57.1%
Disagree	NIL	0%
Strongly Disagree	NIL	0%
Neutral	NIL	0%
Total	140	100%

Staff productivity level is increased with the help of supervisor's support?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	60	42.9%
Strongly Agree	80	57.1%
Disagree	NIL	0%
Strongly Disagree	NIL	0%
Neutral	NIL	0%
Total	140	100%

Findings of the Study

Our findings revealed that a good internal policy is instrumental to increased employees' productivity in an organization. However, in NIMC particularly in the Rivers state office, it was observed that the internal policy was not favourable to the employees. Consequently, employees have demonstrated negative behaviourable tendencies (such as absenteeism,

increasing penchant of lateness to duty etc) toward their official responsibility. This was corroborated by the claims of Boles, Pelletier and Lynch (2004), who argued that a supportive working environment by way of her internal policy can reduce negative behavioural tendencies by employees with a view to increasing employees' productivity in the organization.

Training and development is instrumental to developing a working environment that will improve her employees' productivity. This was supported by the results of Ollukkaran and Gunaseelan (2012), who demonstrated that training and development is a prerequisite for increased employees' productivity in an organization. Good interpersonal relationship is a sine qua non for helping to stimulate a good working environment that can lead to increased employees' productivity. This was also demonstrated by Ollukkaran and Gunaseelan (2012), who averred that a smooth interpersonal relation with co-workers can help to increase employees' productivity in an organization. Provision of functional and adequate office equipment can engender a good working environment that can help to increase employees' productivity in an organization. However, findings revealed that in the Rivers state office of the NIMC, this was not the case as employees were left to their fate in the provision of office equipment. This was supported by a study conducted by Mills and Ford (2008), who argued that the provision of good office equipment stimulates increased employees' productivity in an organization.

Again, good recognition and compensation plan helps to enthrone a conducive internal working environment, which drives the action of employees toward increased organizational productivity. The findings were supported by Condly

et.al (2003), who opined that good recognition and compensation systems helps to increase employees' productivity in an organization. Also, a supervisor's support is a necessary condition for stimulating the behaviour of employees toward increased productivity. A supervisor support is helpful in creating a good internal working environment that can help the employees put in their best enthusiastically towards achieving increased productivity in an organization. This was demonstrated by Lelebici (2012), who asserted that supervisor support is necessary for stimulating the behaviour of employees toward increased productivity. Finally, a good internal working environment is helpful in driving the actions of employees toward the realization of increased productivity. This was corroborated by Ajala (2012), who proposed that a conducive working environment is a prerequisite for increased employees' productivity.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Good working environment is a necessary condition for employees of any organization to put in their best willingly and enthusiastically towards achieving increased productivity. The aforementioned factors such as good internal policy, training and development, recognition and compensation plan, adequate office equipment and supervisor support amongst others should be put in place to elicit the full commitment of

employees for enhanced productivity. For the NIMC to make any meaningful progress towards the realization of her pre-set goals and objectives, managers at various levels should ensure the above factors are in place. This will spur her employees in putting in their best at the workplace.

The following recommendations will also be very beneficial to the NIMC:

- i. The internal policy of the NIMC should be improved upon from time to time to ensure that employees are given a sense of belonging in the organization. Once there is a sense of belonging, the employees will be spurred towards offering their best for the organization. Again, certain provisions of the document especially, areas that deal with the remuneration of employees should be implemented to elicit their full commitment for the purpose of achieving increased productivity.
- ii. Training and development of employees should be given priority by the board of the NIMC. This will keep members of staff abreast with development as it concerns their job role. Training and development will equip employees with new skills to enable them respond to challenges and emerging trends in their organization.
- iii. Adequate and functional office equipment should be provided from time to time by the

management of NIMC for enhanced employees' productivity. Due to the sensitive nature of their job, employees of the NIMC should be equipped with adequate and functional office equipment and other gadgets required for the job. A veritable way of achieving this; is to ensure that adequate budgetary provisions are made in the annual budget of the organization. Periodic check should be conducted to ascertain the functionality of the available equipment with a view to replacing mal-functional ones.

- iv. An effective mechanism be put in place to cater for the recognition and compensation needs of the employees. This will create an environment that will motivate the employees towards achieving enhanced productivity.

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