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RESEARCH ARTICLE

DISCIPLINE AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Background: The study focused on discipline and organizational performance in Nigeria. The study was carried out because of the high level of indiscipline amongst some workers which always affects the level of organizational performance. Ethical theory was employed to analyze the subject matter. **Methods:** The study used only secondary sources of data through literature review approach. The data collected from literature sources were discussed qualitatively. **Results:** The study discovered that the effect of discipline on organizational performance include industrial peace and harmony, organizational high productivity, increased revenue, employee career development and environmental friendliness. Also, economic, socio-cultural, political and managerial factors are basically responsible for workers indiscipline in Nigeria organizations. **Conclusion:** The study concludes that the achievement of organizational high performance among other factors is dependent on the level of employee commitment and dedication to duty in the system which is controlled by the level of employee discipline in the system. The study therefore recommends that Nigeria organizations should develop ethical code of conduct and follow it in their management process so as to maintain discipline; there should be constant training and retraining of organizational staff so as to make them adhere to disciplinary behaviour and organizational employees should always be motivated so as they will not have excuse to exhibit an act of indiscipline as that will have positive effects on organizational performance and growth.

INTRODUCTION

Empirical studies have revealed that individuals enter the workplace with their own unique abilities, attitudes, values and perceptions, and this in itself can be a source of conflict/value in any organization. This is because the organization has an expected behavioural attitude it wants the employees to follow or adhere to (Knight and Ukpere, 2014). But, as a result of conflicting interests, and acquisitive nature of some people, the behavioural attitudes of such people is deviant from the ethos, rules and regulation of the organization; hence the issue of indiscipline in an organization. According to Idris and Alegbeleye (2015), needless to say, a fair degree of predictable behavior is needed from individual(s) for the achievement of organizational goals and objectives. One of the means in ensuring decorum, progress and effectiveness in organization is discipline. Where there are no proper disciplinary procedures for erring employees, there will be a dislocation of effective organizational functionality. Since an organization is not set up in a vacuum but made up of people who have aspiration, and ambitions which they would also want to achieve while in the organization. If such individual objectives of workers and organizational goals must be achieved, there must be discipline among the employees. Such will enable them to adhere to organizational policies, stipulations and goals.

Organizational workers need to maintain high level of discipline so as to achieve the set objectives in the organization. The performance of every organization is therefore, dependent on people. For that, the workers have to observe high level of discipline so as to improve the performance in the system. The failure of the organization to achieve its goals and objectives is largely dependent upon the ways of maintaining discipline in the organization. Anyaoha (2010) defined discipline as the positive approach to the creation of an attitude and organizational climate, where the employees conform to the set of rules and regulation of the organization". This is achieved by applying reward and penalties. Here, rewards should be given to the employee with outstanding disciplinary performance. By this method, organizations do not lay emphasis only on misconduct of employee. High level of discipline by all stakeholders in the organization will lead to improve organizational performance. Organizational performance here is the level of organizational growth, stability, profitability, and productivity. The level of employee input (discipline or indiscipline) in the organization determines the level of organizational performance. Low commitment of the employees will lead to low performance/productivity of the organization, while high commitment of the employee - indiscipline - will lead to high performance of the organization.

DISCIPLINE

Discipline as a social science concept has not generally accepted definition. Scholars have defined it in line with their environment and school of thought. Knight and Ukpere (2014), defines discipline as a pattern of behavior which can be traced back from a particular training. This behaviour is portrayed by a person in order to demonstrate his personal traits. Dumisan (2002) define discipline as a system of rules and mechanism for ensuring that disciplinary codes are followed. This implies that every organization has its rules and regulation “dos and don’ts”. Observance of these sets of rules in itself is discipline. But in the view of Ajumogobia (2007) discipline in the work place does not mean strict and technical observance of rules and regulations for the survival of the organizational system. Rather, it implies a situation where workers are expected to cooperate and behave in a normal and orderly way, as any reasonable person would expect an employee to do.

This has become imperative since the goal of every organization or establishment is to enhance workers’ satisfaction that would lead to higher productivity and profitability. Torrington and Chapman (1979) observed that in regard to organizational behavior discipline implies keeping order and control among a group of workers by using methods that build morale, esprit de corps and obedience which is one of the most basic demands in organizational structures. If these standards of behavior are to be effective, members of the organization have to accept and adhere to them, so as to enhance organizational growth. In all, an employee is disciplined when he adheres to the ethical standards, values, norm and obedient in his organization, and does the things that will enhance the progress, growth and high performance of the organization.

INDISCIPLINE

The concept of indiscipline has also been explained by many social science scholars. According to Osezua, Abah and Gbervbie (2009), indiscipline, refers to conditions of disorderliness in which members of an organization conduct themselves without respect to the rules and regulations and subordinating their needs and desires to the overall needs of the organization. According to Ochai (1984), staff indiscipline is manifested in many ways, such as habitual lateness to work, truancy, and lack of commitment to work: loafing, buck-passing or refusing to take responsibility. It also includes bribery and corruption, tribalism and nepotism, misuse of organizational property, drunkenness, embezzlement or misappropriation of funds and many others. Therefore, any act of unethical practices, misbehaving, disobedient to the norms and ethics of the organization and corrupt practices is an act of indiscipline. In this case, when employees of an organization deviate from the acceptable norms and ethical standards governing the organization, we say that there is an act of indiscipline. Organizations that want to achieve high growth, high performance and organizational stability must maintain discipline in the system.

ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Organizational performance is used to determine the level an organization is achieving its objectives. According to Ogunna (1999), organizational performance could be high when there is industrial peace and harmony, organizational high

productivity, organizational high profitability, employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction/high patronage. This means that an organization that is achieving its objectives are performing positively. Organizational performance is the process of making sure that firms’ resources are being properly used in pursuit of the goals being set (George, 2017). Abdel-Maksoud, Asada and Nakagawa (2008) defined it as one of the most imperative measure in evaluating organizations, their activities and environments. Bescos and Cauvin (2004) viewed it as an actual output or results of an organization as measured against its intended outputs (or goals and objectives). Organizational performance involves assessing activities, monitor growth and make the strategic changes that will subsequently lead to the realization and achievement of corporate goals. Richard *et al.* (2009) posit that organizational performance focuses on three major areas: (a) financial performance and investment; (b) shareholder expectation and economic value; and (c) production capability. Based on the above, organizational high performance, organizational productivity and development are the outcome of effective human resources discipline in any organized organization. When employee put in their best in doing their job that will result to high organizational performance and therefore enhance organizational productivity.

The Effect of Discipline on Organizational Performance: There are many effects of employee discipline on the performance of any organization. For the purpose of this study, we are going to focus on the following:

Organizational peace and harmony: When organizational employees adhere to ethical standards and behaviour in their organization, there will be high level of peace and harmony in the system which will encourage organizational high performance. When there is peace and harmony in the organization, that shows that the organization is performing positively; hence the organizational staff, management and employer(s) will have positive relationship and therefore be committed to the achievements of the organizational growth.

Organizational high productivity: High productivity in an organization is a performance variable. This means that employee discipline in the organization will lead to employee high level of dedication to duty, employee commitment to duty, low level of absenteeism in the organization and employee effectiveness in doing their job; hence organizational high productivity.

Increase revenue for the organization: When the employees of an organization are disciplined, they will perform their functions well and that will lead to high productivity in the organization, therefore encouraging high level income/revenue for the organization. Also, disciplined employees will reduce waste, avoid corruption, misbehaviour and encourage income generation for their organization.

Employee career development: An organization that always develop the career of its employees it’s performing positively. Therefore, when organizational workers are discipline by coming to work early, performing their functions as it ought to be and being committed in the organization, the organizational management will see reasons to motivate the employees through career development – in the way of training, promotion, job security and other forms of empowerment.

Environmental friendliness: An organization that has positive relationship with the people within its environment is actually performing positively because it is the people that can do business, partner and enhance the achievements of the organizational goals. Therefore, when the organizational staff adheres to high level of discipline in performing their functions, there will be peace and harmony, growth and stability in the organization and the people within the environment because of the above will have friendly relationship with the organization, its management and staff; hence they will always have confidence in anything they do in the organization.

Factors Responsible for Workers Indiscipline in Nigeria Organization

For the purpose of this paper, the reasons for indiscipline in conclude the economic factors, the socio- cultural factors, the socio-political factors and the management factors.

Economic factors

Workers are actually influenced by economic factors. The economic factors include irregular payment of salaries to workers and high rate of inflation. A healthy economy is a prerequisite to high quality of work life which embraces the satisfaction of high order needs. This cannot happen when workers go about their work on empty stomachs because their salaries have been delayed.

According to Onah (1995) Associated with this is the high rate of indiscipline that attends adverse situations. At times, salaries are not paid as at when due owing to late release of funds. Such situations predispose staff to various acts of indiscipline such as absenteeism, lateness, indolence and other indurate attitude to work, all in the name of lack of money.

When, at last, the meager salary is paid, the worker does not enjoy it because he has to settle the debts which he incurred when the salary was not forthcoming. The balance, if any, is so little to the extent that it can take him for only few days due to the high rate of inflation in the country. As a result, he has to look for money from other sources to supplement his salary, and the vicious circle begins again. This worker, in this condition, can hardly maintain discipline.

Social-cultural Factors: The main socio-cultural factors are ethnicity. Under ethnicity we have tribalism, sectionalism, nepotism and favoritism. Ethnic problems can bring about, inter alia, a feeling of rejection and alienation. The end result of the worker is a condition of frustration and resignation which can lead to staff indiscipline. In Nigeria today, within the various State Civil Services and parastatals, Sectional or ethnic interest seems to hamper progress. He posits that “promotion, employment, allocation of duties and roles tend to be clouded by ethnic or sectional consideration.

Social-Political Factors: In the Nigerian public sector (and even in some private sector organizations), staff recruitment, selection and placement are in most cases politicized. Despite the politicization of the organization through the deliberate entrenchment of the Federal Character Principle in the Constitution to ensure that no State, ethnic or sectional groups dominate others in the appointment, promotion and transfer of employees, some appointments and promotions are skewed in favour of some ethnic groups to the neglect of others. Also,

related to that is the problem of patronage system (godfatherism). This is the system whereby some people are employed or promoted in the organization, not on merit but because of some influential people whom they have either known in the establishment or in the wider society. These attitudes can frustrate and discourage those who rely on merit (hard-work, honesty and/or additional qualifications). The frustrated staff consequently resorts to acts of indiscipline.

Management Factor: Under the management factor we have laxity on the part of managers to enforce discipline, lack of proper enforcement of the role of the organizational ethical rules and proper motivation of the workforce.

Determinants of Employees

Discipline for Enhance Performance in Organization: There are four major determinants of organizational effectiveness in disciplinary actions; Idris and Alegbeleye (2015) identified the following:

Careful Selection of Employees: Selection should be done carefully giving consideration to emotional maturity, sense of responsibility and personal integrity. Internal discipline within an organization is dependent on the characteristics of its individual member; therefore, disciplinary action appropriate in one organization may be inappropriate in another organization.

An effective motivational system: In well disciplined organizations, employees are given positive incentives to be productive and live by the rules. Self-discipline employees who are highly productive, punctual observant of work rules and respect of the rights of others are rewarded for their behavior.

Necessary rules and regulations: Rules once they have served their purpose should be thrown out. Rules should make sense to the employees to whom they apply. It should be noted that rules related to disciplinary action ought to be reviewed from time to time. So as to enhance organizational effectiveness.

Awareness that rules will be enforced: Employees are more likely to conform to organization standard if they are confident they will be punished for failing to do so. Employees need to know the need for maintaining work standards very effectively.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on ethical theory. The theory of ethics was used in this study because the level of discipline in an organization is an ethical matter. This is because ethics or moral philosophy is a branch of philosophy that involves systematizing, defending and recommending concepts of right and wrong conduct. Here, ethics is “commonly used interchangeably with ‘morality’...and sometimes it is used more narrowly to mean the moral principles of a particular tradition, group or individual. This theory was employed because ethics is moral theory – an analysis of what makes action wrong or right – which is in line with the principle of morality. It then means that employee of an organization can adhere to ethical standards, morality and positive value system by maintaining discipline and shunning act of indiscipline in their behaviour. It’s a fact that the way the employee behaves

as it concerns discipline is also based on ethical code of conduct in the system; hence some organizations do not have ethical principles and some who have do not implement it as it ought to be, therefore encouraging high level of indiscipline in Nigeria organization. This means that virtue ethics has been neglect in many organizations in Nigeria. In all, ethical theory was employed in this study because discipline is an ethical issue in an organization. An organization that has a known ethical principle/code of conduct – like the public sector or organize private sector – expects its employees to adhere to the ethical principles and acceptable value system in performing their functions. However, when the employees deviate from the above norms, it becomes an unethical behaviour which therefore is an act of indiscipline. Such act of indiscipline hinders organizational performance and discourages organizational growth and development; hence the need for employee adherence to acceptable ethical value system in their organizations so as to achieve organizational high performance.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed only secondary sources of data through effective literature review. Information were sourced from published and unpublished books/journals etc. In this direction, ex-post facto research design was used. The information collected were discussed qualitatively for easy understanding.

RESULTS

The study discovered that the effect of discipline on organizational performance include industrial peace and harmony, organizational high productivity, increased revenue, employee career development and environmental friendliness. Also, economic, socio-cultural, political and managerial factors are basically responsible for workers indiscipline in Nigeria organizations.

Conclusion/Recommendations

Every organization that wants to achieve high level of performance and growth must maintain discipline in its system. Organizational employees therefore should adhere to high level of discipline and avoid act of indiscipline in their organization; hence the effect of discipline on organizational performance include organizational peace and harmony, organizational high productivity, increase revenue for the organization, employee career development and environmental friendliness. Based on that, organizations and their employees should thrive to achieve the ethical norms in the system so as to achieve organizational growth, stability through high organizational performance. Therefore, we conclude in this study that the achievement of organizational high performance among other factors is dependent on the level of employee commitment and dedication to duty in the system which is controlled by the level of employee discipline in the system.

This paper therefore recommends that

- Organizations should develop an ethical standard and code of conduct that should be followed by all organizational members, especially employees so as to maintain discipline in the system.

- There should be regular training and retraining of organizational workers as that will help the organization to maintain discipline which will lead to organizational high performance.
- Organization should understand the basic economic social cultural, political and managerial factors encouraging indiscipline in organization. Management should therefore work on such factors so as to enhance workers performance through positive disciplinary behaviour.

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