
Employee Well-Being: Recognition and Non-Academic Staff Performance in Select Federal Universities, South-South Geo-Political Zone, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: *Employee recognition has become essential aspect of employee well-being in work place worldwide. This is so, as it affects performance of employees in organisations. The researcher investigated, the extent which employee well-being variable, recognition affect performance of non-academic staff (PNAS) in select Federal Universities, South-South geo-political zone, Nigeria. A survey research design was employed for this study. Hypothesis was developed to guide the study. The population of 19649 non-academic staff was used. Sample size of 392 was determined from Taro Yamane method. Data were collected from structured questionnaire. Stratified and random sampling technique were adopted. Useable instruments of 380 were returned. This was analysed using descriptive statistics and linear regression. The findings indicated that a relationship existed between employee recognition and performance in terms of commitment. The results also revealed that positive and significant relationship existed between employee well-being: recognition with Beta coefficients (β) value of 0.444, at $P < 0.000$). In conclusion, employee well-being and recognition had significant and positive effect on staff performance. It is recommended that universities should establish and maintain work culture that acknowledges employees' achievement openly among peers, to motivate employees for superior performance.*

KEY WORDS: Employee well-being, recognition, performance, and non-academic staff.

INTRODUCTION

Employee is known to be an importance asset of an organisation. Hence caring for employee - well-being in terms of recognition, is imperative for organisation and employees bonding for added performance. Employee recognition refers to acknowledgement of an individual or team for its contributions, efforts, and accomplishments in line with organisational goals and values (Laitinen, 2013). Employee recognition could come in form of reward system and incentives such as promotion, written commendation, company bonus, and verbal appreciation Tessema et al., (2013). However, failure to recognise the outstanding achievement of employees could likely demotivate such employees. Moreover, this could possibly make employee less committed to the organisation (Baskar and Rajkumar 2015). This infers that the mood of employees possibly will

change when they feel their contributions are not appreciated by the organisation. Failure to recognise employees could diminish their loyalty, morale and discourage honesty in the organisation, with attendant of low performance, in terms of Commitment (Osama et al., (s2017). Employee well-being refer to happy state of employee in line with work processes. Hence, recognition of employees at work place is vital especially non-academic staff who display acceptable behaviours in the discharge of duties in line with the organisation's goals.

Non-academic staff (NAS) are the non-teaching staff in universities who provide support and administrative functions to the teaching staff and the university system. Some professionals among them include the Librarian, Bursar, Administrator, Secretary, the Technologist, and many more. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the extent of employee well-being: recognition and performance of non-academic staff in select Federal universities in South-South, Nigeria. Other empirical works in Nigeria focused private sector while public sector is the focus in this study.

The universities and federal Government are concern about the general well-being being of employees with particular reference to recognition. If so, likely the performance of staff in term of commitment would improve. However, it appears a number of non-academic staff report at work late, delay in work process, to mention a few. Could it be that employee recognition: items such as promotion, award, leave and written commendation, identified in management practice as useful instrument to have heightened performance, in term of commitment, no more influencing non-academic staff in select Federal universities? Although work may have been done on related area. However, much is still required on employee recognition in public sector. These issues prompted the researcher to investigate the extent of relationship between employee well-being: recognition and performance of non-academic staff in select Federal universities in South-South geo-political zone, Nigeria.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Employee Well-Being

Employee well-being is not entirely a new concept to human generally. In management science, this concept was known as wellness, which was later changed to welfare and now well-being (Michele, 2014). Contemporary organisations are interested in employee well-being and they plan for it. Additionally, employee seek recognition, to be happy, enjoy work environment, and interact with people in the work place (Kossek *et al.*, 2012). Employee well-being involves regular salary payment, award for best performance and other incentives that ensure more commitment. Well-being could also be seen as a condition of being happy, comfortable and healthy. Furthermore, it could be inferred that employee well-being, has much to do with state of mind and physical health of staff in an organization.

Recognition

Recognition is the acknowledgement of an employee's achievement and effort towards the attainment of organisational goals (Petrescu and Simon, 2008). This has to do with paying attention to employees' actions, efforts, behaviours and performance, which could either be physical or

psychological or both. Recognition is a means of motivating employees in a workplace, therefore making them feel more valued. (Nyakundi *et al.*, 2012). Recognition equally refers to praise or a personal note, acknowledging achievements including small gestures that are important to employees. Rathi and Rastogi (2008) explains why employees in an organisation need to be recognised. They are of opinion that employees who is appreciated and recognised are often more committed and with improved performance. This means such employees are positive about themselves and their ability to contribute, boost productivity, and increase job satisfaction. This implies that non-financial incentives and other intrinsic rewards could influence performance in terms of committed to responsibilities.

Drake *et al.* (2007) explains that frequently recognizing and rewarding employees can be essential one of the ways to ensure employees are motivated and committed. Recognition is an tool for employers for motivating employees and for organisational success. Allen and Helms (2002) explain that regular expressions of appreciation by leaders could encourage employees to improve on behaviour and to reach strategic goals. However, the performance of employees is not only as a result of qualification and competence but also of motivation. This implies that employees' recognition through motivation is essential for desired performance. Chikungwa and Chamisa (2013) opine that recognition of employees' contributions is a powerful means of directing attention within the organisation. It is management's duty to understand the psychology of applauding employees for good work in order to apply the principles of employees' recognition and to encourage others to initiate it in their working relationships (Md, AI, and Akter, 2013). This implies that employees' recognition plays a vital role in improving relationship at work, leading to an improved performance.

Employees' recognition comes in various dimensions. This includes; promotion, bonus, staff award, self-esteem and incentives. Promotion denotes an advancement of an employee to a higher post for greater responsibilities, higher status, and higher salary. It is an upward movement of an employee in the organisation's hierarchy (Gupta, 2011). It could be described as the procedure in which an organisation elevates or change employees from their current positions to higher positions of service within an organisation. The purpose of promotion is to reward employees for their past performances and encourage them to continue their effort towards the growth and development of organisation. It is further asserts that promotion tend to foster job satisfaction among employees than those without such opportunities. This implies that fair and equitable promotion gives employee chance, to be reinvigorated, strengthens morale and keeps confidence affixed on organisation. Promoting employees when due encourages loyalty and commitment and contributes to efficiencies and job satisfaction (Raza and Nawaz, 2011). Dessler (2015) explains that promotion takes place when an employee makes a shift in the upward direction in organisational hierarchy and moves to a place of greater responsibility. Naveed, *et al.*, (2013) observes that promotion could be used as an incentive tool. It is a way of rewarding the employee for meeting the organisational goals. Therefore, it serves as a means of synchronising organisational goals with personal goals. Armstrong (2016) states that the deciding factor for the position of any individual in the hierarchy is his/her talent. The higher the level of talent in an individual, the higher will be his position in the hierarchy. Promotion has its importance due to the

fact that it carries with it a significant change in the wage package of an employee. Promotion could provide opportunities for personal growth, increased responsibility and increased social status. This implies that people experience satisfaction when they believe that their future prospects are upright. This may lead to opportunities for advancement and growth in their current workplace, or enhance the chance of finding alternative employment. They maintain that if people feel they have limited opportunities for career advancement, their job satisfaction may equally decrease.

Amah *et al.*, (2004) notes that employees who are promoted hardly shy away from taking on additional responsibilities. They tend to be the first to volunteer for challenging assignments, and are eager to accept additional workload. This implies that promotable employees likely display acceptable attitudes toward their work and the organisation, even when faced with higher challenges. These employees express themselves in a constructive manner rather than complaining.

Zenger *et al.* (2014) indicates that the competency that often stands out by a large margin is the leader's ability to keep a strategic perspective that differentiates those executives who ultimately rise to most senior positions. Therefore, timely promotion is useful in an organisation, to make employees have a sense of value, and happiness at work. This means that before an employee is promoted, he or she would have worked with the organisation for a stipulated period of time, usually from two years or more. Wehrich *et al.* (2010) exerts that promotion would be effective if based on clear procedures that are known to the management and staff.

Employees' recognition involves provision of incentives for job well-done. Incentives are valuable payments (bonus) made to employees or a group of employees on the basis of the amount of output achieved (Banjoko, 2006). On the other hand, it could be payments made with the aim of pushing employees' performances towards higher targets. This means that the organisation's overall performance depends on individuals' and groups' performances. Martocchio (2006) opines that an organisation needs to reward employees on the basis of their relative input and output in order to attract, retain and motivate highly productive workers and to be fair to all employees.

Also, the author states that employees are the organisation's key resources. Hence, the success and failure of organisations centre on the ability of the employers to attract, retain, reward competent and talented employees. Implementing this approach could build a good relationship between employer and employee in a short term, thereby enhancing employee performance. Cole *et al.* (2012) assert that recognition is strategic to an organisation's goals thereby should be able to ensure employee satisfaction, employee retention, employee development and better organisational and employee performances. Employees' recognition is one way to contribute to employee well-being. Stringer *et al.* (2011) exerts that recognition of employees' performance generates an emotional bond between staff and the institution.

Managing workers' performance via effective pay reward system management is a strategic and integrated approach to delivering, sustained growth and development in organisations by improving the performance of the people who work in them and by developing the capabilities of

teams and individual contributors (Armstrong and Baron, 2012). Meaning, strategic linkage exists in human resource management that support organisational development.

Commitment

The performance measure in this study was employee commitment. Reichers (2005) is of the opinion that organisational commitment is visible when organisational members are bonded to existing groups within the organisation. The implication is that commitment can strengthen the relationship among employee. Commitment denotes the psychological linkage of employees with the organisation, and the work itself. Commitment is perceived as being bounded to the organisation by the activities of the employee. Commitment is the bonding of employees to the organisation, due to expected gain, either non-financial. or financial.

Employees' commitment in organisation is classify into three elements namely; normative continuance and affective (Allen *et al.*, 2002). Affective commitment as the employee's emotional attachment to, and identify criteria with the organisation. Continuance commitment refers to commitment based on the costs that the employee associates with the organisation. Normative factor refers to the employee's feeling of obligation to continue with the organisation. The researcher define commitment as employees bonding with organisation or bonding with the material benefit obtain for services rendered

Theoretical framework

This study is fastened on Herzberg's Motivation–Two Factors Theory of Hygiene and Motivation. The theory was propounded by Frederick Irving Herzberg (1957). The theory states that there exist factors that cause satisfaction and others that make employees dissatisfied in the workplace. Furthermore, the theory explains that factors that satisfy employees are called motivators and those that dissatisfy are named hygiene factors. Employees' work motivator or satisfier includes recognition, advancement in terms of training, achievement, and work itself. The hygiene factors otherwise called dissatisfiers concern with work environments, incentives and promotion.

When motivators are absent from work, employees feel real sense of dissatisfaction. Moreover, with motivation, employees gain real satisfaction and are happy to perform the assigned task, leading to improved performance. This promotes employee well-being. When causes of dissatisfaction in work environment are minimised and replaced with recognition in terms of promotion, award and other incentives. This can influence employees' performance It is important to note that hygiene factors are aspects of work life that cause dissatisfaction and they do not contribute to motivation and performance of employees (Cole *et al.*, 2011). This implies that hygiene factors that do not meet the expectation of work force, are absent from work environment could cause conflict and other feelings of dissatisfaction which could affect employee's health. In other words, when motivators are absent from work, employees feel real sense of dissatisfaction. Moreover, with motivation, employees gain real satisfaction and are happy to perform the assigned task, leading to improved performance. This promotes employee well-being. When causes of dissatisfaction in work environment are minimised and replaced with recognition in terms of

promotion, award and other incentives. This has a better chance to influence employees' performance.

Empirical Framework

Mbuthia *et al.* (2016) carried out study on the effects of recognition on work commitment with NAS staff in Kenya. The study addressed subject on work commitment among NAS in the university. Descriptive survey approach was used. It was noted that more respondents agreed that recognition had an effect on work place commitment. Findings; it was discovered that recognition was significant to commitment. Recommendation was for the universities to implement total recognition and awards plan. In line with other rewards system in comparable to those given to teaching staff. The previous study is related to the current study, where the findings show that employee performance is boosted when staff are recognised in terms of receiving awards, prompt promotion, and written commendation.

Yamoah (2013) researched on the relationship between employees' recognition and performance of staff in the banking sector in Ghana. A descriptive survey was used to evaluate employees of Ghana Commercial Bank in the Greater Accra. The statistical tool adopted was Pearson Moment Correlation was applied to test the significance of relationship between employees' recognition and employees' performance. The results showed a significant relationship existed with employees' recognition and performance of employee. Based on the result, the researcher determined that the human resource unit corporate organisations are challenged, to advance and implement effective compensation schemes which would lead to the achievement of organisational goals and in that way improve employees' performance. This work is related to the current work, two main variables are recognition and employees' performance. The difference in this study was based on the industry and methods. The PPMC was statistical tool used for testing the hypotheses while the current study uses the multiple regression to test its hypotheses. The result shows that a significant, positive relationship exists among recognition and performance in terms of commitment of non-academic staff in Federal universities in South-South geopolitical zone, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design: The survey research design was adopted; this reduces bias as there was no pre arrangement. It was also considered sequel to the objective of the study. This method enables the researcher to communicate directly with respondents.

Study Population: comprised NAS in select Federal Universities in South-South geographical Zone, Nigeria. The total number of non-academic staff, as at August 30, 2017 were 19,649. Nigerian University Systems Statistics Digest, (2017).

Table: 1: Population and Corresponding Percentage of Non-academic staff (NAS)

Universities	Number of NAS	Percentage
University of Benin – UNIBEN	5,614	28.51
University of Uyo – UNIUYO	4,128	21.01
University of Calabar -UNICAL	4,533	23.07
University of Port Harcourt -UNIPORT	3,127	15.91
Federal University of Petroleum Resources FUPRE	527	2.68
Federal University of Otuoke FUIO	1,720	8.75
Total	19,649	100

From the population of 19649,
sample size was decided, by Taro Yamane

$$\text{formula for identified population } n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)}$$

Where, n = sample size

N = population

e. = error terms

I = constant

$$\text{Then } n = \frac{19649}{1 + 19649(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{19649}{1 + 19649(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{19649}{1 + 49.12}$$

$$n = \frac{19649}{50.12}$$

$$n = 392$$

sampling technique adopted were the combination of stratified random sampling, to distribute the instrument to non-academic staff. Bowley method was used to apportioned the instrument to each university, for precision. $a = \frac{P(n)}{N}$

where, a refer to proportionate sample for each university, P for proportionate population of each university, n represents sample size, and N is overall population as shown in Table:1.

Research instrument

The main research instrument of this work was employee well-being: recognition and performance of NAS questionnaire. The questionnaire designed by the researcher was separated into two main sections (A) and (B) Section. A contained five items on personal data of respondents. Section B included a construct of employee well-being variables recognition, and performance of non-academic staff in select Federal universities. Weight scores were assigned, using Likert scale five points rating: Strongly Agree (SA5), Agree (A4), Undecided (U3), Disagree (D2) and Strongly Disagree (SD1).

Technique of Data Analysis

The personal information of respondents was analysed using percentage. Data provided by respondents were gathered and evaluated with; frequency, percentage, average and mean. Regression statistical tool was used, to test the hypothesis (H_{01}), and analysed by means of statistical package for social science (SPSS) to offer answers to the objective of the study. The assumption was that the null hypothesis would be rejected, if the probability value is less than 0.05 ($p < 0$).

Data presentation, Analysis and findings

Summary of Questionnaire Administered

Table 2, presents the summary of the instrument regarding distribution and responses from each stratum.

Table 2: Numbers of respondents/distribution

University	Questionnaire Administered	Questionnaire Returned	Percentage of Questionnaire Returned
University of Benin	112	109	97.32
University of Uyo	82	80	97.56
University of Calabar	90	87	96.67
University of Port Harcourt	63	60	95.24
Federal University, Otuoke	11	11	100
Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Effurun	34	33	97.06
Total	392	380	Average 97.26%

Table: 3 Demographic profiles**Analysis of Demographic Data (N=380)**

Characteristics	Respondents	Percentage
Gender		
Male	177	46.58
Female	203	53.42
Educational Qualifications		
N/D or Below	115	30.26
B.SC/HND	139	36.58
Masters	95	25
Doctorate	31	8.16
Years in Service		
1-5 years	63	16.59
6-10 years	111	29.21
11-15 years	87	22.89
16 and above	119	31.32
Ages of Respondents in years		
20-29 years	106	27.89
30-39 years	144	37.89
40-49 years	71	18.68
50 years and above	59	15.53

The results in Table 3, specify that, 46.58% or 177 of the respondents were male while 53.42% or 203 of them were female. Majority of respondents were BSC/HND holders 36.58% or 139 were Master's degree holders while only 8.16% of respondents obtained, Doctorate Degree. In terms of years in service, majority of respondents being 119 or 31.32% has worked for a period of 16 years and above in their respective universities, and the least percentage of respondents 5.53% were aged 21 years and over. Results also shows that 37.89% or 144 respondents aged between 30-39 years. This analysis implies that relevant socio-demographic characteristics of all categories of non-academic staff were considered for the study. Again, the majority of staff obtained BSC/HND, meaning they could read and understand the questionnaire, to give unbiased answers to questions.

Table: 4 Response to Employees' Recognition, items analysis

S/N	Attitude Questions	Strongly Agreed 5	Agreed 4	Undecided 3	Disagreed 2	Strongly Disagreed 1
1	My university rewards staff for outstanding performance	82 (21.6%)	167 (43.9%)	90 (23.7%)	31 (8.2%)	10 (2.6%)
2	I get promoted as and when due.	99 (26.1%)	198 (52.1%)	69 (18.2%)	8 (2.1%)	6 (1.6%)
3	My university gave written commendation to staff.	84 (22.1%)	190 (50.0%)	86 (22.6%)	13 (3.4%)	7 (1.8%)
4	Award for achievement is on merit	77 (20.3%)	166 (43.7%)	117 (30.8%)	17 (4.5%)	3 (8%)
Average		86 22.5	180 47.4	91 23.8	17 4.6	7 3.5

The outcome of analysis in Table 4 shows that out of 380 respondents on whether the universities rewarded staff with outstanding performance, 82 or 21.6% of the strongly agreed; 167 or 43.9% of the respondents agreed; 90 or 23.7% were undecided; 31 or 8.2% disagreed; and 10 or 2.6% of the respondents strongly disagreed on the issue. Again, 99 or 26.1% of the respondents, strongly agreed that they got promoted as and when due; 198 or 52.1% of them agreed; 69 or 18.2% were undecided; 8 or 2.1% disagreed, and 6 or 1.6% of the respondents strongly disagreed that they got promoted as and when due. Concerning written commendation, 84 or 22.1% of the respondents strongly agreed that university gave staff written commendation; 190 or 50.0% respondents agreed that university gave staff written commendation; 86 or 22.6% were undecided; 13 or 3.4% disagreed and 7 or 1.8% of the respondents strongly disagreed that university gave staff written commendation. Concerning merit award for achievement, 77 or 20.3% of the respondents strongly agreed; 166 or 43.7% of the respondents agreed that award for achievement was on merit. However, 117 or 30.8% of the respondents were undecided; 17 or 4.5% of the respondents disagreed; and 3 or 0.8% of the respondents strongly disagreed that the award for achievement was on merit. On the whole, out of 380 respondents, an average of 180 or 47.4% being the highest number of respondents agreed at Likert scale point 4, that the sub variables have relationship with employees' recognition.

Descriptive analysis of employee well-being variables

Table 5 shows analysis of Rec and Perf

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
						Std. Error	Std. Error
REC	380	1.25	5.00	3.8447	.73360	-.353	.125
PERF	380	1.00	5.00	3.7158	.87100	-.492	.125
Valid N (listwise)	380						

Employee recognition has mean value of 3.8447 with the standard deviation of 0.73360 and performance of non-academic staff, and the mean value of 3.7158 and standard deviation of 0.87100. This showcases the appropriateness of the construct.

Test of Hypothesis

The hypotheses were stated in both null (H₀) and alternative (H₁):

H₀ there is no significant relationship between employee recognition and PNAS in select Federal universities in South-South geo-political zone, Nigeria.

H₁ there is significant relationship between employee recognition and performance of non-academic staff in select Federal universities in South-South geo-political zone, Nigeria.

To provide answers to research question four, and to achieved objection four, the regression result is presented in table 6

Table: 6 Regression Result for Employees' Recognition

Performance of non-academic staff
a. Dependent Variable: PERF

Variable	Beta	Std. Error	t-Statistic	sig.
Constant	2.009	0.222	9.061	0.000
REC	0.444	0.057	7.840	0.000
R	0.374			
R-squared	0.140			
F-statistic	61.462			
P-value	0.000			
Adjusted R-squared	0.138			
Durbin-Watson stat	2.091			

From Table 6, R-value of 0.374 suggested a reasonable relationship between recognition and performance of NAS in select Federal universities. The R-squared of 0.140 specifies that the variation in performance was accounted to approximately 14.0% variation in employees' recognition. The variations of other variables that have relationship with performance were included in the error term. The F-statistic value of 61.462 and conforming p-value of 0.000 or $P < 0.05$ shows that the overall model was significant. This means the relationship exist between recognition and performance of non-academic staff has 95% confidence level. Employees' recognition Beta coefficient (β_4) value of 0.444 shows a positive relationship exists between all sub variables of recognition and PNAS of the select Federal universities in South-South geo-political zone, Nigeria. Hence, a unit increase in employees' recognition, improves performance of non-academic staff by 44.4% units of increase.

In line with the result, the R value of 0.374 and $P < 0.05$ implies that significant and positive relationship exists between recognition and performance of non-academic staff in select Federal universities in South-South geo-political zone, Nigeria. The null hypothesis is rejected and alternative upheld. It is therefore concluded that, a significant and positive relationship exists among employees' recognition and performance of non-academic staff in select Federal universities South-South geopolitical zone Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The objective ascertained the extent of relationship with employee well-being: recognition and performance of non-academic staff in select Federal universities in South-South geo-political zone, Nigeria. The results of linear regression, with Beta coefficient (β) value of 0.444 and p-value 0.000 in Table 4.5, shows existence of significant and positive relationship between staff recognition and performance in terms of commitments of non-academic staff in select federal universities. This implies that performance of non-academic staff in term of commitment, increased as a result of staff recognition as regards to receiving awards, getting prompt promotions, and written commendation. The findings agree with studies conducted by Mbuthia, *et al.*, (2016) in Kenya and Yamoah (2013) in Ghana indicated that, significant relationship existed between recognition and increased performance in the university environment. This study anchored on Herzberg two factors theory of motivation which stresses the need for employees to have satisfaction or dissatisfaction and motivation or hygiene factor. Recognition of employees through awards motivates employee to do more, while promotion gives more strength, and make them happy. Failure to accomplish these, demotivate and reduces employees' morale while compliance with the employee well-being, positively enhances performance.

CONCLUSION

From the findings, it was concluded, employee well-being variable: recognition have significant and positive relationship with performance of non-academic staff in select Federal universities in South-South geo-political zone, Nigeria. Furthermore, it's possible that, if the select Federal universities, provide good employees recognition items such as promotion, award, written

commendation, and leave, these would benefit both the universities and employees. The employees will gain in terms of enhanced happiness, while the Federal universities will be successful and able to take full advantage of improved group behaviour bonded with the organisation renewed zeal to attain superior performance.

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