

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS CLIMATE AND TEAM PERFORMANCE OF FIVE STAR HOTELS IN PORT HARCOURT

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ABSTRACT

This work examined the relationship between industrial relations climate and team performance of five star hotels in Port Harcourt. Objectives of the study were to examine how dimensions of industrial relations climate such as unionism and interpersonal relationship influence measures of team performance manifesting in terms of task accomplishment and problem solving. The survey research design was adopted. The target population for this study comprised of 215 employees from 10 five star hotels in Port Harcourt. The sample size was 140 which were obtained using the Krejcie and Morgan Sample Size Determination Table of 1970. Bowley's formula was adopted in the number of questionnaires distributed in each of the hotel. Data were collected through primary (questionnaire) and secondary (textbooks, journal articles and internet). A structured questionnaire designed in five point likert rating scale format was adopted for the collection of data. Out of 140 questionnaires administered, the researcher was able to retrieve 116 copies. Spearman Ranking (r) was used for the test of hypotheses via SPSS Version 23.0. The findings revealed that industrial relations climate such as unionism and interpersonal relationship have significant positive influence on team performance manifesting in terms of task accomplishment and problem solving of five star hotels in Port Harcourt. The study concluded that the presence of industrial relations in five star hotels in Port Harcourt is felt and it has a positive relationship with their team performance. The study recommended amongst other things management of five star hotels in Port Harcourt should ensure the right to association is respected so as to allow employees join union as this will promote their the task accomplishment and problem solving of their team; Management of five star hotels in Port Harcourt should resort orientating workers on the need to be interpersonal related savvy so as to cope with others while carrying out team tasks and responsibilities. This will promote effective task accomplishment and problem solving among team members.

Key Words: Industrial Relations Climate, Unionism, Interpersonal Relationship, Team Performance, Task Accomplishment and Problem Solving

Background of Study

Increasing competition has forced organizations to center their attention on performance-oriented organizational development activities (Tuuli et al., 2010). Many organizations have sought to improve human performance through several types of organizational support mechanisms at both the employee and organizational system levels, including individual and team learning opportunities, empowerment, involvement, and leadership support in the workplace (Aime et al., 2010). Teams play the pivotal role of bridging the relationship between individual performance and organizational performance. Therefore, team performance can be an indicator of whether an organization is successful in considering both individuals' behavioral factors (e.g., employee involvement) and the organization's environmental factors (e.g., leadership Support). The essence of a team is a set of members and competitors who have a mutual role to play, and who are dynamically involved together to ensure better work performance in the organization such as prompt task accomplishment and problem solving.

Task accomplishment is the desired result or possible outcome that a person or a system envisions, plans and commits to achieve at the end: a personal or organizational desired end-point in some sort of assumed development (Somers, 2011). Daniel (2013) posited that task accomplishment helps many people or organizations endeavor to reach goals within a finite time by setting deadlines. It is roughly similar to purpose or aim, the anticipated result which guides reaction, or an end, which is an object, either a physical object or an abstract object, that has intrinsic value. Employees at all levels are primarily employed to provide administrative assistance and carry out other office tasks assigned to him/her. Employers and bosses look out for employees that can accomplish any assignment, task or target given to them promptly or early enough before deadline. In fact, a team that is found of completing tasks at the last minute or deadline can be said to be underperforming. The manager and other employees are expected to be up and doing in ensuring effective team performance. Problem solving indicates working with others to detect, define and solve problems. The key features of successful problem solving are being able to detect precisely what the problem is, dissecting the problem so that it is fully understood, examining all possibilities pertaining to solutions, setting up a system of goals and strategies to solve the problem, and lastly putting this plan into effect and observing its progress. In other word it can also be refers to the process whereby a best outcome is determined for some situation, subject to certain constraints (Woods, 2010).

The climate of every organization matters in its processes and operations. Organizational climate is generally viewed as a variable, or set of variables that represent the norms, feelings and attitudes prevailing at a workplace. It is the evaluation that workers give to the policies, practices and programs of the organization which also in turn influence their behaviours, hence industrial relations climate. It is important to recognize that these climates exert an influence at all levels of industrial relations. Dastmalchian et al. (2016) opined that organizational issues, conflicts and values are inextricably bound up with those of the society at large. Among others, as government, employers, management and employees keep grappling for the protection of their stake in the industry, organizations are posed to changes in their industrial relations climate so as to keep breast with viable decisions, policies and rules in order to promote individual, team (group) and organizational performance at large. The above implies that team performance could be dependent on the industrial relations climate premised on a firm.

The industrial relations climate comprises of (political, social, economic and technology) which surround industrial relations is composed of a number of interrelated elements and each environment interrelates with other environments and with the industrial relation system. It enables individuals to be acquainted with the norms, conduct, practice and atmosphere of industrial relations in the workplace (Blyton et al. in Dastmalchian, 2008). In line with the above, industrial relations climate refers to the nature and quality of relationships between labor and management in the organization. It is also the degree at which industrial relations elements or components are practiced by an organization. From the above definition it is important to note that the climate of an organization matters a lot if industrial relation is to flourish. The concept of industrial relations climate is multidimensional in nature. Thus, scholars have used different proven components to buttress on the concept of industrial relations climate. These include U-M consultation, mutual regard, support for unions, union legitimacy, apathy, joint participation, hostility and trust/fairness., corporation, trust, participative decision making, grievance resolution, dispute settlement, policies and actions of union officials and union-management relationship (Dastmalchian, 2008; Deery et al, 1999; Blyton et al, 1987; Gamage & Hewagama; 2010). However, for the purpose of this work industrial relations climate was discussed under sub-variables such as unionism and interpersonal relationship.

Trade union refers to an independent, membership-based organisation of workers that represent and negotiate on behalf of working people. It serves as a platform that gives advice to their members when they have problems at work or industrial dispute, represent members in discussions with employers, and help improve wages and working conditions by negotiating with employers. Kennedy (2014) defined trade unionism as any organization of workers whose principal purposes include the regulation of relations between workers of one or more descriptions and employers or employers' associations (Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation Act 1992). The Nigerian Labour law Section 1 of Sub section 1 Trade Union Act No 31 of 1973 defines Trade Unions as any combination of workers or employers whether temporary or permanent, the purpose of which is to regulate the terms and conditions of employment of workers whether the combination in question would not apart from this act be an unlawful combination by reason of its purpose or any of its purpose be in restraint of trade and whether its purpose do not include provision of benefits for its members. Another definition is an association of wage or salary earners formed with the object of safe guarding and improving the wage and employment conditions of its members and to raise members' social status and standards of living in the community (Fajana, 2009). Also Glennis (2010) defined Trade Union as a continuous association of wage earners for the purpose of maintaining or improving the condition of their working lives. Unions also make sure that their members' legal rights are enforced, provide and broker education and learning opportunities for members, promote equal opportunities at work, fight against discrimination and help to ensure a healthy and safe working environment. Many unions provide services for their members, such as welfare benefits, personal legal help and financial services.

Interpersonal relationship is an important aspect in every organization, and it is one of the vital components in human relationship. Interpersonal relationship at work constitutes the day today interaction between co-workers or managers and employees. These relations are a natural part of work environment and are usually pleasant and creative, but sometime, the source of tension and frustration (Morrison, 2009). Cavazos (2013) describe interpersonal relationship as an interaction that exists between any two or more persons with an aim of fulfilling one or more physical or emotional needs. Interpersonal relationship could also be a connection or association between two or more people. It may be for a short span or lifelong depending upon the relationship. Interpersonal relationships have been proposed as a buffer against stress and risk, instrumental help for tasks, emotional support in daily life, companionship in shared activities, and a basis for social and emotional development (Martin et al., 2009). Muhaiminul et al. (2016) define interpersonal relationships as the degree to which individual relationships exist between co-workers and employers within business environment. Interpersonal relationships can play a vital role for the development of bonds with co-workers and employers to inspire positive organizational performance (Olannye & Peter, 2014). Developing interpersonal relationship is a serious business that yields dividends to those committed to it. Li Min and Su Yong in James (2017) opined that a thing brings two persons together to make them remain in the context of relationship. Such things may be common interest like desire, aspiration or a goal. More so, workplace interpersonal relationship is the type of relationship that exists between employee to employee, superior to subordinates, employed and employee in any organization. This kind of relationship can be formal or informal. However, relationship is born, fed, nurtured and it grows. It is born at the level of acquaintance relationship; it is fed at associate relationship and is nurtured at friendship. It is very important to emphasize that relationship is the ladder to organizational gain or pain and therefore, it must be consciously handled. It does not come by chance, but it is a social work to be done because interpersonal relationship is a social link between two or more people. When employees positively interrelate in an organization, it fosters love and team work, increases level of cooperation, employee morale and motivation, job satisfaction and engagement and overall level of performance.

Organizations cannot perform where its team performance is said to be on the low. Teamwork is defined and deliberated by some researchers as an essential occupational skill that is necessary to accomplish and achieve the visions, goals, plans and objectives of the organization and to activate and enhance the performances of the workers there (Rabey, 2013). Manzoor et al., (2011) defined team work as a group of individuals who work cooperatively to achieve a specific task or goal. An industrial relations climate of an organizations allows for the management to form team so as to attain team performance which in turn help the organization achieve its goals and objectives. Among others, team performance could related to task accomplishment or problem solving.

The Problem

With the inevitable nature of conflict and disputes between employees- employers in every organizations calls for effective industrial relations. The harmonious relationship between employees and employers is a critical determinant for the realization of organizational goals. Based on the contractual relationship between the workforce and management, both parties are expected to meet the conditions stated in the employment contract. However, most times management fails to implement the procedural and substantive agreements with the labour unions representing the workforce in organizations. The researcher has also observed that employees of organizations manifest traits of industrial insubordination such as employee's inability to accomplish task promptly, poor maximization resource, poor attitude towards problem solving mechanism, lateness to work, absenteeism and refusal to put in their effort/carryout management orders. These attitudes from both party (employee and employer) has most time resulted to industrial disputes and strike actions, loss of income and organizational goodwill.

More so, Google search has shown that little has been empirical done with the concept of industrial relations climate and team performance. It was against this background that the researcher decided to go into this study with focus on five star hotels in Port Harcourt..

Theoretical Framework

This work is based on pluralist theory of industrial relations. The pluralist theory as tied to industrial relations school of thought traces back to Sidney and Beatrice Webb in England, John R. Commons (the father of U.S. industrial relations), and members of the Wisconsin school of institutional labor economists in the early twentieth century (Agabe, 2020). Its views were enshrined in the New Deal U.S. labor policies of the 1930s Great Depression era and cemented in practice by a generation of postwar scholar-arbitrators. Assumptions of this theory states that:

1. Workplace relations constitute managers and employees with different objectives. Thus, Management should multiply sources of legitimate authority.
2. Workplace conflict is inevitable, caused by different opinions and values, benefit to an organization. Thus, management should avoid conflict by accepting trade unions, and as well include them in decision making.
3. Workplace role of trade unions are not the cause of conflict. They are expression of diverse workplace interests that always exist. Thus, management should see trade unions as legitimate part of workplace relations.
4. Collective bargaining deals with problems on a collective basis, as they are most efficient means for institutionalizing employment rules. Thus, management should ensure fairer outcomes by balancing employee and management power.

The implication of the above theory to the study is that the organization is made up of employees and employers which must have a cordial relationship to work towards achieving organizational goals and objectives. Thus since the organization is not a place of disorder, managers are expected to create a industrial relations climate that would promote team performance. It is also obvious that effective industrial relations climate plays inevitable role in ensuring team performance (task accomplishment and problem solving). Since the industrial is pluralist in nature, will either build or

ruin team performance, the justification of the Pluralism theory as the theoretical foundation of this study is based on the fact that the theory explains and predicts how effective industrial relations climate in would promote team performance.

Procedure

The study adopted the survey research design. The target population for this study comprised of 215 employees from 10 five star hotels in Port Harcourt namely: The sojourner by Geneses, Wellness Park, Charleson Luxury Hotel, Steffs Lodge & Lounge, Elites lodge, The Charis Hotel & Suites, Polo Court Hotel, Presidential Hotel, Lucian Exclusive Hotel and Heliconia Park Port Harcourt Hotel and Suites. The sample size is 140 which were obtained using the Krejcie and Morgan Sample Size Determination Table of 1970. Bowley’s formula was adopted in the number of questionnaires distributed in each of the hotel. Data were collected through primary (questionnaire) and secondary (textbooks, journal articles and internet). A structured questionnaire titled “Industrial Relations Climate and Team Performance Index (IRCTPI)”. The questionnaire was designed in five point likert rating scale format with the following response options: Strongly Agreed (SA) 5, Agreed (A) 4, Undecided (U) 3, Disagreed (D) 2, and Strongly Disagreed (DS) 1. The instrument was validated by two industrial relations experts and one measurement and evaluation expert. The reliability coefficient of the instrument (0.71) was elicited using Crombach Alpha. Spearman Ranking (r) was used for the test of hypotheses. Out of 140 questionnaires administered, the researcher was able to retrieve 116 copies. A bivariate analysis (test of hypothesis) was done using SPSS Version 23 at 0.05 level of significance. The formula for Spearman Rank Order Correlation is stated thus:

$$r = 1 - \frac{6\sum d^2}{n(n^2 - 1)}$$

Where;
 n = number of pairs of data
 d = different between the ranking in each set of data.
 Σ = Summation

The study was predicated on the conceptual framework presented below:

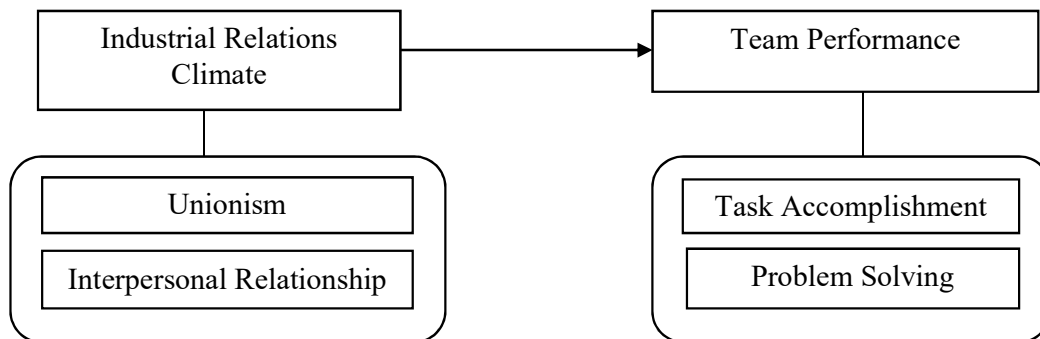


Fig. 1.1: Conceptual Framework Showing Relationship between Industrial Relations Climate and Team Performance.

Source: Researcher’s Conceptualization, 2023.

In order to establish the empirical relationship between industrial relations climate and team performance, four (4) null hypotheses were tested which were stated thus:

Ho₁: Unionism does not significantly influence task accomplishment of teams in five star hotels in Port Harcourt.

Ho₂: Unionism does not significantly influence problem solving of teams in five star hotels in Port Harcourt.

Ho₃: Interpersonal relationship does not significantly influence task accomplishment of teams in five star hotels in Port Harcourt.

Ho₄: Interpersonal relationship does not significantly influence problem solving of teams in five star hotels in Port Harcourt.

Results

Ho₁: Unionism does not significantly influence task accomplishment of teams in five star hotels in Port Harcourt

Table 1 Unionism and Task Accomplishment

		Unionism	Task Accomplishment
Unionism	Correlation	1.000	.422**
	Coefficient		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	116	116
Task Accomplishment	Correlation	.422**	1.000
	Coefficient		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	116	116

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 above shows r value of 0.422 at a significance level of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05. Since the significance value 0.000 is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (Ho₁) which states that unionism does not significantly influence task accomplishment of five star hotels in Port Harcourt was rejected and the alternate hypothesis (Ha₁) is accepted. This implies that unionism significantly influences task accomplishment of five star hotels in Port Harcourt.

Ho₂: Unionism does not significantly influence problem solving of teams in five star hotels in Port Harcourt.

Table 2 Unionism and Problem Solving

		Unionism	Problem Solving
Unionism	Correlation	1.000	.500**
	Coefficient		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	116	116
Problem Solving	Correlation	.500**	1.000
	Coefficient		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	116	116

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 above shows r value of 0.500 at a significance level of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05. Since the significance value 0.000 is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (Ho₂) which states that unionism does not significantly influence problem solving of five star hotels in Port Harcourt was rejected and the alternate hypothesis (Ha₂) is accepted. This implies that unionism significantly influences problem solving of five star hotels in Port Harcourt.

Ho₃: Interpersonal relationship does not significantly influence task accomplishment of teams in five star hotels in Port Harcourt.

Table 3 Interpersonal Relationship and Task Accomplishment

		Interpersonal Relationship	Task Accomplishment
Interpersonal Relationship	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.782**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	116	116
Task Accomplishment	Correlation Coefficient	.782**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	116	116

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 above shows r value of 0.782 at a significance level of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05. Since the significance value 0.000 is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_{03}) which states that interpersonal relationship does not significantly influence task accomplishment of five star hotels in Port Harcourt was rejected and the alternate hypothesis (H_{a3}) is accepted. This implies that interpersonal relationship significantly influences task accomplishment of five star hotels in Port Harcourt

H_{04} : Interpersonal Relationship does not significantly influence problem solving of teams in five star hotels in Port Harcourt

Table 4 Interpersonal Relationship and Problem Solving

		Interpersonal Relationship	Problem Solving
Interpersonal Relationship	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.799**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	116	116
Problem Solving	Correlation Coefficient	.799**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	116	116

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 above shows r value of 0.799 at a significance level of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05. Since the significance value 0.000 is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_{04}) which states that interpersonal relationship does not significantly influence problem solving of five star hotels in Port Harcourt was rejected and the alternate hypothesis (H_{a4}) is accepted. This implies that interpersonal relationship significantly influences problem solving of five star hotels in Port Harcourt.

Summary of Findings

Based on the analyses of data, the following findings were made:

1. Unionism enhances task accomplishment of teams in five star hotels in Port Harcourt.
2. Unionism enhances problem solving of teams in five star hotels in Port Harcourt.
3. Interpersonal relationship enhances task accomplishment of teams in five star hotels in Port Harcourt
4. Interpersonal relationship enhances problem solving of teams in five star hotels in Port Harcourt

Discussion of Findings

The analyses of data revealed that industrial relations climate such as unionism and interpersonal relationship have significant relationship with team performance such as task accomplishment and problem solving. It therefore means that unionism and interpersonal relationship play a lot in team

performance. Unionism as organization of workers whose principal purposes include the regulation of relations between workers of one or more descriptions and employers or employers' associations facilitates the task accomplishment. Checchi and Lucifora (2012) found that trade union plays many roles in promoting the welfare of its members such as bargaining power, minimize discrimination of any kind, sense of participation of the members, platform of self-expression, betterment of employee relations (Employee and employee relationship, employee management, management and trade unions and trade union and other stakeholders of the organisation) and sense of job security of its members enhances prompt task accomplishment and problem solving among teams . The principal objectives of any trade union are the maintenance of co-workers and employees and employers relationship to standards their conditions and provision of benefit to members for better team performance that will foster task accomplishment and problem solving. According to Greenaway as cited in James (2017) unions are organized on the principle that all those employed in an organization, whether as managerial, technical clerical or manual workers are eligible for membership of simple trade union which is responsible for the workers in the industry of which the enterprise is part and allowing it to strive in the firm promote task accomplishment and problem solving among teams.

More so, Martin et al. (2009) found that cordial interpersonal relationship between co-workers/employers works as emotional booster amongst employees for better management and maximization organizational resources. Employees-employers interpersonal relationships also serves as a buffer against stress and risk, instrumental help for tasks, emotional support in daily life, companionship in shared activities, and a basis for social and emotional development. An interpersonal relationship is a strong, deep or close association and acquaintance between two or more people that may range from brief duration to a long enduring relationship. This association may be based on inference, love, solidarity, regular business interactions, or some other type of social commitment which helps in accomplishment of task and problem solving. Interpersonal relationships also serve the vital role for the development of bonds with co-workers and employers to inspire positive organizational performance (Olannye & Peter, 2014). When employees positively interrelate in an organization, it fosters love and team work, increases level of cooperation, employee morale and motivation, job satisfaction and engagement and overall level of performance. According to Sias, (2008) relationships are necessary for existing systems and are the hub of organizations. It is through relationships that organizations maintain stability (Gamage & Hewagama, 2010). Given attention to how a workplace organizes its relationships; not just its tasks, roles and hierarchies, but also, the form of relationships and capacities built to maintain and transform them'.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analyses of data and discussion of findings, the study concluded that industrial relations climate such as unionism and interpersonal relationship; and team performance such as task accomplishment and problem solving of five star hotels in Port Harcourt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results and conclusions, the following recommendations were made:

1. Management of five star hotels in Port Harcourt should ensure the right to association is respected so as to allow employees join union as this will promote their the task accomplishment of their teams.
2. Management of five star hotels in Port Harcourt call on employees to register their association with them so as to guide them within the ambits of the law, thus promoting problem solving among team members.
3. Management of five star hotels in Port Harcourt should resort to orientating workers on the need to be interpersonal related savvy so as to cope with others while carrying out

team tasks and responsibilities. This will promote effective task accomplishment among team members.

4. Social parties should be constituted where management and employees can interact so as to strengthen their interpersonal relationship, which in turn will enhance their problem solving.

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