

RELAXATION AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE ON PERFORMANCE OF FOOD FIRMS IN PORT HARCOURT

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to examine the impact of relaxation on employee performance in food firms in Port Harcourt. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised of 118 staff of four (4) fast food firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The simple random sampling procedure was adopted. The Taro Yamane's formula was used to determine the sample size for the study. A sample size of 91 respondents was obtained. The instrument for data collection in the study was a questionnaire. To determine the reliability of the instrument a test re-test statistical procedure was carried and a reliability coefficient of 0.85 was obtained. The study found a positive significant relationship between flexible work hour and commitment, effectiveness and job satisfaction. In conclusion therefore, based on the objectives and the findings of this study; Stress management strategies were found to have greater influence on the performance of employees in the fast food firms. Flexibility in work hour is cost-effective and efficient way which also helps in savings on overheads cost and reduces the expenses, gain competitiveness and also improve employee performance. The study finally recommended that the management of the organization under study should create awareness to the employees to enable them be aware of utilization of stress management strategies available in the organization that can result in improved performance.

Keywords: *Flexible Work Hour, Employee Performance, Commitment*

INTRODUCTION

Employee performance has been described in many ways; ability to achieve targets, realize goals, attain benchmarks. Most commonly people immediately talked of job performance as what a person did at work. Different stages of job as well the complexity of a job also affected the overall performance of the jobholder. This could mean that job performance as a construct could be defined in different ways depending on the different stages and complexities of the job (June, 2011). Sarmiento and Beale, as cited in June (2011) noted job performance resulted from two elements, abilities and skills (natural or acquired) that an employee possessed, and motivation to use them in order to perform a better job.

If performance was simply defined as —all of the behaviour employee engaged in at work, the definition would be slightly misleading because at times people might be engaging themselves in work which had no relation to their job performance (e.g. making personal phone calls). More appropriate way then was as suggested by Campbell, 1990; according to which job performance was stated as a collection of behaviour employees engaged in at work, as long as that behaviour contributed to the attainment of organizational goals. It was intuitive to draw a link between behaviour and performance. Linking behaviour and performance meant, trying to predict as to what type of behaviour led to what type of performance e.g. creativity in an employee and relating it to future performance. However, the ability to attain acceptable performance levels can be hampered greatly by stress which employees face while discharging their duties.

Stress management refers to interventions designed to reduce the impact of stressors in the workplace. These can have an individual focus, aimed at increasing an individual's ability to cope with stressors. The goal of stress management is to help the individual to manage the

stress of everyday life. According to Bruce (2003) stress management is a proven group of techniques for modifying stress, producing thoughts, relaxing away physical and emotional tension and learning how to make changes to our environment (or situation) whenever possible.

Effective stress management can help us to resolve conflicts with others assertively and confidently become better problem solvers in the face of life's demands and to appreciate the helpfulness of exercise and recreation. Employees report that they are more productive and more engaged in their work when there are able to balance the demands of work with other aspects of their lives. Improvements in physical and mental health are also associated with workplace flexibility. Research shows that flexible work arrangements may reduce stress because employees working flexibly are more satisfied with their jobs, more satisfied with their lives, and experience better work-family balance. Overall, employees who have a high work-life fit fare much better than employees who have moderate or low levels of work-life fit. They are more highly engaged and less likely to look for a new job in the next year, and they enjoy better overall health, better mental health, and lower levels of stress (Ayodele, 2014).

HO₁: there is no significant relationship between relaxation and employee commitment of selected food manufacturers in Port Harcourt

HO₂: there is no significant relationship between relaxation and employee effectiveness of selected food manufacturers in Port Harcourt

HO₃: there is no significant relationship between relaxation and job satisfaction of selected food manufacturers in Port Harcourt

Relaxation

Relaxation in psychology, is the emotional state of a living being, of low tension, in which there is an absence of arousal that could come from sources such as anger, anxiety, or fear. According to the Oxford dictionary relaxation is when the body and mind are free from tension and anxiety. Relaxation is a form of mild ecstasy coming from the frontal lobe of the brain in which the backward cortex sends signals to the frontal cortex via a mild sedative.[citation needed] Relaxation can be achieved through meditation, autogenics, and progressive muscle relaxation. Relaxation helps improve coping with stress. Stress is the leading cause of mental problems and physical problems, therefore feeling relaxed is beneficial for a person's health. When we are stressed, the sympathetic nervous system is activated because we are in a fight-or-flight response mode; over time, this could have negative effects on a human body. The idea of relaxation in psychology was popularized by Dr. Edmund Jacobson in his published book *Progressive Relaxation*. It was a technical book intended for doctors and scientists. His book describes tensing and relaxing specific muscles at a time to achieve overall relaxation in the body. Jacobson then published another book called *You Must Relax* published in 1934 that was geared towards the general public. According to Jacobson, his research started in 1908 at Harvard University, and later moving on to Cornell and University of Chicago. His research was aimed at improving the general human well being. In 1932, Johannes Schultz and Wolfgang Luthe developed a method of relaxation that emphasized using the power of suggestion, called autogenic training. In 1975, Herbert Benson and Mirium Z. Klipper published a book called *The Relaxation Response*, which gives instructions on tying meditation techniques into daily activities the average person could do.

Job Satisfaction

Despite its wide usage in scientific research, as well as in everyday life, there is still no general agreement regarding what job satisfaction is. In fact there is no final definition on what job represents. Therefore before a definition on job satisfaction can be given, the nature and importance of work as a universal human activity must be considered. Different authors have

different approaches towards defining job satisfaction. Some of the most commonly cited definitions on job satisfaction are analysed in the text that follows. Hoppock defined job satisfaction as any combination of psychological, physiological and environmental circumstances that cause a person truthfully to say I am satisfied with my job (Hoppock, 1935). According to this approach although job satisfaction is under the influence of many external factors, it remains something internal that has to do with the way how the employee feels. That is job satisfaction presents a set of factors that cause a feeling of satisfaction. Vroom in his definition on job satisfaction focuses on the role of the employee in the workplace. Thus he defines job satisfaction as affective orientations on the part of individuals toward work roles which they are presently occupying (Vroom, 1964). One of the most often cited definitions on job satisfaction is the one given by Spector according to him, job satisfaction has to do with the way how people feel about their job and its various aspects. It has to do with the extent to which people like or dislike their job. That's why job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction can appear in any given work situation. Job satisfaction represents a combination of positive or negative feelings that workers have towards their work. Meanwhile, when a worker employed in a business organization, brings with it the needs, desires and experiences which determinates expectations that he has dismissed. Job satisfaction represents the extent to which expectations are and match the real awards. Job satisfaction is closely linked to that individual's behaviour in the work place (Davis et al.,1985). Job satisfaction is a worker's sense of achievement and success on the job. It is generally perceived to be directly linked to productivity as well as to personal well-being. Job satisfaction implies doing a job one enjoys, doing it well and being rewarded for one's efforts. Job satisfaction further implies enthusiasm and happiness with one's work. Job satisfaction is the key ingredient that leads to recognition, income, promotion, and the achievement of other goals that lead to a feeling of fulfilment (Kaliski,2007).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprises of four (4) fast food firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The fast food manufacturers under study includes; Genesis Fast Food & Restaurant, Jevinik Restaurant, The Promise and Pepperoni Foods Limited. Hence, the population of study are 118 employees from the selected fast food manufacturers in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The simple random sampling procedure was adopted. Simple random sampling is a sampling technique where every item in the population has an even chance and likelihood of being selected in the sample.

Method of Data Analysis

The statistical tool was used in the analysis and computing the numerical variables; Section A will be analysed using frequency and percentages.

The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman rank Correlation at 0.05 significant level. The rule for acceptance or rejection of the hypotheses is given below;

HO₁: there is no significant relationship between relaxation and employee commitment of selected food firms in Port Harcourt.

Correlation between Relaxation and Commitment

Relaxation		Commitment		
Spearman's rho	Relaxation	Correlation	1.000	.834*
	Coefficient			
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	82	82
	Commitment	Correlation	.834*	1.000
		Coefficient		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	82	82

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The hypothesis testing results shows that the probability value is 0.000 which is less than the critical value of 0.05. The null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypotheses is accepted which states that,

HA₁: there is a significant relationship between Relaxation and employee commitment of selected food firms in Port Harcourt.

Again, the correlation coefficient of 0.834 shows the strength of relationship between Relaxation and employee commitment is very strong.

HO₂: there is no significant relationship between relaxation and employee effectiveness of selected food firms in Port Harcourt.

critical value of 0.05. The null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypotheses is accepted which states that,

HA₂: there is a significant relationship between Relaxation and employee Effectiveness of selected food firms in Port Harcourt.

Again, the correlation coefficient of 0.549 shows the strength of relationship between Relaxation and employee Effectiveness is moderate.

Hypothesis

HO₃: there is no significant relationship between relaxation and job satisfaction of selected food firms in Port Harcourt.

Correlation between Relaxation and Employee Job Satisfaction

Relaxation		Effectiveness		
Spearman's rho	Relaxation	Correlation	1.000	.549*
	Coefficient			
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	82	82
	Effectiveness	Correlation	.549*	1.000
		Coefficient		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	82	82

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The hypothesis testing results shows that the probability value is 0.000 which is less than the

			Relaxation	Job Satisfaction
Spearman's rho	Relaxation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.623*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	82	82
	Job Satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	.623*	1.000

Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
N	82	82

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The hypothesis testing results shows that the probability value is 0.000 which is less than the critical value of 0.05. The null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypotheses is accepted which states that,

HA₉: there is a significant relationship between Relaxation and Job Satisfaction of selected food firms in Port Harcourt.

Again, the correlation coefficient of 0.623 shows the strength of relationship between Relaxation and Job Satisfaction is strong.

CONCLUSION

Based on the objectives and the findings of the study, the following conclusions were made that relaxation has a positive effect on employee performance as it makes them more committed, gives them job satisfaction and make them more effective after relaxation time. A workplace thoughtfully designed to include relaxation or "recharge rooms," can have a significant effect on employee satisfaction and performance.

The study also concluded that relaxation has a positive effect on employee performance as it makes them more committed, gives them job satisfaction and make them more effective after relaxation time. A workplace thoughtfully designed to include relaxation or "recharge rooms," can have a significant effect on employee satisfaction and performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made;

1. The study recommended that the management of the organization under study should create awareness to the employees to enable them be aware of utilization of stress management strategies available in the organization that can result in improved performance.
Evaluate if the employees' background knowledge and adeptness are compatible with tasks and duties. If they are not, check if there is any training to narrow the knowledge and skill gaps. And if there are no trainings, decide whether it is absolutely necessary for the employee to complete the tasks.
2. Employees should be made aware of meditation as the easiest way of handling stress and also relaxation by encouraging team building which refreshes the body and mind hence improving performance.

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