

**WORKPLACE DISCIPLINE AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ATMOSPHERE OF
ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING SERVICE COMPANIES IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explored the moderating variable applied was work rule, operationalized as substantive work rules and procedural work rule. Using a cross-sectional survey research design, the study employed a positivist approach where the questionnaire was utilized as the major instrument. The hypotheses were stated in the null form. The theoretical framework was drawn from Skinner's reinforcement theory, interactional justice theory and employment relations theory. The primary data were collected using two hundred and twenty five (225) employees drawn from the sample size of one hundred and forty four (144) was generated using the taro Yamane formula while Bowley's proportional allocation technique was used for the individual company sample size. For data collection 144 copies of the questionnaire were distributed depicting 100%. The sample subjects were obtained using the simple random sampling technique. The unit of analysis for the study are individual organizational members. Data were collected from a sample of 139 employees from 10 electrical engineering companies operating in South South Region, Nigeria. A total of 139 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved, depicting 96% response rate. A total of 131 copies were used, depicting 90%. For primary data analysis, the study applied mean, mode and standard deviation to test the variables. The Spearman rank correlation coefficient was used to test the hypothesized associations, using SPSS version 25. The study found that in electrical engineering companies there is a strong but negative relationship between substantive work rules do not moderate the relationship that exists between workplace discipline and industrial relations atmosphere and procedural work rules do not moderate the relationship that exists between workplace. Based on the findings, it was recommended that: managers should enact statements as work rules in the organization's handbook, while employees should be counseled on customs and practices of the organization.

Keywords: Work Rule, Substantive Rule Procedural Rule, Industrial Relation Atmosphere

INTRODUCTION

Electrical engineering companies in South- South region Nigeria covers a wide range of areas and are mainly on the private sector. There has been reports recently of deteriorating and adverse industrial relations climate with more frequent industrial dispute and industrial actions. More recently, the focus of the Human resource policies of some of these companies revealed that its core focus had changed to targets, safety achievement, announcements of achievements concerning quality and training. Very little improvement has been seen on the implementation of workrules that relate to workers condition of service, nor was there any scope for workers expression during rule making processes. Most of the content of the existing workrules are reported to have very little said about the employee related issues especially on how they will conduct themselves. Rather, the core of discussions and decisions reached were on marriages, child birth and deaths etc. This report was however, consolidated in a study conducted by Johnnies & Nwasike (2002). The study revealed that several of these companies in Nigeria have had fluctuations in their industrial relations atmosphere at some point in their operations. This act of negligence by management, and employees discontents over existing existing company rules, has led to several cases of misconduct and deviant work behaviours which has exposed these companies to diverse disciplinary risk, which left some negative impact on the industrial relations atmosphere, The outcome has led to internal disputes and industrial actions. There were still concerns about the exclusion of workers in work

rule arrangement, rule enforcement and rule interpretation which has in most cases not favored the workers. There has been several agitations as to how the employers will eject these outdated and failing workrules which has led to these agitations that have disrupted the industrial relations atmosphere.

As management makes rules unilaterally and imposes it on the employees, there is the danger of increased strike, work stoppages, work to rule action and other forms of industrial disharmony which is capable of causing tension in the industrial relations atmosphere. Despite the fact that management is fully aware of the awkwardness and dangers in making rules by this method, they have tended to claim the right to do so in some electrical engineering companies in south-south, Nigeria. That is, they have the belief that such regulations fall only within the ambit and caprices of management. Organizational managers have not experienced any marked change in the restoration of discipline in the workplace this goes to impact on the industrial relations atmosphere. This goes to show that perhaps the right mechanisms have not been adopted, as such workplace discipline measures have not produced their expected results.

These workers in these companies are worried about the unstable nature of industrial relations and the lack of proactive disciplinary measures to bring about an improvement in the industrial relations atmosphere of their companies, as misconduct are gradually taking over the atmosphere of these organizations. The practice of industrial relations is guided by rules and regulations, and any worker who goes against these rules or fails to abide by these rules and regulations is liable to face disciplinary action. Most often the employers try to ensure that employees deliver on their agreements by working hard when they enter the workplace. Unfortunately, this is not achieved most of the time. The employees are not oriented on the rules and rule making process that regulate employment relations. This automatically affects the industrial relations atmosphere. These have remained poor because the proactive aspect of discipline is not being strengthened with the trained managers/ practitioners who can sufficiently handle acts of misconduct to take charge at that level of discipline handling. There are also issues about quality of data collected as regards previous disciplinary issues. Reasons may not be far from the fact that qualified managers and practitioners who can sufficiently handle issues of discipline.

Today, disciplinary applications that are available in most electrical engineering companies are designed on operations of foreign countries which are just adopted into our country, which in most cases does not meet our context in Nigeria. There is therefore need for organization's to come up with a specific policy which is going to be accepted, especially such that will guide the proper choice of workplace disciplinary approach and procedures that are convenient for the practice of industrial relations in Nigeria. This is so speculated or reasoned because industrial relations in Nigeria is said to be guided by rules, regulations, ethics and jurisprudence, so any worker that goes against the provisions of these rules, will be made to face the law.

In recent time, the industrial relations atmosphere of some electrical engineering companies in Nigeria has been reported to be unstable. It has been noted that organizations at some point in time experience an adverse industrial relations atmosphere, while at other times they encounter a peaceful industrial relations atmosphere. It is even more worrisome to note that the adverse scenerios play out even more than the harmonious atmosphere manifestations in these organizations, perharps due to the increased rate of indiscipline and disrespect for work regulations by employees; or due to a breach in the terms of the agreement in the work rule; or complete exclusion of employees as parties in the formation of agreements in the workrules. On the industrial relations atmosphere front, the delays in adopting and applying proactive disciplinary actions affected and increased misconducts and increased industrial relations uncertainty or instability.

Accordingly, Hare (1962) in Oji and Amucheazi (2015) pointed that these precursors as suggested by Yesufu (1984) are the fundamental causes of industrial discontent. Such industrial discontent may be latent, passive or active and has the tendency of disrupting the industrial relations equilibrium no matter the form it takes. Consequently, when latent or passive discontent becomes active discontent, it becomes a grievance. A grievance may be individual based, when an employee feels aggrieved by a particular treatment meted to him/her by a superior for instance in terms of discipline implementation. Every employer of labour owe his employees the duty to properly manage Discipline.

This study therefore considers work rule as a moderator to work place discipline as a necessary precursor to industrial relations atmosphere.

Research Hypotheses

- Ho₁: Substantive Work rules do not moderate the relationship that exists between workplace discipline and industrial relations atmosphere of electrical engineering companies in south-south Nigeria.
- Ho₂: Procedural Work rules do not moderate the relationship that exists between workplace discipline and industrial relations atmosphere of electrical engineering companies in south-south Nigeria.

Skinner's Reinforcement Theory

Skinner's reinforcement theory is among one of the theories that focuses on human motivation. This theory was propounded by Burrhus Frederic Skinner, an American social philosopher. The theory is based on the principles of causality and knowledge that a worker's behavior is regulated by the type of reward. Skinner's (1957) reinforcement theory is aimed at enforcing disciplinary procedure/actions as far as the aims of disciplinary procedure are concerned. The theory acknowledges three basic rules of consequences: i) reward for positive behaviour reinforces positive behavior; ii) punishment for negative behavior weakens negative behaviour and iii) if there is no reward or punishment, behavior is fading.

Negative reinforcement is defined as the reinforcement of behavior that reduces negative situations. Skinner observed that dysfunctional behaviors can be eliminated by extinction, i.e. by not reinforcing them. This justifies our logic in this study that discipline serves as a precursor and reciprocal reinforcement that creates an atmosphere within the organization that directly impacts on workers' behaviour, conduct and reactions toward their organizations. Effective negative reinforcement is supposed to be applied which gives a lot to be desired. Skinner is of the view that positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement and punishment are examples of the learning process (Werneer, 2007). Negative reinforcements in the form of undesirable outcome are given when employees do not exhibit organizationally functional behaviours (Amah, 2010). The essence is to make employees behave well to avoid the negative outcomes of nagging and threats.

Skinner (1957) also analyzed work situations to determine what causes workers to behave the way they do, with a view to initiate changes to mitigate areas where they encountered challenges and the barriers to performance. With clearly set goals and parameters such as participation and assistance, prompt and regular feedback was possible. The approach was found useful though more concerned with the control of employee behaviour. The implication of this theory for this study however, is that reinforcement should be as prompt as possible, especially in the case of negative behaviours to refrain incumbent misconduct and deviant actions among employees. Again, employers of labour can ensure that both positive and negative factors in the employees' work environment are properly identified and enumerated. With proper orientation, expected behaviour and desired performance level can be indicated in measurable terms. This theory gives room for

both expanded communication and control through feedback. Managers learn to manage effectively all organizational resources through planning and organization to avoid the frequent demands from labour and their unions.

Concept of Work Rules

Jaja (2000) identified the traditional or Oxford approach as one among the three labour management system theories. It is obvious that thrust of the Oxford or traditional theory was on job-regulation (Flander, 1975; Fox, 1969 and Robert, 1968). Basically, the argument is premised on the fact that both the employer and employees are jointly concerned with the making of rules, which will regulate job at the workplace. Flanders (1968) is of the opinion that joint-regulation is much more appropriate to contemporary labour management system practice. Many contemporary industrial relations theorist have also built on this key notion (Flanders 1975; Fox, 1969; Robert, 1968).

According to Jaja (2000), these rules are of two categories. The substantive rules are rules which deal on matters such as the determination of pay increases, length of work day/week, condition of service and so on. Stressing further, Jaja (2000) noted that this type of rules cut across the entire organization as it concerns all, irrespective of class. The second type of rule is the procedural rules. This is the mechanism adopted in changing the substantive rule. For instance, how the demand for high wages is to be made and the procedure to follow in the event of industrial dispute.

Basically, it is worthy of note that the actors in Industrial Relations system influence the rule making process and the rules also influence the behavior of the actors in Industrial Relations system (Jaja, 2000). Jaja (2000), noted in the results of Ahiauzu (1984) study on rule making methods adopted in Nigerian workplaces, that managerial regulations accounted for 60.8% of the rule making process adopted by managers in their organizations. This is a situation where management consults the employees or their representatives before making the rules. Similarly, Zeb-Obipi (2018) drawing from Flanders (1968) assertion, noted that the industrial relations system comes to existence when it is able to make rules and implement those rules and then organize itself around those rules. For our purposes we can say that job regulation refers to the process by which systems make rules.

In Flander's theory, there are also two basic kinds of distinctions. The first is the distinction between the industrial relations system and its environment. The second is the distinction that industrial relations systems makes within itself, internal distinctions. In Flander's theory there are two basic forms of rule. The first is the substantive rules. The second is the procedural rules. In other words, once an industrial relations system has distinguished itself from its environment it proceeds to develop internal rules. Perhaps the most practical aspect of Flander's industrial relations theory, his description of the different forms of work rules. There are at least two ways that industrial relations systems implement rules.

Concept of Industrial Relations Atmosphere

Blyton and Turnbull have argued that industrial relation apart from having a distinctive characteristics has an independent nature which is continuous and open-ended and such employment relationship can engender both conflict and co-operation. As such Tamunomebi (2019), building on this assertion, noted that there are three basic aspects of industrial relations which every industrial relations system must be occupied with before one can be rightly assured of a peaceful industrial relations atmosphere.

Yesufu (1984) is of the view that industrial relation is concerned with labour problems in all their ramifications ranging from employment problems to job-seemingly conditions of work; remuneration level, frequency methods of wage payment and wage fixing employee development. Industrial relation according to him also deals with the institutions concerned with these labour problems

namely, trade unions, employers' organizations, the labour administrative mechanism, such as joint consultation, collective bargaining, labour tribunals as well as courts. All of which fall within the ambit of industrial relation atmosphere. (Girigiri, 1999:119-120) stated that:

"Industrial relations also involves rule-making at the crux of which are issues relating to wages, working conditions, benefits and various other subjects, in as much as these are concerned with the rights and obligations of the parties in modern work settings".

The concept of industrial relations atmosphere relates to the state of the organization's industrial relations practices. It is suggested that a firm's industrial relations activities generate a characteristic atmosphere or climate in the organization. Dastmalchian, Blyton and Adamson (1989) view industrial relations climate as a subset of organizational climate that pertains to the norms and attitudes reflecting union-management relationships in an organization. Dastmalchian, Blyton and Adamson(1989) also referring to Payne and Pugh(1976)'s claim that the concept of industrial relation atmosphere can also be interchanged or replaced with industrial relations climate or organizational climate, because the concept of organizational climate has variables that represents the norms, feelings and attitudes prevailing at the workplace which has the capacity to convey the general psychological atmosphere of an organization, and consequently, can influence the satisfaction, motivation and behavior patterns of individuals in the workplace (Litwin and stringer,1968; Payne, 1971).

Mediating Effect of Work Rules on the Causal Relationship Between Workplace Discipline and Industrial Relations Atmosphere.

According to Girigiri (2002), industrial relations also involves rule-making at the crux of which are relating to issues such as wages, working conditions, benefits and various other subjects, in as much as these are concerned with the rights and obligations of the parties in modern work settings. This suggests that the essence and function of industrial relations practice is in fact, basically the containment of disharmony in the industry. The employment contract entails reciprocal and mutual expectations and obligations of employees and employers (Venkata Ratnam, 2013). However, Lack of commitment by management in implementing development recipes, or even long standing neglect of workers expectations and needs, which stands as organizational obligation to its employees, has only brought to the fore the fact that managers in Nigerian industries do not show kin interest towards employees welfare.

The failed actions of management may attract various forms of militant agitations by employees, disobedience to rules and acts of misconduct by the workforce. In the light of the above, managers in the industry may be left with the option of resorting to disciplinary actions. The process or approach adopted to implement discipline is what this thesis is set to examine. It also underlines the need for the management of employee grievance and disciplines through a positive managerial approach, and with respect to workplace discipline, when inevitable, through punitive means. Tamunomiebi (2019) has earlier advanced that it is the prerogative of organizational managers to handle disciplinary actions and to ensure that work rules are adhered to.

In modern organizations what should be clear is that such matters of discipline are likely to occur on organization's that the entire system has ignored and that later will threaten its functionality. This is the reason why management has to adapt to the changes in the work organizaiton and ensure that disciplinary issues are properly handled. Discipline is a sensitive and complex issue that requires managerial skills to handle in the workplace. Even though this role/function has been disputed over time by both labour and employees, prompting management to be silent over whose responsibility it really is to handle discipline, this function is however, one that is meant to be handled by line managers, human resource managers or the few industrial relations managers. According to

Cole (1986), this is so because line managers recently in many organizations are expected to handle disciplinary matters that arise in their sections, at least in the early stages.

Substantive Rules

The Substantive Rule of the organization being a subset of work rule is typified also by the state of employee discipline. (Chidi and Okpala, 2011) define substantive rules as rules that pertain to issues involving wages /salaries, hour of work and other terms and condition of employment. Substantive rules are rules made at workplaces that touch on the rights and procedures or pertain to individual workers. They basically touch on individual rights and settle such issues as pay, length of the working day, overtime, holidays and the way in which a job should be done and the time it should take (Ahiauzu, 1999). They also deal with such issues as: facilities for medical treatment, including the extension of medical facilities to families of the employees, pension, gratuity or end of service benefit, death benefit and expenses, and annual or year- end bonus is to be treated as ex-gratia payment.

All of these deal with issues fundamental to the conditions of service, which are subject to collective agreement. Substantive rule deals with such issues as: Rules on the condition of employment which are not negotiable, or which are perceived as managerial prerogative. facilities for medical treatment, including the extension of medical facilities to families of the employees, pension, gratuity or end of service benefit, death benefit and expenses, and annual or year- end bonus is to be treated as ex-gratia payment.

The regulation of substantive issues such as wages, fringe benefit and other conditions of employment cannot function without following the guidelines for their implementation. In the light of this, organizations and their managers are expected to consciously plan for the establishment of substantive rules to encourage healthy exchanges and also serve as a deterrent for incumbent offenders. At this point we stand to reason that when substantive rules are on ground, it readily serves as a 'watch dog' Mechanism to warn against deviant behaviours and misconduct or indiscipline. At the heart of conceiving the need for substantive rules in organization, we are to reason with Hackkett (1989) that substantive rules are necessary because, they are the framework upon which the procedure to follow depends; and without them there is no foundation for discipline to succeed in the workplace.

Procedural Rules

The procedural rule has to do with the process for implementing the substantive rules (Fashoyin, 2014). An enlightened program of organizational discipline will also perform the organizational self-consciousness in workers, function in training workers, in self-control and of inculcating respect for organizational rules (Johnnie and Nwasike, 2002). The main provision of procedural rules or agreement are: i) the declaration of principles of reaching and implementing collective bargaining agreements; ii) Aspiration of the parties is clear and unambiguous; iii) Highlighting the exclusion clauses such as showing those who are not to take part in industrial action; iv) Treatment of negotiable and non-negotiable subject at the workplace; v) the constitution of joint industrial council or National Industrial Council; vi) Grievances laying and resolution proceeding in term of both individual and collective disagreement; vii) Duration of agreement.

The procedural rules serve as the constitution of the labour management relationship (Imoisili, 1984). It is capable of creating the enabling industrial relations atmosphere when rules are obeyed. Procedural rules accords recognition to the union, and accepts the principle of co-operation and peaceful relationship between employees and their union on one hand, and their employers, on the other hand. According to Fashoyin (2014) the procedural rules agreement is precautionary; it serves as a cushion for preventing arguments on procedures which could arise

if the mode of relation had not been previously agreed hence, the significance of the procedural agreement become evident in the area of grievances. Fashoyin (2014) observed that the procedural agreement unlike other agreements embodies the initial negotiations that lays the foundation for the substantive issues especially in the wave of redundancies, dispute scenarios, when tempers rise and the state of labour relations is at its lowest procedural rules doubt becomes the path to preliminary understanding in an industrial relations atmosphere that is clouded by the herculean task of agreeing, first, that the issues in dispute will be subject for labour-management negotiation. This goes to show that on a broader note, procedural agreements are capable of laying down the rules and procedures governing the parties in industrial relations for as long as they wish the agreement to last. Hyman (1975) argues that the analysis of industrial relations should not only focus on trade unions as organization, but also on workers and their grievances and aspirations. These are actually rules that relate to the rules governing discipline, redundancy, settlement of disputes, periodicity of meetings renewal of collective agreement and the like (Chidi and Okpala, 2011).

Research Design

This study adopted is a cross-sectional research design.

Population of the Study

The population of the study was made up of 225 staff of 10 Electrical Engineering companies who are registered with the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) in south-south Nigeria. The population excludes casual workers who are not listed in the nominal roll of the firms or updated gazetted publications of the said firms. The population was restricted to only Electrical Engineering companies in the organized private sector to ease accessibility. The study therefore adopted the 2019 directory of the manufacturers Association of Nigeria (M A N) which is the latest version available.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

The simple random sampling method was also adopted to arrive at the study subjects. This is a good and fair representation of the 225 employees that have been identified as our population.

Methods of Data Analyses

The data generated through the quantitative instrument was first of all cleaned after which the items were coded and entered into the data editor of the SPSS. Frequencies, as well as descriptive such as the measures of central tendency (i.e. mean scores) and dispersion (i.e. standard deviation) were computed for the primary analysis, which focused on the study demographics and univariate analysis respectively. At the secondary level of analysis, inferential statistics such as Pearson r correlation coefficients and Regression coefficients including the p-values were calculated for purposes of answering the research questions and testing the research hypotheses. Correlation analyses using the Pearson r correlation were interpreted based on Guilford's (1956) scale giving in Irving (2005, p.16), thus: (a) $< .20$ = slight correlation, almost negligible; (b) $.20$ to $.40$ = low correlation, definite but small relationship; (c) $.40$ to $.70$ = moderate correlation, substantial relationship; $.70$ to $.90$ = high correlation, marked relationship; and (e) $> .90$ = very high correlation, very dependable relationship. According to (Irving 2005, p.16) the Guilford scale provides "a consistent means for interpreting the statistical correlations" and these interpretations should be evaluated in the light of the significance levels, which is set at p value of < 0.05 (one tailed). Kerlinger and Lee (2000) according to (Irving 2005, p.16) give guidelines for accepting or rejecting the null hypotheses as follows: (1) an r value of $< .20$ is the benchmark for accepting the null hypotheses.

Multivariate Data Analysis

The test for the moderating role of the dimensions of work rules, namely: substantive work rules and procedural work rules in addressed in this section of the study. The test for the moderating effects of these factors is carried out using the regression analysis and based on the Medina et al (2005) position and three-step mediation/moderating effect analysis. Where the test comprises of three steps: (a), regressing the moderator on the independent variable; (b), regressing the dependent variable on the independent variable; and (c), regressing the dependent variable on both the independent variable and on the moderator.

Substantive work rules moderating effect

The test for the moderating effect of substantive work rules on the relationship between workplace discipline and industrial relation atmosphere is reflected in the following hypothesis:

H₀₁: Substantive Work rules do not moderate the relationship that exists between workplace discipline and industrial relations atmosphere in electrical companies' south-south Nigeria.

Step one test for moderating effectiveness of substantive work rules

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.373	.248		1.502	.136
	Workplace Discipline	.849	.073	.715	11.615	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Substantive Work Rules

The first step of the test for the moderating role of substantive work rules is observed to be significant as demonstrated on table 4.18 where $P_v = 0.000$ and $t\text{-value} = 11.615$. Result indicates that workplace discipline significantly impacts on substantive work rules.

Step two and three tests for moderating effectiveness of substantive work rules

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
2	(Constant)	2.132	.189		11.277	.000
	Workplace Discipline	.191	.056	.289	3.431	.001
3	(Constant)	2.130	.191		11.127	.000
	Workplace Discipline	.187	.080	.283	2.338	.021
	Substantive Work Rules	.005	.067	.009	.072	.942

a. Dependent Variable: Industrial Relation Atmosphere

Table above demonstrates the step two and three of the tests for the moderating role of substantive work rules. The result indicates a significant direct impact of workplace discipline in step two (where $P_v = 0.001$) as well as step three (where $P_v = 0.021$) on industrial relation atmosphere; where the effect of substantive work on industrial work atmosphere is noted to be insignificant at step three (where $P_v = 0.942$). Based on the evidence presented, the result shows that Substantive work rules do not moderate the relationship that exists between workplace discipline and industrial relations atmosphere in electrical engineering companies' south-south Nigeria. The null hypothesis is accepted in this case.

Procedural work rules moderating effect

The test for the moderating effect of procedural work rules on the relationship between workplace discipline and industrial relation atmosphere is reflected in the following hypothesis:

H₀₂: Procedural Work rules do not moderate the relationship that exists between workplace discipline and industrial relations atmosphere in electrical engineering companies' south-south Nigeria.

Step one test for moderating effective of procedural work rules

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.305	.171		1.782	.077
	Workplace Discipline	.934	.050	.853	18.535	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Procedural Work Rules

The first step of the test for the moderating role of procedural work rules is observed to be significant as demonstrated on table 4.20 where $P_v = 0.000$ and $t\text{-value} = 18.535$. Result indicates that workplace discipline significantly impacts on procedural work rules.

Step two and three tests for moderating effective of procedural work rules

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.132	.189		11.277	.000
	Workplace Discipline	.191	.056	.289	3.431	.001
2	(Constant)	2.284	.172		13.306	.000
	Workplace Discipline	.655	.096	.991	6.853	.000
	Procedural Work Rules	-.497	.087	-.824	-5.693	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Industrial Relation Atmosphere

Table above demonstrates the step two and three of the tests for the moderating role of procedural work rules. The result indicates a significant direct impact of workplace discipline in step two (where $P_v = 0.001$) as well as step three (where $P_v = 0.000$) on industrial relation atmosphere; where the effect of procedural work on industrial work atmosphere is noted to be significant at step three (where $P_v = 0.000$) but not as substantial and evident compared to the direct effect (workplace discipline and industrial relation atmosphere). Based on the evidence presented, the result shows that procedural work rules do not moderate the relationship that exists between workplace discipline and industrial relations atmosphere in electrical engineering companies' south-south Nigeria. The null hypothesis is accepted in this case.

Mediating Effect of the 'Substantive Rules' and 'Procedural Rules' on the Influence of Workplace Discipline on Industrial relations Atmosphere.

The findings in this study indicate that substantive rules and procedural rules both exist in these companies, with strong manifestations. This is to reason that, organizational managers who are responsible for discipline administration in the different companies have sufficiently created an atmosphere in which workers participate in formulating goals and objectives, setting of standards for performance and developing appropriate norms as rules in the organization. Shared understanding between workers and management with reduced restriction can promote a harmonious industrial relations atmosphere. However, these organizational characteristics found in the companies under study only have direct and distinct implications for workplace discipline and

industrial relations atmosphere rather than a mediating influence. In this study therefore, the hypothesized causal relationships between workplace discipline and industrial relations atmosphere which were presumed not to be mediated by the substantive and procedural rules of the organization were not supported. We found that neither the substantive nor procedural rules mediate the influence of workplace discipline and industrial relations atmosphere.

1. This finding notwithstanding, have been able to establish through the results that the substantive and procedural rules, though not necessarily accounting for the relationship between workplace discipline and industrial relations atmosphere, which are nonetheless important variables within the organization and do independently associate with both workplace discipline as the predictor variable, and industrial relations atmosphere as the criterion variable. As electrical engineering companies apply progressive disciplinary mechanism, adversarial industrial relations atmosphere with indices as, conflict and industrial dispute is significantly decreased.

Scholars have poised as we have noted (Oji and Amucheazi, 2015; Girigiri, 2002; Venkatta Ratnam, 2013; Ahiauzu, 1999; Zeb-Obipi, 2018) that substantive work rule have projected Dunlop's (1956, 1958,) assertion that substantive rules are those rules that pertain to issues involving wages/ salaries, hour of work and other terms and condition of employment.

A learning organization is one in which learning of all organizational members is facilitated and that such an organization continuously transforms itself. Thus organizations and their managers are expected to consciously plan for the establishment of substantive rules that will encourage and promote the expected harmonious industrial relations atmosphere (Chidi and Okpala, 2011). From the outcome of this study, the substantive work rule is positively associated with workplace discipline and industrial relations atmosphere, indicating that workplace discipline practices just as well as industrial relations atmosphere, are likely to be enhanced where workers' adhere to work rules. Viewed in this sense, the researcher argues that the substantive work rules cannot be ignored when implementing a model of managerial control and transformation such as workplace discipline or when seeking for implementers of control that will initiate and enhance an harmonious industrial relations atmosphere.

CONCLUSION

These conclusions, which are drawn from the findings in this study offer a significant addition to studies on workplace discipline and add to the hitherto dearth of empirical studies investigating the association between workplace discipline and industrial relations atmosphere. In light of the growing focus on the scholarly thesis of workplace discipline, the results in this study indicates high degree of statistical significance, providing a high degree of confidence in the research outcomes and sufficient grounds for generalizing the findings to the entire study population. Towards this end an important issue that has come out clearly from this study is that work place discipline is essential for the maintenance of harmonious industrial relations atmosphere. This assertion which has been empirically verified in the present study has both theoretical and practical implications, which form the major thrust of the next two sections of this study.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the implications arising from the study outcomes, the following recommendations are made:

1. Efforts should be made by organizations and their managers in the electrical engineering companies to adopt curative discipline approach to discourage workers from further violations of the work rules and standards through the withholding of increments of offenders.
2. Managers should ensure the demotion to lower ranks of offenders.
3. Managers should ensure that offenders are assigned on shifts

4. Then through written warning if violators fail to comply.
5. Final warning should as well be issued with a threat of suspension.
6. Employee stands the risk of losing their job with or without pay when they refuse to adhere to these processes against them.

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