Relationship Between Work Ethics and Senior Non-Teaching Staff's Productivity in South-South Universities in Nigeria

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Abstract: This study examined the relationship between work ethics and senior non-teaching staff productivity in universities in South-South, Nigeria. Three research questions were raised and one was hypothesized to guide the study. [1]The descriptive survey correlational research design was adopted for the study. The target population of the study comprised 9,508 out of which Nine hundred and twenty-three (923) senior non-teaching staff were selected across south-south universities in Nigeria. The multistage and proportional-to-size sampling techniques were used in obtaining the sample size. The research instruments were questionnaires, titled, Work Ethics Questionnaire and Productivity Rating Scale. The reliability of the Work Ethics Questionnaire was 0.695 using Pearson (r). The Cronbach alpha, reliability of the Productivity Rating Scale was 0.734 at 0.05 level of coefficient. Mean rating and standard deviation were applied to answer research questions while the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to test the hypothesis formulated. Findings from the study revealed that the level of compliance of senior non-teaching staff with work ethics in South-South Universities in Nigeria was low. There was a significant relationship between work ethics and senior non-teaching staff productivity in south-south Universities in Nigeria. The study therefore recommended that senior non-teaching staff in South-South, Nigeria, improve their compliance with work ethics to increase their productivity within the University system.

Keywords: Work Ethics, Productivity and Senior Non-teaching Staff

Introduction

Work ethics is the attitude of a worker towards work duties about diligence, obligation to hard work, administration of assets, deterrence to indolence and waste. In the university system, having the right mindset to work is one of the prerequisites for productivity. It is posited that senior non-teaching staff of universities can exhibit work ethic attributes of accountability, organization of work duties, honesty, initiative, integrity,

leadership, dependability, respect for workplace values, no biased organizational choices, teamwork, good communication skills and proficiency at work. Adeyemi (2000) positioned that all these could lead to high productivity if adhered to. Work ethics are standards, opinions and procedures that dictate how an organization conducts its business. This senior non-teaching staff on (salary scale level) CONTISS 07 – 11 and CONTISS 13 and above is responsible to the office of the Registrar of the University (Omisore & Oyende, 2015). The staff is saddled with general administrative responsibilities of supervising, coordinating, allocating, guiding and delivering institutional programmes and services. The staff ensures work advances proficiently in coherence with established goals as stipulated within the university's provisions for the identification, assessment and provision of necessary administrative duties as required by students, other members of staff, visitors and the general public. Professional participation measures the degree to which a staff identifies with his/her performance and self-worth. Any job assigned to a person should be carried out with utmost honesty, without being deceitful, deceptive or larceny (Buff, Melinsky, Seifert & Van Ness, 2010). They are not to demand or receive money or kind from anyone in the performance of their duties except their normal entitlements.

Productivity is the total of goods produced or services rendered over a particular period. Adeniji, Adeyeye, Oludayo and Osinbanjo (2015) stated that productivity is perceived through appraisal of work done to ascertain whether a worker is competent or not to maintain the office which the worker occupies. The productivity of senior non-teaching staff can be viewed from the perspective of occupational expertise, cognate knowledge, approach to work duties, involvement on the job and leadership abilities. These are the driving forces for productivity. It makes employees be on their toes always to deliver and attain maximum productivity and efficacious utilization of available resources (Omisore & Oyende, 2015). Somers (2001) opined that when the workforce understands how a system operates, its peculiarities and functions there would not be incessant industrial actions that affect and diminish the accomplishment of organizational goals. Senior non-teaching staff should be schooled on what each individual requires to achieve organizational goals to avoid a laissez-faire attitude to work duties. Isiwu (2012) posited that productivity is a measure of how well resources are harnessed in organizations and utilized for accomplishing a set of results or maximization of resources. It is also reaching the highest level of productivity with the least available resources. It is the increased value added per worker or hour worked. The rate at which organizational workers produce results is matched by the quality and quantity produced. Staff productivity can be evaluated in terms of the output of an employee in a specific period.

In their study on work ethics as it affects the productivity of workers in the United States, Buff, Melinsky, Seifert, and Van Ness (2010) studied work professionals of two hundred and twelve (212) respondents in the United States. Their findings revealed that employee productivity is approximately 23% of variability in the dimensions of work ethics. The results showed a univariate F value of 2.38. This provided a better understanding of the influence of perceived productivity on individual constructs of work ethics. These constructs include self-reliance, dependability, proficiency and hard work in work workplace.

In a research study conducted by Kwame (2016) on *improving workers' productivity and work ethics in a recession in Trinidad;* the study found that 37% of staff in Trinidad out of 7000 employees in 50 companies were not adhering to work standards because of absenteeism. The rate of absenteeism which is one of the constructs of work ethics is affecting their productivity. This led to a productivity level of 18%, which is very low for any organization to grow.

When individuals working within an organization align their goals and aspirations in line with the organization's objectives, it shows a level of obligation to the organization's productivity. The study on work ethics in the United States by Somers (2001) among 340 respondents observed that 35% (121) of staff are aware of the ethical standards in operation in their organization. Sixty-five per cent (65%) of the respondents (319) were not even aware of any code of ethics let alone identify with any unethical behaviour within the workplace. Kott (2012) reiterated that a strong motivator of good work ethics is putting oneself aside to work toward the greater good of the organization as a whole. Senior non-teaching staff must be enterprising and creative in carrying out their duties (Nwadiani, 2000). Doing so leads to working toward goals rather than putting in the minimum effort. Employees should also be involved in the design and implementation of productivity measures to give them a sense of ownership in the process.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of compliance of senior non-teaching staff with work ethics in universities in South-South, Nigeria?
2. What is the level of productivity of senior non-teaching staff of universities in South-South, Nigeria?
3. Is there a relationship between work ethics and productivity of senior non-teaching staff of universities in South-South, Nigeria?

Hypothesis

Research questions 1-2 were answered, while 3 were hypothesized to guide the study.

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between work ethics and perceived productivity of senior non-teaching staff of Universities in South-South, Nigeria.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey correlational research design. The target population of the study comprised the 9,508 senior non-teaching staff of Universities in South-South, Nigeria. The sample comprised nine hundred seventy-three (973) senior non-teaching staff from selected Universities in South-South, Nigeria. The multistage sampling procedure and probability proportional to size sampling techniques were used. The instruments used for the study were a questionnaire and a rating scale. The questionnaire was tagged Work Ethics Questionnaire (WEQ). The rating scale instrument titled: Productivity Rating Scale (PRORS) was developed and used. From the sampled universities, fifty-eight (58) supervising officers (CONTISS 13 and above) completed the rating scale instrument. The reliability of the work ethics questionnaire was 0.695. Cronbach alpha was used to test the reliability of the productivity rating scale. The result was 0.734. In all, the instruments were administered to nine hundred and seventy-three (973) respondents and nine hundred and twenty-three (923) respondents returned the instrument. This gave a response rate of 0.949. Out of 973 instruments administered, 50 were not returned. Research questions 1 and 2 were analyzed, using mean scores and standard deviation. Research question 3 was hypothesized and analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research question one: What is the level of compliance of senior non-teaching staff with the work ethics of universities in South-South, Nigeria?

Table 1: **Mean rating of work ethics of senior non-teaching staff of universities in South-South, Nigeria**

WEQ Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Remarks
Accountability	923	2.24	0.83	Moderate
Reliability	923	2.21	0.82	Moderate
Organization of work duties	923	2.06	0.81	Moderate
Honesty	923	1.89	0.79	Low
Initiative	923	1.90	0.79	Low
Integrity	923	1.83	0.84	Low
Leadership	923	1.78	0.84	Low
Dependability	923	1.77	0.88	Low
Respect for workplace values	923	1.74	0.79	Low
No biased organizational choices	923	1.75	0.90	Low
Teamwork	923	1.76	0.90	Low
Good communication skills	923	1.82	0.86	Low
Proficiency at work	923	1.85	0.83	Low
Quality of work duties	923	1.95	0.91	Low
Selfless attitude to work	923	2.00	0.90	Moderate
Overall Average	**923**	**1.90**	**0.85**	**Low**

High, Level of Compliance (2.5 Rating Benchmark)

Moderately low: 2.00 -2.49 and Low: Below 2.00

To obtain the level of compliance of senior non-teaching staff with work ethics in South-South Universities, in Nigeria and the corresponding proportion, the respondents were asked to indicate appropriately between Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), Strongly Disagree (1). The data in Table 1 showed that out of fifteen (15) identified work ethics, the level of compliance with accountability (2.24); reliability (2.21); organization of work duties (2.06) and selfless attitude to work (2.00) were rated moderately. The level of compliance with work ethics among senior non-teaching staff in south-south universities was low on average. This included; honesty (1.89); initiative (1.90); integrity (1.83); leadership (1.78); dependability (1.77); respect for workplace values (1.74), no biased organizational choices (1.75); teamwork (1.76); good communication skills (1.82); proficiency at work (1.85); quality work duties (1.95). The overall mean score of 1.90 indicated that the level of compliance of senior non-teaching staff with work ethics in south-south universities in Nigeria was low.

Research question two: What is the level of productivity of senior non-teaching staff of universities in south-south, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean rating of perceived level of productivity of senior non-teaching staff of universities in south-south, Nigeria

LEVEL OF PRODUCTIVITY RATING SCALE	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Remarks
Occupational Expertise			
Thoroughness in handling jobs	2.06	0.79	Low
Resourcefulness	1.92	0.77	Low
Result-oriented	1.81	0.77	Low
Human relations	1.82	0.80	Low
Cognate Knowledge			
Reliability under pressure	1.80	0.82	Low
Ability to accept additional responsibility	1.80	0.81	Low
Computer literacy	1.91	0.88	Low
Professional competency	1.93	0.88	Low
Work Approach			
Oral expression	1.77	0.78	Low
Punctuality at work	1.66	0.79	Low
Attitude to authority	1.89	0.85	Low
Integrity	1.85	0.81	Low
Involvement on the Job			
Personal involvement on the job	1.85	0.85	Low
Understanding the university system	1.94	1.00	Low
Quality of work output	1.98	0.88	Low
Foresight	1.96	0.84	Low
Leadership Abilities			
Ability to accept corrections	1.84	0.80	Low
Organizational ability	1.87	0.79	Low
Demonstrate effective leadership skills	1.89	0.86	Low
Teamwork with others	1.91	0.78	Low
Overall Average	**1.88**	**0.83**	Low

High Productivity Level (3 Rating Benchmark)

Low Productivity Level: Below 3

To find the level of productivity of senior non-teaching staff of universities in south-south, Nigeria, supervisors (salary scale level - CONTISS 13 and above) of senior non-teaching staff were selected to complete the rating scale. The data in Table 2 showed that the level of productivity of senior non-teaching staff was generally low. The mean score of thoroughness in handling jobs was relatively higher than others (2.07) and punctuality at work (1.67) was the lowest. Resourcefulness (1.93); result-oriented (1.82); human relations (1.83); reliability under pressure (1.81); ability to accept additional responsibility (1.80); computer literacy (1.91); professional competency (1.94); oral expression (1.77); attitude to authority (1.89); integrity (1.86); personal involvement on the job (1.85); understanding the university system (1.92); quality of work output (1.98); foresight (1.97); ability to accept corrections (1.84); organizational ability (1.88); demonstrate effective leadership skills (1.90) and teamwork with others (1.92). The overall mean score of 1.88 indicated that the level of productivity of senior non-teaching staff in South-South Universities, Nigeria was low.

Table 3: Mean rating of grouped perceived level of productivity of senior non-teaching staff of universities in South-South, Nigeria

PERCEIVED LEVEL OF PRODUCTIVITY RATING SCALE	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Remarks
Occupational Expertise	1.91	0.78	Low
Cognate Knowledge	1.87	0.85	Low
Work Approach	1.80	0.81	Low
Involvement on the Job	1.93	0.89	Low
Leadership Abilities	1.89	0.83	Low
Overall Average	**1.88**	**0.83**	**Low**

Measuring the level of productivity of senior non-teaching staff was grouped into five divisions as shown in the data in Table 3. Senior non-teaching staff were relatively more productive in involvement on the job (1.93). This could be a result of senior non-teaching staff's involvement on the job, understanding the university system, quality of work output and having foresight at work. They were less productive in their work approach (1.80). This could be a result of not being punctual at work, bad oral expression, unethical attitude to authority and lack of integrity at the workplace. Other forms of measuring the level of productivity included occupational expertise (1.91); cognate knowledge (1.87); and leadership abilities (1.89); which were also relatively low. The overall mean score showed 1.88 which indicated a low level of productivity of senior non-teaching staff in South-South Universities, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between work ethics and productivity of senior non-teaching staff of universities in South-South, Nigeria.

Table 4: Pearson (r) correlation statistics between work ethics and productivity of senior non-teaching staff of universities in South-South, Nigeria

Universities	N	Pearson r-value	Sig (2-tailed)	Remark
Work Ethics	923			
		0.459	0.000	Reject
Perceived Productivity	923			

The data in Table 4 showed that nine hundred and twenty-three (923) senior non-teaching staff responded to the instrument on work ethics and perceived productivity. Using the Pearson (r) correlation coefficient to find the significant relationship between work ethics and perceived productivity of senior non-teaching staff of Universities in South-South, Nigeria, the results showed r = 0.459 with a p-value of 0.000 at 0.05 alpha level. These results implied that there was a significant relationship between work ethics and perceived productivity of senior non-teaching staff of universities in south-south, Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The result in Table 1 showed that out of fifteen (15) identified work ethics, the level of compliance with accountability, reliability, organization of work duties and selfless attitude to work was moderately low. This implied that senior non-teaching staff were more accountable, reliable, organized and selfless in handling work

duties. They were not complying with ethics like honesty, taking initiative in their jobs; integrity, leadership; respect; teamwork; good communication skills, unbiased affiliations, quality of work and proficiency. This could be a result of *man-know-man* and *god-fatherism* in operation within the system. These work standards are there in the university system as confirmed by Omisore and Oyende (2015) in their studies on ethical standards in the Nigerian public service. This is against the findings of Somers (2001) in the United States among 340 respondents observed that 35% (121) of staff were aware of the ethical standards in operation in their organization. They dully report wrong ethical practices within the system. Sixty-five Percent (65%) of respondents (319) were not even aware of any code of ethics let alone identify with any unethical behaviours within the workplace.

The data also showed that the perceived productivity level of senior non-teaching staff was low. It showed that senior non-teaching staff were not always punctual with a 1.66 mean score. This was affirmed to by Kwame (2016) that 37% of staff in Trinidad out of 7000 employees in 50 companies were not adhering to work standards because of absenteeism. This led to a perceived productivity level of 18%, which is very low for any organizational growth. Senior non-teaching staff were more productive in involvement on the job but were less productive in their work approach. This could be a result of low oral expression, not being punctual to work, poor attitude to authority and lack of integrity at the workplace.

It is further emphasized that for productivity levels to be high or low. This has been positioned by Adeniji et al (2015) to be occupational expertise, cognate knowledge, approach to work duties, involvement on the job and leadership abilities. Data in Table 4 showed that there was a significant relationship between work ethics and perceived productivity of senior non-teaching staff of universities in south-south, Nigeria. This is confirmed by the findings of Hill and Petty (2013). Among 1,151 respondents in public and private business industries in the Southeastern United States, 38.86% of staff complied with work ethics. This showed that 61.14% of staff did not comply with work ethics and as a result their productivity level was low. This indicated that workers cannot be productive if they do not imbibe accountability, reliability, organization of work duties, honesty, initiative, integrity, leadership, dependability, respect for workplace values, no biased organizational choices, teamwork, good communication skills and proficiency at work. It is believed that all these could lead to high productivity if adhered to.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that senior non-teaching staff did not comply with work ethics in Universities in South-South, Nigeria. The productivity of senior non-teaching staff in these universities was relatively low as a result of their non-compliance with work ethics. Furthermore, it was concluded that the level of productivity of senior non-teaching staff was largely related to a high level of compliance with work ethics in the university system.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made.

Senior non-teaching staff within the university system should adhere to work ethics which include accountability, reliability, organization of work duties, honesty, initiative, integrity, leadership, dependability, respect for workplace values, no biased organizational choices, teamwork, good communication skills, proficiency, quality of work duties and selfless attitude to work. This could be reinforced through spelling out responsibilities and work duties; assignment and delegation of authority at the workplace; creating open opportunities for employees; and innovative technologies. The use of electronic time machines to monitor

punctuality and staff movements within the University system. This could lead to improved compliance levels of senior non-teaching staff with work ethics in South-South Universities in Nigeria.

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