

A STUDY OF EMPLOYEES' RELATIONS IN THE FEDERAL MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT, ABUJA

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the effect of employee relations on the employees' performance in the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Abuja, Nigeria. Simple random sampling technique was adopted for the study with the use of structured questionnaire to obtain the required information from the respondents. The descriptive statistics employed involved simple percentages and tables, while correlation analysis was utilized as the inferential statistics. The findings of the study established positive and significant relationship between labour - management relations and employees' work performance in the ministry. The study therefore recommends improved effective communication between the management and the entire workforces; the superiors and subordinates; and co-staff so as not to only minimize disputes, but to as well reduce any misunderstanding that may arise in the ministry in future, while also affording these workers with the opportunity to interchange ideas, opinions and feelings with the management of the ministry.

Keywords: Employee's Commitment; Employee's Performance; Employee Relations; Corporate Performance; and Grievance Management

INTRODUCTION

The increase in competition, frequent changes in customers' needs, influence of technology coupled with globalization in the dynamic business world have forced both multi-national and local organizations into being driven towards maintaining good employee relations so as to enhance their performance and boost productivity. This is also due to the fact that employee relation has turned into the driving force of competitive organizations in the international business environment with a view to maintain good interrelationships among different stakeholders (Armstrong, 2006). In the present-day business environment, the need for an employee relationship management in the workplace is indispensable following the growing size of the organizations as this is required in helping the organization in strategizing the overall growth of the establishment which includes the growth of every employee.

The continuous maintenance of healthy employee relationship through effective management is one of the key conditions for organizational success as effectiveness of an establishment is only possible where there is great working relationships between management and its workforces. Therefore, the requisite to manage this relationship has always been at the vanguard ever since the commencement of industrial revolution, given that effective employee relationship management is crucial to the place of work, be it at the recruitment time, employees' tenure or event at the time of separation from work (Rose, 2008).

An employee relation is a general term that integrates a number of issues such as collective bargaining, dialogues, work legislation, work-life balance, equal opportunities and diversity management. It also encompasses initiatives for guaranteeing workers' happiness and productivity as it makes employees' recognition, policy development and interpretation with dispute resolution possible. Employee relation is equally related to sustaining employee-employer relation, which promotes satisfactory productivity, rise in workers' morale and motivation (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2010). In the organization, the effective management of employees' relationship is crucial so as to make sure that all workers perform together as indivisible entity contributing meaningfully towards the achievement of a common goal as hardly can any task be successfully undertaken in the event of continuous engagement of conflicts and misunderstanding by the organization's actors. However, targets are easily met at a much faster rate where the workforces work together in unison and in an occasion where a warm relationship with one another is shared, and where barriers to successful job performance are easily got ridden of, while a positive work environment is being fostered.

In the workplace, both the management and its employees are confronted with various complicated challenges. Management of the organization is used to setting goals and having predetermined objectives which have to be realized, thus requiring the hiring of competent individuals. However, these individuals most often do have their personal goals and targets conflicted with those of the workplace, thereby resulting to discrepancy, disharmony, and fight which start from slight difference in opinions to serious dissonance. All these often lead to low or poor work performance in the organization as cordial relationship between management and its workers might have been shattered as a result; thereby stopping management and workers from achieving their set goals. So, in such a state, there is mostly low employees' morale, reduced productivity leading to pay cut, absence of promotion and maintenance culture (Onwu, 2012). It is however, unfortunate that management of many workplaces is found wanting in the awareness of the effect of dearth of communication for organizational productivity, effective communication of information to the workers since this could prompt these workforces into putting their efforts in the proper direction so as to prevent waste. It is therefore worthy of understanding by the workers at all times of what is going on if they are to undertake workplace's activities confidently and happily as they are expected to be motivated for their best to be offered in view of the fact that gone are the days when money alone motivates an employee as secured tenure of office coupled with job satisfaction are what are currently necessary.

However, this study was undertaken with a focus on the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Abuja, Nigeria as a case study, while the rationale behind this was based on the staff's frequent grievances, that is, numerous complaints and strife among staff and the authority as there had been previously numerous objections against poor employee relations with the management in the ministry. Hence, it is therefore considered necessary to see monopoly of decision making by the management of the ministry as a problem disrupting peaceful co-

existence of management – employee relations since industrial democracy is a necessity for workers to share in the control of the organization so as to ensure their commitment for the overall corporate performance.

However, it is observed that there seems a lack of studies as to the impact of labour – management relationships and effects in Nigeria. The undertaken and known studies were restricted to the tertiary institutions. Currently, none of these studies focused on government ministries or agencies in the country. For example, Ikechukwu, Ema and Ndukwe (2016) researched on the effect of leadership influence on labour management relations in Ebonyi State University, Southeastern Nigeria. This research thus covers literature gaps by exploring the relationship between employees’ relations and performance in the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Abuja, Nigeria.

Research Questions

- i. What is the relationship between labour – management relations and employees’ performance?; and
- ii. What is the relationship between effective employees’ motivation and employees’ performance in the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Abuja?

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are:

- i. to assess the relationship between labour - management relations and employees’ performance;; and
- ii. to ascertain the relationship between effective employees’ motivation and employees’ performance in the study area.

Hypotheses of the Study

Ho₁: Labour - Management relation does not have any significant relationship with employees’ Performance; and

Ho₂: Employees’ Motivation does not have any significant relationship with employees’ performance in the Federal Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development, Abuja.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Employee Relations

Employees are believed to be one of the organization's crucial resources and as most valuable assets involving the maintenance of a work environment that satisfies each individual and management’s needs. According to Oluchi (2013), employee relation is therefore referred to as a process involved by the organization to effectively manage its interactions with the workforces so as to achieve the set goals. That is, the act of effectively monitoring and managing the relationship between persons either of the same group or different teams as the management’s activities assist in strengthening the bonds among the workforces so as to ensure that everyone is not only

contented, but also enjoys a healthy relationship with each other in the workplace. Also, to Ana-Maria and Ana – Iolanda (2017), employee relation is the concept useful in describing the process between employers and employees, management and unions so as to arrive at decisions in the workplace as the taken decisions include salaries or wages, conditions of work, working hours, protection at work, security, then grievances. Therefore, employee relationship management includes both formal and informal relations existing between managers and those whom they manage as effectiveness of the workplace begins with the clearly written policies showing the organization's rules, philosophy and procedures that address employee related matters.

This as well includes guidelines that are typically found in a collective bargaining agreement or document that is negotiated between the employer and the employees' unions as owners of businesses desiring competitive advantage over and above the rivals at a world-class level must have clear understanding of the human side of their organizations and business processes. The business executives are therefore required to be social architects capable of working across the organization's levels and functions with continuous improvement on the business process, promoting a favourable atmosphere for innovation, risk-taking, self-directed teamwork, commitment, quality and self-improvement. This is due to the reality that survival and growth in the twenty-first century are dependent on the management of organization's ability to learn and use suitable human skills for motivation and inspiration of all those involved in their business (Jansen, Curseu & Vermeulen, 2013). This is also in addition to the need to have long-term customer's and employee's relationships capable of carrying the organization through the challenging and difficult times, as well as relationships with other business owners so as to share struggles, resources and best practices which can really guarantee them an edge as the relationship between employer and employee is conflicting in nature due to the divergence in their aspirations and interests (Ekwoaba & Danesi, 2020).

Techniques of Employee's Relations

As stated by Karanja (2011), employees' relationship with the employer or organization's management is capable of being maintained or strengthened through the adoption of techniques such as:

i. Monetary Reward

Drucker (1999) maintains that financial reward is one of the strongest means through which ties between the employer and the employees can be strengthened as economic incentives are turning out to be more acceptable than any form of rewards and given that we are living in a money motivated era. However, hardly is there any amount of human relations that is capable of compensating for lack of monetary reward, since this can serve as an effective method to pay for excellent performance and re-enforcement of workers in an alignment with organizational goals and acting as well as the catalyst for enhanced performance and improved productivity.

ii. Pleasant Working Conditions and Job Enrichment

Improvement of working conditions for employees is a necessity for smooth and hit – free employee relations as workers in the workplace also have aspirations and needs to be promptly met and adequately satisfied. Karanja (2011) therefore holds that this class of employees' expectation centres on the efforts of organization to ensure that those aspirations and needs relating to the offer of good working environment are met.

iii. Promotion, Offer of Credits for Work Well Undertaken and Job Security

The credit for work properly done by an employee can be offered by the management of the organization through monetary rewards, verbal praise, and public recognition, while elevation as at well due should always be accorded the deserving workers. Job security is of high priority for some labour unions and many workers that they represent. The adoption of these is capable of building up employee relations at work in no small measure.

iv. Formal Communication

In relations to Karanja (2011), key is the aspect of keeping workers abreast of the general matters bothering on their work roles if employee relations at work must be a success as communication coupled with consultation within the organization facilitates increased understanding of the management's actions.

v. Employee's Participation

This involves employees participating in decision making processes of the organization. Employees' participation implies the practice in which workers are allowed to play a part in the organization's decision - making given that it is built on the interest between employer and employee so as to further the long-term prospects of the organization and those working in it (British Institute of Management, 1977).

Concept of Employees' Performance

Performance refers the act having to do with doing something with a view to achieve the anticipated aim through the adoption of the gained experience rather than merely having it. As defined by Mengzhong (2016), performance is the identification, measurement and then management of what matters, all with the aim of improving the effectiveness, efficiency of the organization This is more or less a behaviour or what an employee does, and not what has been produced by him (Riyadi & Soeling, 2019). Akanbi (2011) therefore considers employee's performance as the ability of a worker to undertake his or her job, which is assessable in qualitative or quantitative term as this is equally appraisable from the behaviour of the employee, and which is in conformity with the organization's norms and values. The term can as well be referred to as the combined result of efforts, capability, and perceptions of tasks (Ibeme & Obioji, 2019). To Mano (2019), the concept indicates the extent at which human services could achieve social impact in the workplace. In relation to (Lameck, 2014), employee's performance is therefore a process of employing the co-operation of the workplace's employees so as to accomplish new aspects of a particular task. Said, Ahmad, Zahari, and Salleh (2015) also defined the concept of employee's performance from the contextual viewpoint by maintaining that individuals with higher contextual performance are likely to be more committed and gratified with their work than those having low contextual performance since this is a sign that work commitment together with job satisfaction are orchestrators of contextual performance. Said, Ahmad, Zahari, and Salleh (2015) argue further that work performance is likely to rise when an employee enjoys his assigned tasks given that this will prompt him to be more dedicated to duties as all these depend on the degree of motivation from his workplace.

Concept of Motivation

Motivation was derived in relations to Re'em (2011) from the Latin word "motus," which is a form of the verb "movere" meaning to move, effect, excite and affect. According to Shanks (2012), motivation refers the act which has to do with the provision of inner drives that propel a

person into an action. According to Shanks (2012), motivation means the process which has to do with the provision of inner drive that propel a person into an action. Buchanan (2010) defines the term as a decision-making process by which an individual makes a selection of the desired outcomes and sets in motion the action that he considers necessary. Motivation as a term implies a force that sustains or modifies a behaviour's consistency and direction. It is the guiding force that inspires into an effort anyone who is an employee so as to understand the organization's objectives. Dubrin (2012) considers the motivation of employees as the forces starting and holding an individual at work. It is something that makes it possible for a person to be put into action and to proceed in the course of action that has already been started. It is further maintained that the motivation of the employee means the manner in which a worker is being stimulated at work so as to intensify his ability into investing his energies on achieving the goals of the workplace. Thomas (2012) contends that since the desire of each workplace is to obtain and enjoy the complete cooperation of its workers, all efforts should therefore be guided towards ensuring that their motivation is influenced by incentives or rewards, good leadership and, most importantly, by acknowledging the work well done. This is to ensure a working atmosphere that goes a long way towards ensuring that workers produce results that will be in line with the standards of the management promptly.

The Relationship between Employee Relations and Work Performance

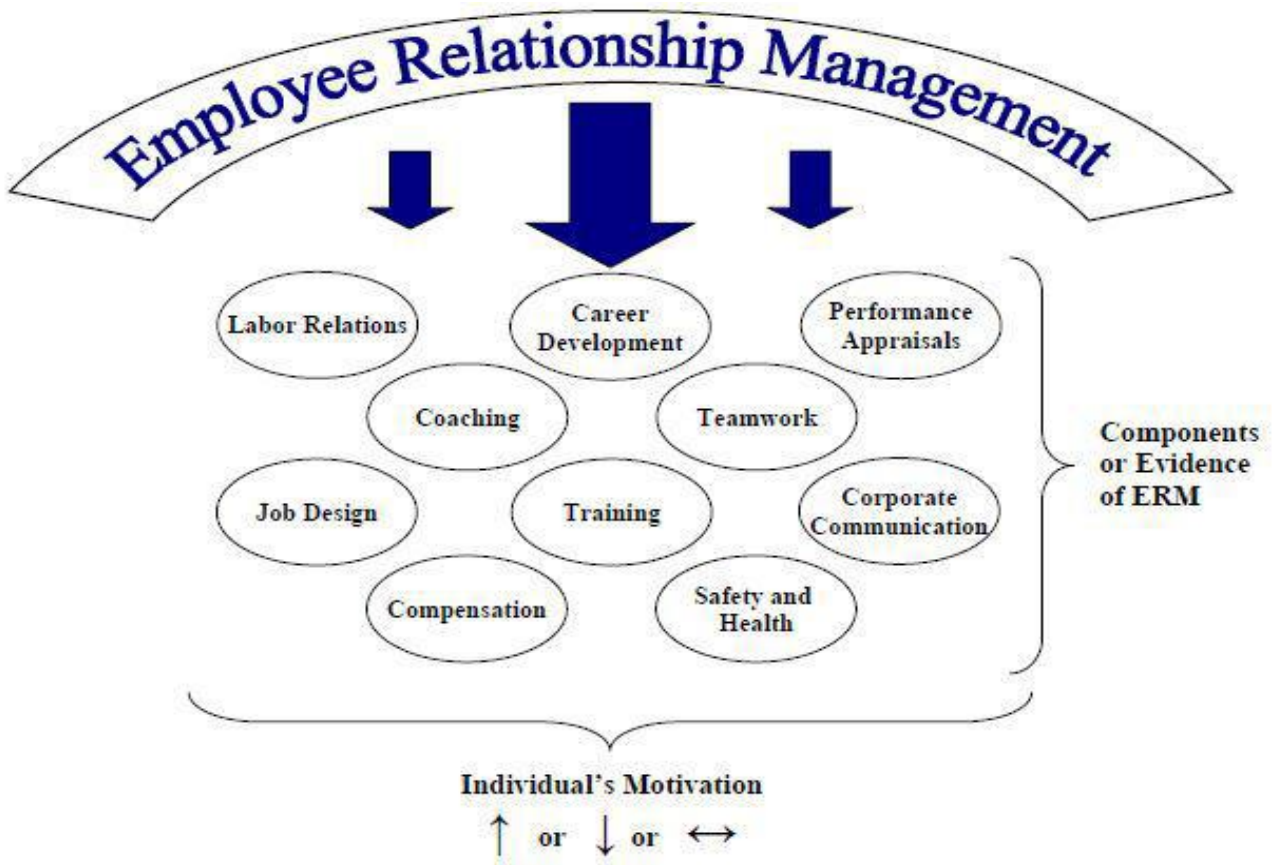
In any establishment, the relationship between the employer and the workers is a determinant of any organizational success as good ties between employer and employee are directly linked to work satisfaction (Armstrong, 2006). Therefore, organization's performance evaluation against employees increases job satisfaction which thereafter results in better and higher work performance among workers. Timely feedback given by bosses to workers allows employees to recognize their weaknesses and develop their abilities in a better way to work. In the organizational sense, disciplinary processes implemented by the workplace dictate how the place of work identifies and responds to the employees' disciplinary issues. Transparency and efficient disciplinary contact strengthen employer-employee ties (Garrido, Rez & Ant, 2005), while effective conflict management techniques within the organization, such as counseling, preparation, mediation and facilitation as well go a long way to make stronger the relationship between workers and employers thereby increasing work performance. The ability of workers to join the trade union of their choice as a right often affects positively the spirit of team work in an organization so as to perform well. In the evolving market climate, workers who are members of labour unions appear to feel secured and have a say over their employers (Sweney & McFarlin, 2005).

The model of firm-employee relationship intensity by Herington, Johnson and Scott (2009) is the only model used in this study. The intensity of the firm-employee relationship model includes seven main elements that signify the depth and significance of a relationship: cooperation, balance of power, coordination, connection, mutual interests and values, faith and the absence of damaging conflict as reflected in Figure 1. Affective loyalty is the desired consequence of firm-employee relationship strength, reflecting the ultimate objective of establishing relationships between an organization and its employees (Herington et al., 2009).

Theoretical Framework

There exist a number of motivational theories such as Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory, Herzberg’s two-factor theory, expectancy theory, goal-setting theory, and McClelland’s needs for achievement theory among others as the concept of performance or productivity is theoretically built on the theory of motivation (Bateman & Zeithaml, 1993; Esu & Inyang, 2009; Kreitner, 1998). However, this theoretical review section describes both Herzberg’s two-factor theory and also social exchange relationship theory, and how they are related to this study.

Figure1. Employee Relationship Management Model



Source: Adopted from Wargborn (2008)

Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory

Two-factor theory was developed by psychologist Frederick Herzberg who posited that work satisfaction and job dissatisfaction function independently. The theory otherwise known as the motivation-hygiene theory of Herzberg (1965) notes that there are some factors in the organization that trigger job satisfaction, while a separate collection of factors contribute to dissatisfaction. According to Herzberg, the fulfillment of lower-order needs at work is not met

by individuals, such as those aligned with minimum wage levels or healthy and friendly working conditions. Instead, individuals are searching for the satisfaction of psychological higher-level needs related to success, validation, accountability, development and the essence of the job itself. Till date, this theory seems to be parallel to the principle of a need hierarchy by Maslow (Armstrong, 2008). This stems from the assertion that it is only when workers are pleased or satisfied by the manner in which their employers treat them that they can make the organization's consumers or clients happy. This is therefore considered a key factor in enhancing performance which ultimately results in greater operational results for the workplace.

Social Exchange Relationship Theory

Social exchange relationship theory was propounded in 1958 by George Homans. Homans described social exchange as the tangible or intangible activity that is either costly or rewarding between two individuals or among more people, in that costs and benefits are central to the reality of this theory as the benefits of the theory's key concept comprise financial gains, material comforts, emotional comfort, and social status, while costs consist of time, money and loss of opportunities. The theory therefore maintains that the people's resolutions are determined most often by the benefits and costs accrued on them resulting from the actual decisions. According to Niklas and Dormann (2005), human beings are used to building relationships based on the perceived benefits or advantages that are hoped to be gained. So, a person can quickly put an end to a relationship when his efforts or costs are higher than the benefits that the relationship brings. Thus, every social relation is centered on the perceived outcome as the costs and benefits difference. Therefore, individuals expect return for what they too had earlier given out to others since those who receive something from counterparts would be under serious pressure to return the same later, given that what is offered by a man could be seen as a cost, while what the person obtains is considered a reward. So, a person's behaviour is influenced by the exchanges' profits.

However, the social exchange relationship theory is considered more suitable to this study because it makes it possible to know that employees in the workplace have high tendency to form a cordial relationship and also co-operate well with their employer only if they sense that they are receiving or will receive something satisfactory or worthwhile in the long run. So, benefits received by the workers from their employers in terms of salaries, promotions, training and development, delegations of authority, improved working conditions, fringe benefits, friendship creation at work, and involvement in social activities such as lunch sharing or partying do influence employees' job satisfaction in no small measure, while also helping in strengthening bonds between them and their employers.

Empirical Studies

Onwu (2012) assessed the effects of labour management relations on workers' performance with a focus on the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN). The study made use of both primary and secondary sources of data collection as the obtained data were analyzed utilizing tables, percentages, and statistical distribution. The findings of the study revealed that variables of labour relations (workers' motivation, clarity of communication to the employees as at when due together with employees' participation in organization' decision – making) have positive and meaningful effect on employees' work performance in PHCN.

Charlen – Ivy and Hadge (2017) examined the effect of employee’s relations on job performance in an engineering, construction and manufacturing company in Batangas Province, Philippine. The study utilized frequency distribution and percentage to describe the socio-demographic profile of the respondents, while weighted mean was adopted for the determination of the average scores of the respondents. The finding of the study established a positive and significant relationship between employee’s relations and performance in the studied establishment as there are friendly interpersonal relationship among the workforces in each department of the organization and also cordial interface between the organization’s management and its workers.

In the study undertaken by Ackon (2018) on employee relations and productivity with the selected publishing firms in the Accra metropolis as a case study, non-interventional quantitative research design, correlational study design, and multi-stage sampling method were adopted. The study utilized structured questionnaires as the instrument of data collection. The data collected were therefore analyzed with the employment of descriptive statistical tools such as median and mean coupled with Pearson’s correlation coefficient as the inferential statistics via version 21 of SPSS. The findings of the study showed that there is pleasant employee-employer relations in the selected publishing firms in Accra Metropolis as employee-employer relations had a positive and significant relationship with the productivity of the firms.

However, in view of the geographical locations and cultural settings of the establishments under study in the reviewed researches above, and the differences in the employees’ perceptions of these case study organizations, hence, further researches on employees’ relations and its effect.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study was carried out on employees’ relations and its effect with the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Abuja, Nigeria as a focus. The study utilized survey method via the adoption of questionnaire to acquire needed information from the respondents. The method was used as a result of its ability to make possible the collection of quantitative data which were analyzed quantitatively with the employment of descriptive and inferential statistics. The method was considered suitable for the study as more reliable and definite responses from the respondents could be obtained through it.

Study Population / Sample Size

The study’s population was made up of the whole members of staff in the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Abuja, Nigeria adding up to One Thousand and One (1,001) workforces. The figure was founded on the obtained information in the course of carrying out this study. The study’s sampling size was Two Hundred and Eighty Six (286) workers of the ministry as Guilford and Flutter’s formula was used to determine this, where

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Q^2 N}$$

and n = Sample size, N = Population of the study

Q = Tolerable error (5%).

However, out of Two Hundred and Eighty Six (286) copies of distributed questionnaire, Two Hundred and Thirty Eight (238) copies were properly filled, given back and analyzed for the study.

Sources of Data

The study adopted primary data source through the use of questionnaire for obtaining the required data from the respondents during which some suitable textbooks and journals were also accessed and used for this study.

Research Instrument

The employed instrument of data collection for the study was questionnaire with the use of simple random sampling technique. The questionnaire comprises two sections, namely, section A and section B. The section A was embodied with bio-data variables as it was meant for collecting respondents' personal information, while the section B had two distinct segments. Segment One contained questions envisioned to assess the relationship between labour - management relations and employees' performance in the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Abuja; then the Segment Two incorporated questions aimed at ascertaining the relationship between effective employees' motivation and employees' performance in the study area as some of the questions were embraced from preceding studies having high validity and reliability coefficient which were modified for the study's use. From the reviewed literature, the questionnaire was updated and checked by a specialist with enormous experience in questionnaire design for research. The questionnaire was organized in a way that respondents could easily understand it and was also well crafted in a close-ended manner using four Likert-scale 1 = intensely disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agreed, and 4 = intensely agreed. The alpha of the Cronbach, that is, an instrument's reliability calculation of all sub-scales, is large with coefficients between 0.70 and 0.85.

Methods of Data Analysis

The study utilized both descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics encompassed simple percentages and frequency tables; while inferential statistical tool applied was correlational analysis. The simple percentage and tables were for explanation of the respondents' demographic characteristics, while correlation was for the test of the study's hypotheses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study's analysis is presented from the Table 1 through Table 3 as the analysis of the obtained data was built on Two Hundred and Thirty Eight (238) copies of questionnaire that were correctly filled and returned out of Two Hundred and Eighty Six (286) copies distributed.

The result in the Table 1 shows that 115 out of 238 respondents are males in the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Abuja, Nigeria and this gives 48.6% of the whole respondents, while 123 out of 238 respondents are females and this constitutes 51.4% of the total respondents. It is therefore implies that majority of the respondents were females in the ministry. Similarly, the result above reveals that 84 out of 238 respondents are between the age of 21-30 years and this represents 38.5% of the whole respondents, while 107 out of 238 respondents are

between the age 31-40 years, and this constitutes 46.8% of the total respondents, then 21 out of 238 respondents are between the age 41-50 years, and this as well represents 7.3% of the total respondents, while 26 respondents are 51 years and above signifying 7.3%. Therefore, the implication is that the ministry prefers to engage middle-aged with experience for better work commitment and prompt discharge of assigned duties. Also in the table, the distribution of respondents by marital status revealed that 79 out of 238 respondents are single, and it gives 32.1% of the total respondents, 121 out of 238 respondents is married and this gives 63.3% of the whole respondents, while 38 out of 238 respondents are divorced and this corresponds to 4.6% of the total respondents. The result brings to the height that the majority of the respondents sampled were married.

Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Socio-demographic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender:		
Female	123	48.6
Male	115	51.4
Total	238	100
Age (Years):		
less than 26years	84	38.5
26-35years	107	46.8
36-45years	21	7.3
46years and above	26	7.3
Total	238	100
Marital Status:		
Single	79	32.1
Married	121	63.3
Separated, divorced or widowed	38	4.6
Total	238	100
Educational Qualifications:		
OND/NCE	49	19.3
Bachelor Degree/HND	74	32.1
Master's Degree	59	23.9
Others	56	24.8
Total	238	100
Work Experience (Years):		
<5years	58	20.2
5-9years	116	63.3
10-14years	28	4.6
15years and above	36	11.9
Total	238	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020

More also, the table presents the distribution of the respondents by educational status, revealing that 49 respondents have NCE/OND qualification and this stands for 19.3% of the whole

respondents, 74 respondents have HND/B.Sc./BA qualification and this gives 32.1% of the total respondents. However, 59 respondents have MSc/MA qualification, and this represents 23.9% of the whole respondents, while 56 respondents have others qualification and it is 24.8% of the total respondents. This means that majority of the ministry’s workforces possess what it is required to function or perform effectively at work as they represent an average score of 32.1%. The table further shows that 20.2% of the respondents in the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Abuja have less than 5 years’ work experience. Also, 63.3% has 6-10 years of work experience, 4.6% has 11-15 years, while 11.9% has spent 16 years and above in the ministry. This therefore suggests that most of the staff of the ministry have been working for 6-10 years, meaning that the ministry has reasonable members of staff already possessed with the requisite measures of work experience which are essential for the enhanced performance and quality service delivery.

TEST OF HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: Labour - Management relations does not have any significant relationship with employees’ performance in the Federal Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development, Abuja

Table 2: Correlation Exhibiting the Relationship between Labour – Management Relations and Employee’ Performance in Federal Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development, Abuja

Correlation		Labour - Management Relations	Employees’ Performance
Labour- Management Relations	Pearson Correlation	1	.193*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.044
	N	238	238
Employees’ Performance	Pearson Correlation	.193*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.044	
	N	238	238

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

Source: Author’s Computation, 2020

Table 2 displays the nature of relationship that subsists among the factors of labour – management relations and employees’ performance. It was established that labour – management relations as shown by its correlation coefficient of 0.193 is with the P values of 0.001; thus implying that as the ministry continues to intensify efforts in building more and pleasant relationship with its staff members, the more it will be possible for the authority in the ministry to realize the different ways in which the ministry can easily and promptly achieve its set goals. As a result, hypothesis one was unsupported by the result of the study, and it is afterward

rejected. Thus, it can be concluded that labour – management relations has positive and significant relationship with the employees’ performance in the ministry. This finding is in coherence with the findings of the studies being conducted by Charlen – Ivy and Hadge (2017); and Ackon (2018) respectively.

The finding of Charlen – Ivy and Hadge (2017)’s study established a positive and significant relationship between employee’s relations and employees’ performance in the studied organization as employees across all the units of the workplace enjoyed interpersonal relationship among themselves and equally had good relationship with the organization’s management which resulted in their performance. The result of the study conducted by Ackon (2018) equally showed pleasant and meaningful relationship between employee-employer relations and productivity in the Accra selected publishing firms.

Hypothesis Two

Ho₂: Employees’ Motivation does not have any significant relationship with employees’ performance in the Federal Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development, Abuja

Table 3: Correlation Showing the Relationship between Employees’ Motivation and Employees’ Performance in Federal Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development, Abuja

Correlation		Motivation	Employees’ Performance
Motivation	Pearson Correlation	1	.213*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.026
	N	238	238
Employees’ performance	Pearson Correlation	.213*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.026	
	N	238	238

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

Source: Author’s Computation, 2020

Table 3 indicates the kind of relationship that occurs among the factors of motivation and employees’ performance. It was shown that workforce motivation as reflected by the correlation coefficient of 0.213 is with the P values of 0.001, suggesting that the more the employees’ motivation in the ministry, the higher and better will be the work performance of the ministry’s employees as more would be known about the dissimilar means through which the staff’s tasks could be undertaken properly. Therefore, hypothesis two was not supported by the result of the study, and it is then rejected, hence, it can be concluded that there is positive and significant

relationship between effective employees' motivation and employees' work performance in the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Abuja. This finding corroborates the findings of the study carried out by Onwu (2012) on the effect of labour - management relations on workers' performance in the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN). The finding revealed that positive and significant relationship exists between variables of labour relations (effective workers' motivation, clarity of communication to the employees as at when due and employees' participation in the organization' decision – making), and employees' work performance in PHCN.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Following the findings of the study, it could be maintained that good relationships between employers and employees do not just happen; they are the result of a strategy and activities designed by the employee relations managers in Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Abuja so as to ensure improvement in the communication between the management and its workforces. It could also be inferred that employee relations management in the ministry creates ways to boost employees' attitudes in that this incorporates labour and employment laws and human resource expertise in developing practices adequate enough to improve the working relationship in the ministry. It could therefore be concluded that labour – management relations has positive and significant relationship with the employees' performance; and also that there is positive and significant relationship between effective employees' motivation and employees' work performance in the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Abuja.

Recommendations

Resulting from the findings of the study that there is employee relations' practice in the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Abuja and that there is positive together with significant relationship between employee relations and work performance in the ministry, it is therefore recommended that:

- i. For continuous sustenance of employee relations practice, and to strengthen this, the authority in the ministry should endeavour to conduct effective training and re-training exercise for the staff of the ministry on the regular basis. This should be coupled with the organization of frequent job activities' related seminars so as to draw the best performance from each member of staff and bind them together in unity.
- ii. The authority in the ministry should equally ensure improved effective communication between the management and the entire workforces; the superiors and those who are under them; and co-staff so as not to only minimize clashes or dispute, but to as well reduce any misunderstanding that may arise in the future. Therefore, all staff members should be given opportunity to interchange ideas, opinions and feelings with the management, while they should always be consulted and involved in the decision making of the ministry as at when due, since these will improve trust between the management and the workers.
- iii. The authority in the ministry should similarly make it a policy in the ministry to always acknowledge and celebrate extra – ordinary performance and accomplishment of its staff. This is to heighten the moral and eagerness of such an employee subsequently, and to

excite others in the ministry to work hard for the ministry, while the authority should not neglect soliciting from everyone at work good or helpful counsel on how to make the ministry's future plans better.

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