Industrial Harmony and Productivity in Lafia Local Government Secretariat

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Abstract

The paper examines the impact of industrial harmony on productivity in Lafia local government council of Nasarawa state. The research is guided by two hypotheses. The social system theory of Talcott Persons was adopted as a framework of analysis. The samples size of 140 respondents was used for the study with the aid of purposive sampling. The study used both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection, such as administration of questionnaire and available records. Chi-square (X²) method was used to test the research hypotheses. The findings from the hypotheses revealed that, there is a significant relationship between industrial harmony and efficiency of work and maximum productivity. The study concludes that, industrial harmony is very central to the success of job efficiency and maximum productivity in Lafia local government council. The study recommended that, managers should realize the importance of harmonious work relationship among the employees as a measure towards achieving the desire objectives of the organization.

Keywords: Industrial Harmony, Productivity, Organizational goal, Motivation, Efficiency

Introduction

Industrial harmony is the major pillar for attaining organizational productivity. Disharmony among employee and or between and their employers has over the years been a subject of concern to all and have been attributed to the low level of performance and productivity in most organizations. This is as a result of absence of, or non adherence to the ethics that guide personnel conducts and other work related functions. Corroborating the foregoing, Akinwade, (2011) opined that the Nigeria workplace context had for decades been embattled in the demands for increased concern on issues that relate to employer-employee relationship which is a form of motivation., In recent times, industrial disharmony is assuming unprecedented proportion in Lafia local government secretariat. Like in other areas, the effect of disharmony is devastating such as interpersonal conflict, lack of a shared vision, poor leadership, and weak communication. Albert and Yahaya (2013), argued along this line that the pattern of industrial relations in Nigeria has been conflictual in nature with disruptive consequences and significant work-stoppages. When it’s dealt with in a healthy, productive manner, disharmony is temporary, even fleeting sometimes. But if left unresolved, it can inflict a lot of negative effects on the health of organization productive capabilities. Industrial harmony is concerned with the relationship between employees in both in private and public organizations in order to achieve efficiency and maximum productivity. In recent times, this phenomenon has continued to weaken performance which affects productivity.

Industrial harmony has over the years been an important factor in achieving job efficiency, maximum productivity, as well as attainment of organization’s goals and objective. It enhances labour productivity and means of improving performance in workplace thus achieving economic growth. It is the fulcrum of attaining organizational objectives. That is why Odia and Omofonmwan, (2007) admits that industrial
harmony covers the area of responsibilities, employment policy, collective bargaining, communication and consultation. Believing that, it creates a peaceful environment that is attractive and favorable to employees. However, absence of peaceful and cordial relationship among employees in a work place will affect productivity and the goals of the organization. Maintaining industrial harmony in an organizational setting therefore constitute one of the most delicate and complex problems of modern industrial society, because managing human resources and ensuring peaceful and harmonious work relationship is critical to its success. Furthermore, harmonious work relationship is vital because modern organizations are social unit or human grouping deliberately constructed and reconstructed to seek specific goals, as such managers must recognize the importance of human resources as the most vital element in achieving efficiency (Etzioni, 1964).

Furthermore, Hanson (2006) opines that industrial harmony represents absence of strike by industrial unions in organization which is bound to result in effective and efficient organization. Industrial harmony thus covers four broad areas of cooperation: responsibilities, employment policy, collective bargaining, communication and consultation (Odia and Omofonmwan, 2007).

Industrial Harmony can only come out of what some scholars termed as Industrial Democracy. This is a situation in organization where to a larger extent, the participation of workers is adequately sought in the process of making decisions that will determine the conditions of their working lives. Attaining high productivity in Lafia local government secretariat will create an enabling environment for growth and development.

**Conceptualization of Concepts**

**Industrial Harmony**

Industrial harmony means to a state of relative peaceful cooperation in formal or informal organization. It refers to a friendly and cooperative agreement on working relationships between employer and employees for their mutual benefit (Otobo, 2005; Osad and Osas, 2013). Ukachukwu (2009) sees relative industrial peace involves absence of strikes, trust among groups or unions, and peaceful relationship between employer and employee as well as employees positive perception of his contribution as participant not as a subject within organization. Industrial harmony, from the foregoing is central to organizational productivity. This is achieved when there is harmonious coexistence among organizational staff especially as it relates with the management. Arguing along this line is Puttapalli and Vuram (2012), whose observation depicts that industrial harmony is concerned with the relationship between management and employees with respect to the terms and conditions of employment and the work place. Akuh, (2015) wraps up industrial harmony believing it requires that:

1. All management personnel understand their responsibilities and what is required of them, and have the training and authority necessary to discharge such duties and responsibilities efficiently;
2. Duties and responsibilities for each group of employees are stated with clarity and simplicity in the organizational/institutional structure;
3. Individual employees or work-groups know their objectives and are regularly kept informed of progress made towards achieving them;
4. There is an effective link in the interchange of information and views between senior management and members of the work group;
5. Supervisors are briefed about innovation and changes before they occur so they can explain management’s policies and intentions to the work-group;
6. Employers cooperate with trade unions in establishing effective procedures for the negotiation of terms and conditions of employment and for the settlement of disputes;
7. Employers encourage the establishment of effective procedures among member organizations/institutions for the settlement of grievances and disputes at the level of the establishment or undertaking;
8. Employers take all reasonable steps to ensure the organization/institution observes agreements and agreed upon procedures;
9. The organization/institution maintains a communication system, which secures the interchange of information and views between different levels in the organization/institution and ensures that employees are systematically and regularly kept informed, factually and objectively, of changes and progress in the system.

**Organizational Productivity**

Organizational productivity refers to the overall performance of the organization in terms of the ratio of output to input (Laplange, 2009). While Ebo (1988) argues that productivity designates how efficiently an organization uses its resources, representing its ability to do more with less. Productivity therefore, is the efficient utilization of resources in the achievement of organizational goals and objectives. However, in modern organizations, favourable work environment is the major concern of managers for profitability and effective productivity, as such, employer and employee seeks to maximize their degree of relationship with consideration for the plight of the other. Nkiinebari (2015) studied employee engagement and workplace harmony in Nigeria Civil Service. Results revealed a significant relationship and influence of the variables of employee engagement on workplace harmony in the studied sector.

Industrial relations therefore involve reconciliation of conflicting interests, expectations, motivations towards the common goal. The workplace environment plays a crucial role in the lives of employees. Amah and Ahiauzu (2013) suggest that organizations need to reconfigure their workplace in a manner that will allow employees to feel as an integral part of the organization. So also, Makinde (2013) carried out a study on securing a harmonious working environment through effective industrial relations at workplace: The Nigerian perspective. It revealed that Harmonious Working Environment can be secured through Effective Industrial relations at workplace only that the challenges confronting the unions has not make their activities effective in a way. Creating an enabling environment will bring about increase industrial harmony leading to increase productivity in an organization.

Orders are given using the steam shovel approach such that no one worker is allowed to know the reason for any decision that affects the tasks they do (Nkiinebari, 2014). Moreover, when work environment is enabling, responsive and democratic, there is bound to be peace and harmony. Nwokocha (2015) conducted a conceptual study on the title Employers and the Enhancement of Industrial Harmony in Private Sector Organizations in Nigeria. Underscoring the role of employers in enhancing industrial harmony in organizations, it posits that conflict is inevitable in all organizations and, as such, the employer who has the responsibility of making major organizational policies to achieve corporate objectives must play a dominant role in ensuring industrial harmony.

However, over the year, there has been prevalence of weak harmonious relationship among employer and employee and employee to employee in most organizations. In Lafia local government, factors such as distrust, gossips, favouritism, conflicting interests amongst other factors has affected maximum productivity. Therefore, the need for industrial harmony cannot be overemphasized because peaceful, favourable and good work relationship is central in organization towards achieving higher productivity and attainment of organizational goal. It was on this background that the study seeks to assess the state of industrial harmony and productivity in Lafia local government secretariat.

**Research Questions**

The following questions were formulated for the research

i. To what extent does industrial harmony impact on job efficiency in Lafia local government

ii. What are the effects of industrial harmony on productivity in Lafia local government

iii. How can industrial harmony be encouraged for the attainment of organization goal of the council.

**Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of the study is to assess the impact of industrial harmony and productivity. While the specific objectives are:
i. To examine the extent of industrial harmony on job efficiency in Lafia local government
ii. To determine the effects of industrial harmony on productivity in Lafia local government
iii. To proffer recommendations on how to encourage industrial harmony for attainment of organization of the council.

Hypotheses
These hypotheses are stated in null format.
1. There is no significant relationship between industrial harmony and efficiency of work.
2. There is no significant relationship between industrial harmony and maximum productivity.

Theoretical Framework
The social system theory of Talcott Parsons was used in this paper. Parsons organized social systems in terms of action units, where one action executed by an individual is one unit. He defines a social system as a network of interactions between actors. The theory argues that the social world was viewed in systematic terms. As a system, the world is composed of mutually interrelated parts. Study of the parts focused on how they fulfilled the requisites of the systematic whole and how they maintained equilibrium. It further argued that system signifies a patterned of relationship among actors and bind them into reality (Parsons, 1937).

Furthermore, the theory maintains that all organizations are therefore “social system”, since they consist of interacting individuals bounded together towards achieving the same goal. Thus, a system therefore presupposes a social structure consisting of different parts which are interrelated and working in unity. As a result of functional relationships between different constituent units, an integrated whole is created. Its functional character ensures continuity and social stability of the whole system (Luhmann, 2013).

Maintaining mutual beneficial and harmonious work relationship in an organization is vital to its success. The interconnectedness of system focused on how each actor influences and is influenced by another actor networking together in harmony to maintain a state of social equilibrium (Haralambos, 1980). Thus, organizational maximum productivity largely depends on harmonious interrelationship and interdependency of all actors. As such, relying on social system of parsons, a plurality of social actors who are engaged in more or less stable interaction according to shared cultural norms and constituent parts of a structure which is based on functional and harmonious relations and which makes the parts. Applying the Talcott Parsons system theory to increased productivity in organizations depicts that each the proper workings of each units and departments in a harmonious manner. Improved productivity can only be achieved when there is industrial harmony among all the units that made up the organization, thus achieving high productivity.

The system theory of Parsons is adopted as it provides insight and enhances internal logical consistency of the pattern and order for analysis and discussion of this paper. The theory clearly suggested that in any organizational setting, industrial harmony is very critical and important for the smooth functioning and attainment of its specific objective. It advocated for employees harmonious relationship in a work place for efficiency and maximum productivity in work environment.

Methodology
Research Design
The study was empirically tested through a survey design of selected employee of Lafia local government secretariat.

Population of the Study
The population of the study was drawn from the 704 staff of the Local Government.

Method of Data Collection
The study use both qualitative and quantitative method of data collection. Data were collected during a field survey of staff of Lafia local government in 2019 through administration of questionnaires.
Sampling Method
Sample size of 140 respondents was used using purposive sampling technique.

Techniques of Data Analysis
Data collected through the use of questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively using simple percentages and chi-square ($\chi^2$). The analysis was used to test the hypotheses of the study.

Chi-square is presented statistically as:

$$\chi^2 = \frac{(f_0 - f_e)^2}{f_e}$$

Table 1: Chi-square ($\chi^2$) statistical analysis of the relationship between industrial harmony and efficiency (N=140) responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Senior Staff</th>
<th>Junior Staff</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field survey, 2019

Table 1.1: Computation of chi-square distribution table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>O</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>O-E</th>
<th>(O-E)$^2$</th>
<th>(D - E)$^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>174.2</td>
<td>5.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>27.04</td>
<td>2.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>334.8</td>
<td>7.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8.57</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>11.76</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant level = 0.05
Degree of freedom = 2
Calculated $X^2$ value = 16.11
Critical $X^2$ table value = 5.991

Thus, result in table 1.1 reveals that the calculated $X^2$ value of 16.11 higher than the critical $X^2$ value of 5.991 at 05 level of significance with 2 degree of freedom; as such this shows that there is a significant relationship between industrial harmony and efficiency. However, findings from the study correlate with the objective one of the research which revealed that industrial harmony is very important for efficiency of work in the organization. Thus, findings in this study conforms with the position of Luhmann (2013) who believed that any organizational setting that desire efficiency work must take into consideration mutual and beneficial relationships among employees.

Table 2: Chi-square statistical analysis of the relationship between industrial harmony and productivity (N =40).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Senior Staff</th>
<th>Junior Staff</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field survey, 2019
Table 2.1: Computation of chi-square distribution table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>O</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>O-E</th>
<th>(O-E)^2</th>
<th>(D – E)^2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>240.2</td>
<td>6.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.42</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>6.65</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>357.2</td>
<td>7.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>7.85</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>9.92</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[X^2 = 16.1\]

Significant level = 0.05
Degree of freedom = 2
Calculated \(X^2\) value = 16.1
Critical \(X^2\) table value = 5.991

The result table 2.1 shows that the calculated \(X^2\) value of 16.1 is higher than the critical value \(X^2\) of 5.991 at 05 level of significant with 2 degree of freedom; consequently, there is significant relationship between industrial harmony and efficiency.

Result of findings in line with objective two of the study shows that industrial harmony in also an important factor in ensuring maximum productivity in the council. The findings of this study collaborates the view of Berman (2002) who sees industrial harmony as important in attaining organizational productivity. He argued that, when there are weak work relations in the organization there is tendency for industrial conflict and the resultant consequences would be low output and productivity.

Discussion of Findings

Based on findings from this study, it can be deduced that industrial harmony in a workplace is very central to organization and as such it constitute one of the most delicate and complex task for managers in modern industrial society because managing human resources in an organization devoid of crisis and unhealthy relationship become critical to its success. Basically, the study placed emphasis on harmonious work relationship as a basic factor to organizational productivity. The study was prompted by the prevalence of unhealthy work relationships that affects productivity. Thus, the study noted that industrial harmony is needed and should be encouraged in all organizations that desire efficient and maximum output. Factors leading to unhealthy work relationship among employees should be discouraged by managers. More so, employer/employee and employee to employee harmonious relations at workplace as well as industrial peace is vital to organizational success. Because human capital represents an important bridge in an organization’s capacity to absorb modern challenges to boost productivity in order to compete favorable in this highly bureaucratized and globalized society.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the effect of industrial harmony on productivity in Lafia local government secretariat. It identified that industrial harmony is the fulcrum of productivity, asserting that progress of any organization relies on that nature of employee relations within themselves and with the employer. Productivity is usually a product of high level of industrial democratic culture which allows for employee freedom to relate peacefully with one another. The paper also identified that absence of industrial harmony tend to weaken employee morale toward duties, low esteem and poor work attitude. Improved industrial harmony the paper discovered will bring about the desired objective of increased productivity and growth.

Recommendations

From the forgoing discussion, the paper recommends that;

1. Both employees and the managers should realize the importance of harmonious work relationship as an integral part of organization for productivity which will open path for industrial peace and effective and efficient productivity of the institution.
2. The management should create an industrial relations unit that would monitor employees’ relationship at work place to ensure relative peace and collaborative work relationship.

3. Enabling working environment should also be created for all employees, promote good communication system. In this process, information is exchanged between employees to enable in correcting misinformation and lack of understanding, which invariably would encourage healthy relations in the work place.

4. The managers should be objective in dealing with employees and also ensure that tasks are carried out to prevent employees’ from doing nothing that gives room and tendencies for an unhealthy work environment. This would encourage industrial harmony in the local government, efficiency of jobs and maximum productivity for the attainment of desire goals of the council.

References


Osad, I.O. and Osas, E.U. (2013). Harmonious industrial relations as a panacea for ailing
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