NOVATEUR PUBLICATIONS
JournalNX- A Multidisciplinary Peer Reviewed Journal
ISSN No: 2581 - 4230
VOLUME 11, ISSUE 4, April – 2025

ORGANIZATIONAL EQUITY AND EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY IN FURNITURE COMPANIES IN PORTHARCOURT, RIVERS STATE

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Abstract

This study examined organizational equity and employee productivity in furniture companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The study concentrated on two measures of organizational equity like pay equity, promotion equity, including two proxies of employee productivity namely quality of service and timeliness. The researcher espoused descriptive survey design. Population of the study contained 139 selected employees from 11 chosen furniture companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Convenient sampling method was useful for the purpose of minimizing research errors. The primary data was collected from structured questionnaire while the secondary data was information received from company reports of various selected furniture companies. Taro Yamane's formula was utilized to get a sample size of 103 employees for the study. Copies of questionnaire were distributed to collect data necessary in answering research questions. Spearman correlation coefficient was used to test the hypotheses. The findings of the study specified that there was a positive significant relationship between pay equity and quality of service, including the relationship between promotion equity and timeliness was statistically significant. It was concluded that organizational equity influenced employee productivity. The researcher recommended that furniture companies should have an effective policy on promotion without bias so as to enhance quick delivery of products and services.

Keywords: Organizational equity, pay equity, quality of service, employee productivity.

Introduction

Organizations that understand the feelings of employees may foster healthier work environment, supporting individuals' well-being both individual and organizational resilience, increase open-mindedness, acceptance, and innovation. Effective well-being strategies are directed towards an organization's values and vision. The essence of this is for the managers to have personal commitment to change, fairness, embrace staff inclusion, and the organizations to make policies that could enhance employee well-being and productivity. Most employees in furniture companies have complaint of negative outcomes related to promotions, hiring, terminations, and performance evaluations than their counterparts in other sectors. The level of partiality, unfairness, ethnicity behaviour, inequity instigated the workers to feel unsafe, undervalued, and become tired of the job (Khalifa & Truong, 2010). An equitable organization requires fair or equal treatment of employees, distribution of responsibility, and accountability. The perceptions of workers are very important, it could lead to behaviours that either support or weaken an organization's key goals. Workers assess their organization based on empathy towards employees, and if the relative fairness in the organization is similar to the rewards, performance, and decisions. Bearing in mind the radical global changes, productive employees have better opportunities, by exhibiting fairness so as to attract, retain, and enhance productivity and job performance. Employee perception of equity and fairness in workplace has a direct effect on his productivity. Sania and Siraj (2013) pronounced that organizational equity is equal and fair treatment of organization workforce. Ajala and Bolarinwa (2015) proclaimed that organizational equity refers to sense of equal treatment and moral principle that workers should have in the organization. Similarly organizational equity signifies the impartial treatment of an employee without bias in distribution of reward, information, and other administrative benefits.

Sharma and Sharma (2014) articulated that increase in employee productivity results in growth, enhance profitability, and increase the organizational fortune. Moreover, employee who are more productive could earn improved salaries, develop favourable work environment including positive employment opportunities. Hanaysah (2016) conceived employee productivity as the assessment of the efficiency of employee which could be evaluated in terms of the output per employee in a specific period of time. Employee productivity entails the survival of a firm that comes from the combination of individual performance and organizational support. It is also the amount of unit of product or service produced by a worker within a particular time. Employee productivity is worthy of attention as it increases organizational competitive advantage through cost reduction and enhancement in high services quality (Wright, 2004). Employee perception of fairness in organizational settings, influence behaviors as well as their attitude and consequently their intention to quit (Sharpe, 2006). Nevertheless, the inequities in furniture companies influence psychological state of employees thereby reducing their morale to become highly productive. It is within the context of the above assertion that the researcher deemed it necessary to investigate organizational equity and employee productivity in furniture companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Research Hypotheses

H0:1 There is no significant relationship between pay equity and quality of service in furniture companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

H0:2 There is no significant relationship between promotion equity and timeliness in furniture companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Literature Review

Organizational Equity

Mahajan and Benson (2013) discoursed that organization equity involves fairness, impartiality, and equal treatment of workers and other management processes. Indeed, equitable management process is a process that promotes equal and unbiased promotion opportunity and reward system. Al-Zawahreh and Al-Madi (2012) declared that organizational equity entails impartial treatment and the way outcomes are consistent with norm for distribution of compensations. Organizational equity signifies a set of degree of justice with which workers are treated by organizational authorities (Abdelghfour, A., & Faisal, A., (2014). Correspondingly, Susanna (2006) noted that organizational equity is the extent to which workers perceive workplace procedures, process, outcomes, and interaction to be fair nature. Similar to the above discourse, organizational equity connotes fairness, justice, and unbiased actions of the organization given to the employees. Balasskino and Salles (2012) stated that organizational equity consists of interactional justice and procedural justice which promote employee satisfaction and commitment in allocation of tasks. When a state of unfair and inequity is perceived, the employee may experience dissatisfaction, sorrow, and reward the organization with low productivity and displeasing performance. This dissatisfaction may as well persuade the employee to reduce productivity. Abdelghafour and Faisal (2014) contended that the higher inequity and unjust treatment in an organization, the more employees' dissatisfaction increases which leads to inefficiency. When employees are not given fair treatment, it creates opportunity for mismanagement, conflict, and corruption. In the aspect of unfair, injustice, and inequity, an employee may express, anger, dissatisfaction, attempt to distort inputs and outcomes. Abdelghafour and Faisal (2014) postulated that injustice and inequity trigger workers anger to reduce productivity and quality of work. Khalifa and Truong (2010) insisted that pay and promotion equity are the key measures of organizational equity that are useful in minimizing inequity and injustice and to increase employees' productivity.

Pay equity

The concept of pay equity refers to the degree to which employees perceive their pay to be fair ((Al-Zawahreh & Al-Madi 2012). Pay equity symbolizes the absolute amount of fair pay received by the employees that attracts satisfaction. Berkotiz (1987) noted that employees who strongly believed their pay was fair are likely to be satisfied with their earnings. In essence, pay equity was a strong predictor of pay or satisfaction (Scarpello, 1988). The demand of family members enables employees to know the strength of his salary. Employee feels cheated if the pay of his reference group is higher than what he earns, based on that he may move to adjust his inputs (Levine, 1993). Pay is a central feature in the work lives of many workers and most employees dislike less pay and prefer reasonable pay to solve personal needs. Martin and Peterson (1987) asserted that most organizations, individuals, compare their pay with many reference groups or other organizations and in the external market. The variations in salary could come from several factors such as background characteristics, uniqueness of job, personality, and economic or family circumstances (Lawler & Jenkins, 1992). Employees need fair pay to support family needs which eventually result in job satisfaction and organizational productivity (Gupta & Shaw, 2001). An average person likes money because it commands varieties and very important for buying material goods to improve the living standard of people.

Promotion Equity

Lazear (2008) specified that promotion is the movement of worker upward that results in taking additional responsibility and increase in compensation. Promotion equity is the impartiality in the elevation of employee to higher position in the organization. In furniture company, if employees are promoted with higher responsibilities based on merit or without bias, the workers may display positive attitude to work by increasing their productivity (Kostas, 2009). Promotion equity connotes the employee perception of fairness in the way promotion is done within the organization. Promotion equity is the equal chances of promotion available for committee (Seth & Mohammad, 2014). Fairness in promotion opportunities given to employees is very vital to workers and employer. promotion equity encompasses creating an environment where employees are fairly promoted on the basis of their years in service, commitment, level of education and experience (Lazear, 2008). Accordingly, Saharuddin and

Sulaiman (2016) conceived promotion equity as the impartiality in decision making concerning promotion process, performance evaluation process, and advancement of employees. Workers may perceive equal promotion opportunities when they are permitted to have equal access to opportunities such as promotion examinations, training, and fair appraisal evaluations. Kostas (2009) maintained that promotion opportunities are the alternatives to increase employee wages or salaries, responsibilities, and higher status. Sulaiman and Saharuddin (2016) disclosed a strong significant relationship between fair promotion process and employee productivity and job satisfaction. Companies that promote employees on the basis of their experience, qualifications, and years in service in a fair and just process could increase employee retention and general productivity (Greenberg, 1999). Meanwhile, favoritism promotion creates dissatisfaction, low productivity, employee burnout, turnover, and conflict in the organization Arshad et al. (2012) discoursed that the higher promotion opportunities for employee the more employee productivity.

Employee Productivity

Productivity in a simple term is the relation between output and input, applied in many different circumstances on various levels of aggregation in the economic system (Stefan, 2009). Productivity denotes one of the important basic variables governing economic production activities (Singh et al., 2000). Correspondingly, Jennifer and George (2006) described employee productivity as the level of effort put forth by the employees and management of an organization towards achieving organizational goals. Mathis and John (2003) indicated that employee productivity refers to a measure of the quantity and quality of work done, with regard to the cost of capital used. Employee productivity is the rate at which employees effectively and efficiently discharge their duties. Lawler (2003) narrated that certain element affects worker's productivity levels in relation to their jobs. Productivity is dependent on the amount of monetary or non-monetary benefits the employees receive which may be contrary to their expectations. Nwachukwu (2004) emphasized that any organization that fails to provide a conducive work environment, compensate its workers adequately, create room for proper training and career development, is at risk of having angry or demotivated workforce. This suggests that such a workforce being demoralized may fail to effectively and efficiently discharge their duties leading to low performance and productivity levels. Jennifer and George (2006) claimed that the performance of workers contribute directly to an organization's level of effectiveness, efficiency, productivity, and even towards the achievement of administrative goals. When furniture firms fail to integrate fairness and motivation of workforce in the system, the behaviour of workers may generate negative influence on organizational effectiveness thereby affecting employee's productivity levels.

Alhassan et al. (2014) maintained that a worker's level of productivity depends on the degree of motivation that fulfills worker's needs. Nevertheless, where the employees are dissatisfied, they exercise less productive behaviour. A rise in the level of organizational productivity could eventually leads to greater competitive edge. Improved productivity ratio occurs when less workers or less financial resources and time were utilized in producing the similar output. Sania and Siraj (2013) affirmed that employee productivity could be enhanced when organizations implement fairness in pay, impartial distribution of limited resources, and equal promotion opportunities. The jobs performed by employees affect the overall organizational productivity. Employees are capable of demonstrating positive behavior and high productivity, if they notice their employer is fair in policies implementation and distributive system. Fairness and equity are strong predictors for high employee productivity and performance (Jaroslav, 2013). Furthermore, Chei et al. (2014) acknowledged that all heads of department know that the ineffectiveness of employees under their supervision harmfully affects the productivity of the organization. Buuri (2015) recognized quality of service and timeliness as the key predictors of employee productivity.

Quality of Service

Quality of service entails supremacy of a service which customers used to evaluate the performance of a firm (Koozehchian & et al., 2011). Services quality covers quality processes and quality output. Dotchin and Oakland (1994) considered quality of service as a service that could accomplish the expectations of the customer. Parasuraman et al. (1985) mentioned quality service as the difference between customer expectations of the service and the service as perceived or received by the customer. Quality of service signifies the acceptable service by the customers which gives recognition to the product and organization. Priyathanalai and Moenjohn (2012) revealed a positive significant relationship existed between employee satisfaction and service quality. Schlesinger and Zornitsky (1991) also examined job satisfaction and service quality and found that employee perceptions of job satisfaction and the ability to serve has a positive relationship with perceptions of the quality of service. Ariani (2015) stated that if the services received is worse than expected, then the service quality is also considered faulty. When the service received by the customers or users is equal to the expected, the service quality appears to be good. Hill et al. (2014) revealed that low job satisfaction could reduce the performance of services especially quality of service. Indeed, quality of service is an important matter in sectors of public, private, service, manufacturing companies, industries and businesses (Yusoff et al., 2008). Ordinarily, the essence of competition is to improve service quality that may have a higher level of customer satisfaction and to achieve sustainable competitive advantage. Thus, quality of product and services result in profitability, loyalty, and customer satisfaction (Prentice, 2013).

Timeliness

Every customer wants goods and services to be delivered on time. Delay defeats subsequent order and firms' reputation. Iberahim et al. (2016) recognized timeliness as the ability to respond to customer requirements timely and flexible. Timeliness is the punctuality of workers and delivery of products or services by an organization. Moreover, timeliness addresses how quickly and when a service or product is delivered. In an attempt to satisfy customers urgent attention should be given to the delivery of goods and services within the specified time which in turn boost organizational productivity (Yeboah et al., 2015). The nature of the timeliness of the service delivered may influence the customers perception of the firms' performance and their loyalty. Apparently, customers of furniture companies are always in search of organizations that keep to time when it relates to job activities, delivery of goods and services. Companies that could render quality services within a specific timeframe are efficient and driver of productivity. A firm that is able to give its service but was not timely is said to be inefficient. The inefficiency of employees in delay of services or arrival of products affect the general performance of the firms. Mariappan (2006) stated that evolution of information technology has resulted in drastic changes in business environment by improving service delivery. Maalhotra and Mukherjee (2004) contended that it is necessary for furniture firms to clearly understand the changing customer needs and adopt the newest information technology system in order to compete effectively in timely delivery of services with best global practices. Dilijona et al. (2009) noted that if organizations put timeliness into action, it helps to identified speed, errors, high uptime, improve quality of services, reduces waiting hours and improve employee productivity.

Methodology

The researcher adopted descriptive survey research design to promote business decisions as well as providing systematic approach to analyze data. Population of the study comprised of 139 selected employees from 11 chosen furniture companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The reachable employees that were available for the empirical inquiry include administrative staff and production staff from the listed furniture companies. Convenient sampling method was applied for the purpose of minimizing research errors. The primary data was collected from structured questionnaire while the secondary data was information received from company reports of various selected furniture companies. Taro Yamane's formula was utilized to get a sample size of 103 employees for the study. Copies of questionnaire were distributed to collect data useful in answering research questions. The questionnaire was structured on the measures of organizational equity and employee productivity (Sekaran, 2003). It was also divided into three sections like section A, B, and C, where A represents participants profile, B focused on independent variable, and C deals on dependent variable. These questions were stated in an ordinal scale using the 5-point Likert's scale of 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neutral), 4 (agree), and 5 (strongly agree). Statistical instrument used for this study was Spearman correlation coefficient to measure the relationship between the variables. The reliability of the research instrument was demonstrated in Cronbach's Alpha where if the result is above 0.70, it shows that the research instrument used for this study was reliable. The research instrument was validated by experts in management. The researcher informed respondents that the information provided shall only be used for academic purpose. This study concentrated on two measures of organizational equity like pay equity, promotion equity, including two proxies of employee productivity namely quality of service and timeliness.

Results and Discussion

Test of Hypothesis One

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between pay equity and quality of service in furniture companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

HA_1: There is significant relationship between pay equity and quality of service in furniture companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Table 1 Spearman Correlation Coefficient between Pay Equity and Quality of Service

Correlations

			Pay equity	Quality of service
Spearman's rho	Pay equity	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.996**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	103	103
	Quality of service	Correlation Coefficient	.996**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	103	103

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results in Table 1 showed a significant positive relationship between pay equity and quality of service in furniture companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. This supported that the relationship between the two variables was statistically significant. The r- value was 0.996 and p – value 0.000 which specified that pay equity has positive significant relationship with quality of service. Where p – value = 0.000 < 0.005, the null hypothesis was rejected while alternative hypothesis was accepted. The positive significance r- value of 0.996 revealed that 99.6% rise in implementation of pay equity may improve the quality of service among employees in the furniture companies.

Test of Hypothesis Two

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between promotion equity and timeliness in furniture companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

HA2: There is significant relationship between promotion equity and timeliness in furniture companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Table 2 Spearman Correlation Coefficient between Promotion Equity and Timeliness

Correlations

			Promotion equity	Timeliness
Spearman's rho	Promotion equity	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.916**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	103	103
	Timeliness	Correlation Coefficient	.916**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	103	103

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results in Table 2 demonstrated that there is positive significant relationship between promotion equity and timeliness in furniture companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. This revealed that r- value was 0.916 and p – value 0.000 which discovered that promotion equity was meaningfully connected to timeliness in furniture companies. Where p – value = 0.000 < 0.005, the null hypothesis was rejected while alternative hypothesis was accepted. The positive significance r- value of 0.916 displayed that 91.6% increase in promotion equity could lead to more time stability in the organization.

Discussion of Findings

The findings in hypothesis one shows that there is a positive significant relationship between pay equity and quality of service in furniture companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. This result makes known that when employees receive fair pay in comparison with their performance, they are likely to maintain quick service delivery. This finding is in accord with Gupta and Shaw (2001), who stated that employees need fair pay to support family needs which eventually result in job satisfaction and organizational productivity. The second hypothesis proves that there is positive significant relationship between promotion equity and timeliness in furniture companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. This result shows that when a company does not permit favouritism during promotion, it contributes to efficiency and high productivity. The finding is consistent with Greenberg (1999), who narrated that companies that promote employees on the basis of their experience, qualifications, and years in service in a fair and just process could increase employee retention and general productivity. Similarly, this result is also in agreement with Arshad et al. (2012), they claimed that favoritism promotion creates dissatisfaction, low productivity, employee burnout, turnover, and conflict in the organization.

Conclusion

Organizations are goal-oriented entities and ensuring fairness could create high productivity of employees and the attainment of the organizational goals. This study reveals that pay equity has significant positive relationship with quality of service. This indicates that when employees perceive equity in their pay, they are likely to increase their moral to work diligently and enhance their ability in delivering quality and timely services. However, if the workers experience inequity, such could also demotivate them which may subsequently incumber their productivity. It was also discovered that promotion equity may activate timeliness in the organization. This showed that there was significant positive relationship between promotion equity and timeliness, as well as positive relationship between organizational equity and employee productivity. Furthermore, the recommended that management of furniture companies should provide fair pay commensurate with what is obtainable in the industry, hence, it could eliminate negative work attitude and improve quality of service. Furniture companies should have an effective policy on promotion without bias so as to enhance quick delivery of products and services.

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