Human Factor Dimensions and Workplace Climate of Food and Beverage Firms in Lagos State, Nigeria: An Empirical Paper

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Abstract

Workplace climate is vital to an organisation's goal achievement with human factors as catalyst. Organisation's fail when processes are not consonant with the values that guides the atmospheric workplace behaviour. Several studies on employee's behaviour and its impact on team's outcome exist. However, there are limited work on individual effect of employee attitude, skill, knowledge, involvement, trust, engagement, and commitment on the organisation's climatic condition. Survey method with a target population of 4,834 employees of selected food and beverages companies in Lagos State, was used for the study. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select participants. Krejcie and Morgan table was used to determine 392 sample size. 400 copies of questionnaire was administered with 94% response rate. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Results of tested hypothesis revealed human factor dimensions had a significant effect on workplace climate (Adj R^2 =0.474, $F_{(7,363)}$ =48.672, p<0.05) however, employee knowledge (β = 0.005, t = 0.119, p>0.05) and employee skill (β =0.018, t =0.359, p>0.05) were insignificant. The study concluded that employee attitude, trust, and engagement were vital factors required to achieve a harmonious workplace climate. Recommendation was pillared on building attitude, trust and engagement to enhance workplace climate.

Keywords: Attitude, Human factor dimensions, Knowledge, Workplace climate

Introduction

Adopting continuous improvement strategies is inevitable for organisational sustainability. Organisations constantly innovate to accommodate/overcome/win in the turbulent global economic instability, sporadic technological advancement and adverse competitive business environment that is evident in the current business world (Chiloane-Tsoka, 2013; Kirkegaard, 2018). Continually changing political, economic, societal, technological, legal and environmental factors in the world today, causes organisations to regularly change/adjust its mode of operation in order to win the war of competition. These dynamic external influences affect the internal workings of any organisation leading to re-arrangement/re-organisation/restructuring of processes and procedures (Birnleitner, 2013). As a result of these global political, economic, technological changes, the workplace atmosphere/work environment employees perform their organisational roles and responsibilities had evolved to accommodate the change (Akpoveta, 2018).

Within the changing work, environments work teams exist, who are expected to be effective; they must successfully perform both task-work and teamwork (Burke, Wilson & Salas, 2003). Task-work involves the performance of specific tasks that team members need to complete in order to achieve team goals. In particular, tasks represent the work-related activities that individuals or teams engage in as an essential function of their organisational role (Wildman, Thayer, Rosen, Salas, Mathieu, & Rayne, 2012). Conversely, teamwork focuses more on the shared behaviours (i.e., what team members do), attitudes (i.e., what team members feel or believe), and cognition (i.e., what team members think or know) that are necessary for teams to accomplish these tasks (Morgan, Salas, & Glickman, 1994). Both task-work and teamwork are critical to successful team performance, with the effectiveness of one facilitating the other. Although task-work often becomes a key focus for teams as they work toward goals, it is teamwork that aids in ensuring the effective performance of task-work. Despite having an extensive knowledge of the task at hand, a team will fail if the members cannot successfully share knowledge, coordinate behaviours and trust one another (Mathieu, Maynard, Rapp, & Gilson, 2008). Individuals who have extensive task-relevant expertise are still vulnerable to poor team outcomes if teamwork within the workplace is inadequate (Salas, Shuffler, Thayer, Bedwell, &Lazzara, 2014).

Over the years, scholars have shown that human dimensions have significant relationships with workplace climate. One of such is an interview survey in Norway by Ghazinejad, Hussein and Zidane (2018) which discovered that three human factor values (trust, openness, and commitment) impacted positively on effective teamwork that gave rise to a conducive workplace climate. Organizations recognise the importance of their most important asset—their people. How they communicate, team up to solve problems, get excited about goals and tasks, and deal with adversity will largely determine the performance of the organization which significantly affect the climatic condition of the entire organisation. However, getting the required level of collaboration within the team is a mirage (Janus, 2016). Limited studies exist on human factor with the following dimensions; employee involvement, worker's knowledge, employee skills, employee engagement, employee commitment, employee attitude and employee trust on an organisation's workplace climate. It is on this premise that this present study seeks to investigate the effect of human factor dimensions on workplace climate among selected employees in selected food and beverage companies in Lagos state, Nigeria. This research, therefore, provided an empirical answer to the hypothesis: human factor dimensions have no significant effect on workplace climate? The paper is structured into five (5) parts namely; introduction, literature review, methodology, results and discussion, conclusion and recommendation.

Literature Review

Workplace climate constitutes the atmosphere established by an organisation for its employees (Kundu, 2007), as it provides the template for acceptable norms, work behaviour and interactions which all categories of staff must comply with, irrespective of the characteristics/idiosyncrasies of each employee. The following scholars (Iljins, Skvarciany, &Gaile-Sarkane, 2017; Kundu, 2007) shared the perspective that workplace norms are instrumental to workers' self-expression. However, a dichotomy exists in the workplace climate definition, framework and model with an organisational culture which had for a long time appeared in the operational, functional, strategic sets of dimensions, measurements, and research findings that are highly diverse and often contradictory (Kundu, 2007).

Onyango (2014) asserts that organisations experience turbulent economic situations and drastic technological changes in the environment in which they operate and workplace culture plays a valuable role in ensuring stability by binding several parts of the organisation together to achieve the desired future state. Akpoveta (2018); Kundu (2007) and Salas, Shuffler, Thayer, Bedwell, and Lazzara, (2014)provided a similar position regarding workplace culture as a system of shared values among people irrespective of their diverse backgrounds and orientations, as a platform to share a universal belief system, task views, communication pattern and work attitude that enhance the quality of work life and productivity. It, therefore, entails feelings, emotions and behaviour of people at work as these relate to the acceptability of change or new idea.

As such, humans are probably the only source of an organisation's competitive advantage (Srivastava, 2001), valuable asset (Du-Plessis, 2007) and human factors that enables the acceptance of change. However, it is difficult to transfer these human factor assets from one person to another because of each peculiarity (Osterloh& Frey, 2000). Nevertheless, these human factors are essential for workplace climate, where team building/bonding or social capital are encouraged, and individual knowledge is translated to organisational knowledge.

Organisations can not overlook human factor dimensions (employee involvement, employee knowledge, employee skill, employee engagement, employee commitment, employee attitude, and employee trust) as they unavoidably affect the business (Gabriel, Oburu, & Aduba 2013). According to Armstrong (2012), human factor is a combination of people's feelings, emotions, behaviour, ability, intelligence, personality and attitudes in organisational operations. Çelik and Ozsoy (2016) assert that human factor is the psychological process and involvement of the people in organisational activities. In order for the organisation to remain sustainable in the face of competition; It, therefore, impact people's interest, emotions, values, beliefs, reactions and interactions among the employees in the organisation to work together as a team in order to achieve organisational goal (Chia, 2014; Shih, Shaw, Fu, & Cheng, 2013).

Human behaviour at work is dependent on both the personal characteristics of the individuals, the group effects/team the individuals belong to and the situation in which they work (Buttner, Lowe, & Billings-Harris 2012; Gharleghi, Jahanshahi, & Nawaser 2018; Ghazinejad et al., 2018). Armstrong (2012) asserts that employee's individual characteristics such as ability, intelligence, personality, attitudes, emotions and the work environment interact toproduce organisation's goals; however, behaviours are difficult to analyse and predict accurately in organisational operations. As such, in this study, human factors focus on how people deal with job-related responsibilities and the workplace climate they work which Klarner, By, and Diefenbach (2011) itemized as knowledge, skills, perception, and attitude.

Brinkschröder (2014) described human factor dimensions as the most dynamic and foremost organisational asset, while Kotter and Cohen (2002), Osei and Ackah (2015), Shin, Taylor, and Seo (2012) and Whelan-Berry, Gordon, and Hinings (2003) posit that an organisation's human resource, comprising attitude, skill, knowledge, employees engagement, involvement, commitment level and trust are essential elements for a vibrant organisational climate which in turn engenders the organization's continuity in an ever-changing environment.

Employee attitude is a settled mode of thinking which involves an assessment of whether people liked or disliked the object to which it refers (Armstrong, 2012). An individual's attitude is not static but evolves through accumulated experiences in the organisation and with the work team. Employee attitude constitutes a way of thinking or feeling about either the task given or the organisation as a whole (Iddagoda, Opatha, & Gunawardana 2015; Karia & Asaari, 2006). The employee's attitude influences how work roles or tasks are executed. Hence, the negative and unfavourable attitudes towards the job could indicate job dissatisfaction. Attitude is consonant with employee's commitment (attitudinal mindset) that binds an individual to a course of action in an organisation (Albdour & Altarawneh, 2014; Armstrong, 2009; Neubert & Cady, 2001). Employee commitment is the level of dedication, passion, emotional and physical energy an individual is willing to give towards a course (Shin et al., 2012). Carbonara (2013) asserts that being committed to the organisation is a component of employee engagement. Visagie and Steyn (2011) described organisational commitment as the relative strength of an individual's identification and involvement in a particular organisation.

Skills and knowledge are two human attributes an individual brings to an organisation. Barbieri, Huang, Tommaso, and Lan (2013) assert that aggregation of knowledge and skills of an organisation's employees creates outcomes such as performance, competitiveness, innovation and ability to renovate. Ghalandari (2012); Hameed and Waheed (2011) described employee skill as the ability to discern, understanding and comprehend how to accomplish tasks with personalised or practical knowledge gained from expertiseor dexterous consistent learning. According to Hameed and Waheed (2011), skills are acquired or learned, as opposed to innate abilities.

Appiah (2010) describes employee knowledge as a boost to skillfulness, capability, competencies and behaviours, being an offshoot of the appropriate training and development given to enhance the employee's productivity. Abbas (2014) defines knowledge as a combination of structure exposure with appropriate information and proficient intuition that give a skeleton for assessing and integrating fresh experiences and information. Kaplan, Schenkel, Von Krogh, and Weber (2001) illustrate that knowledge is a vital foundation of prosperity and a key to achieving business sustainability and profitability in a competitive world. Meanwhile, Rizescu (2014) stated that knowledge, information sharing with the team and the way these share knowledge/information are used to accomplish organisation's goals are weapons of winning the war of competition in the volatile, ever-changing and unstable economy.

Stenmark (2001), categorised knowledge into two types: explicit and tacit. Explicit knowledge is the type of knowledge that is easy to disseminate as opposed to tacit knowledge, which is a type of knowledge that exists within a person's mind and can only be seen in his actions, but may be difficult to codify ((Kim, 2005; Stenmark, 2001). Lubit (2001) posits that tacit knowledge is the most difficult to capture and utilise, and seen to be more valuable out of the two types of knowledge because it is the background knowledge which a person uses when trying to understand anything presented to him. Maalu and Dosho (2016) assert that employee knowledge is the most important organisational asset and should be effectively managed because employee's knowledge that is well harnessed would enable an organisation to achieve its set goals and gain a competitive advantage in the competitive business world.

Workplace Climate

According to Akpoveta (2018), the workplace has transformed. One of the essential elements of the transformation in today's organisation is the shift to a technology-driven workplace and an emphasis on information and relationships that exist in the workplace (Sofat, Kiran, & Kaushik 2015). The kind of culture established by the leadership at the organisation's inception is critical to the successful positive implementation of an organisational change effort which diffuses to the relationship that would exist between the team (Belias & Koustelios, 2014). The need to understand the influence of organisational culture on attitude towards achieving organisation's goal achievement and learning that occurs within the team is essential because culture is vital in an organisation to stimulate organisational goal achievement (Vadi, 2006).

Chiloane-Tsoka(2013) opines the need to establish a strong value system and encourage employee commitment to organisational values and other members of the team. Inner satisfaction and intrinsic motivation are derived when organisational membership and team oneness with values are encouraged which in turn stimulate organizational success. Ongera (2013)is of the view that employees' confidence in the activities of the organisation is enhanced when trust is built within the workforce, connecting the people to work as an effective team which enables the organization to withstand external threats to militating against organisational growth.

Salas, Shuffler, Thayer, Bedwell, and Lazzara (2014) asset that individual employees, despite having an extensive knowledge of the job, the team will fail if the members cannot successfully share knowledge, coordinate behaviours, and trust one another. Individuals who have extensive task-relevant expertise are still vulnerable to poor team outcomes if teamwork is inadequate in an inharmonious working environment.

Workplace climate is the cultural environment which an organisation provides for its employees and may enhance or hinder their productivity (Mamza & Bassi, 2014). It is defined by Gathai, Ngugi, Waithaka, and Kamingi (2012) as shared norms, values, beliefs-both conscious and unconscious, attitudes, the pattern of work and collective behaviours exhibited by the employees and the leaders in a particular organisation or a department within an organisation. Workplace climate manifests as tangibles and intangibles with the intangibles comprising of beliefs, values, standards paradigms and internal communication of the people. Mamza and Bassi (2014) assert that employees bring to the workplace many different behaviours and personalities which have an impact on task accomplishment as well as condition in workplace climate, and so it is the synergy of the different attitudes and personalities of the employees.

Theoretical Framework

Theory of reasoned action (TRA) by Fishbein and Ajzen in 1967 explains the behavioural intention of an individual to perform a behaviour, influenced by the positive attitude and social norms the individual is affiliated. The attitude composition of the individuals in the social norm influences the willingness to transfer knowledge to other members of the group (Bandura, 1982; Bandura, 1991; Razak, Pangil, Mohd Zin, Azlina, &Asnawi, 2014). In this paper, TRA focuses on the intentional knowledge sharing behaviour an individual in a work team is willing to do.Social exchange theory (SET) is the exchange of valuable resource which is expected to benefit the individuals in the group (Razak et al., 2014). The theoretical contribution in this paper hinges on the rational behaviour of an individual to perceive the possibility of gainful rewards from the social exchange. While the reward aspect is about money, social exchange comprises social approval, self-esteem, respect and compliance.

Empirical Review

Through a work focused on organisational culture, leadership behaviour and job satisfaction Tsai (2011) observed a significant and positive correlation relationship with job satisfaction measured as working partners, rewards, employee welfare and job recognition. In the same vein, Saurin (2012) observed a significant positive relationship between transformative mindset (employee attitude), awareness, responsibility, creativity and knowledge development and a conducive workplace climate. The relationship that exist in an organisation is vital to organisational goal achievement which Shah (2014) in a study on the role of employees' trust in management and supervisors on developing attitudes and behaviours for organisational change revealed that employee trust in supervisor was more positively related to workplace climate measured as organisational culture than trust in management. Farkas (2013)corroborated the above discovery, stating that an organisation's atmosphere is a significant determinant of the success or failure of any change initiative; change initiative developed without considering the behaviours and espoused values of the organisation is likely to fail.

The result of thematic triangulation analysis by Richardson (2014) indicates a significant interaction between employee attitude and the work environment. Iqbal (2015) in a mixed research method, indicates that attitudinal commitment of employees is significantly associated with organisational climate dimensions (challenge and involvement, freedom, idea support, debate, trust/openness, idea time, risk-taking and conflict). A case study conducted by Iljins et al. (2017) shows a positive interaction between employee satisfaction (employee engagement) and organisational climate. The result also indicates that employee involvement, employee participation have a positive relationship with the workplace climate. Gharleghi et al. (2018) reveal that employee involvement, creative work attitude and intention to leave (commitment) had a significant relationship on employee's corporate social responsibility.

Amkpa and Mamza (2011) investigated the effects of corporate culture on the implementation of automation in Federal universities libraries in the North –East zone of Nigeria and found that the implementation process was deficient and corporate culture components of value, norm, attitude and belief had a significant effect on the low outcome. Burma (2014), House (2010) and Caldwell, Chatman, Ormiston, and Lapiz (2008) revealed that organisational beliefs/values, norms, leadership style, employee attitude, mutual tolerance and teamwork as organisation's cultural factors that affect organisation's goal achievement. Yahyagil (2004) observed that work environments characterised by openness to changes, innovation, teamwork, interpersonal relations, and involvement in a decision-making process, predicted interdependence between the cultural characteristics of organisations and their climatic medium. Aguirre, von Post, and Alpern (2013) examined culture's role in enabling organisational change and exposed that organisations where changes had worked successfully, used existing culture as a source of energy and influence. Belias (2014) revealed that psychological safety is needed for the work environment to enable successful change implementation

Methodology

A survey research design was used to investigate the effect of human factor dimensions (employee attitude, skill, knowledge, involvement, trust, engagement, and commitment) on an organisation's workplace climate with 4, 834 target population of selected food and beverages companies in Lagos State, Nigeria. A sample size of 392 was determined using Krejcie and Morgan table. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select the participants. Four hundred (400) copies of the adapted and validated 6-point Likert scale structured questionnaire with Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients ranging from 0.73 to 0.90 was employed for data collection. Three hundred and seventy-six (376) copies of the distributed questionnaire were returned duly filled and used for the analysis. The validity of the instrument was tested using content validity index (CVI) with a value of 0.91. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's Test of sphericity pretest method was used to test the reliability of the instrument and values ranged from 0.77 to 0.91 were arrived at for human factor dimensions and workplace climate respectively.

Apriori Expectation

In line with the hypothesis formulated, human factor dimensions have no significant effect on workplace climate, it is expected that human factor dimensions (employee attitude, employee's skill, employee's knowledge, employee's involvement, employee trust, employee engagement, employee commitment) would have significant onworkplace climate. This is illustrated in table 1 below:

Table 1: A priori Expectation

Hypothesi	Models	A prioriexpectations : IF
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H_{01}	$WC = \beta_0 + \beta_1 ET + \beta_2 EI + \beta_3 EE + \beta_4 WK + \beta_5 EA + \beta_6 ES +$	$\beta i \neq 0$, p≤,0.05; H ₀₁ will be rejected
	$\beta_7 EC + \mu_i$	$\beta i = \beta 1, \beta 2, \beta 3, \beta 4, \beta 5, \beta 6, \beta 7, \beta 8$

Ethical principles governing research works was taken into consideration during this study as the researcher ensued that there were non-manipulation and falsification of data, respondent's confidentiality was respected and their decision during data gathering was not influenced.

Discussions of Findings

Four hundredcopies of structured questionnaire were administered on the permanent staff of selected food and beverages companies in a Lagos, Nigeria. Three hundred and seventy-six were filled and returned which gives 94% response rate. Table 2, shows the multiple regression analysis results for the effect of human factor dimensions (employee involvement, employee knowledge, employee skill, employee engagement, employee commitment, employee attitude, and employee trust) on workplace climate of selected Food and Beverage companies in Lagos State, Nigeria.

The results reveal that employee involvement($\beta = 0.098$, t = 2.642, p<0.05), employee engagement ($\beta = 0.144$, t = 2.730, p<0.05), employee commitment ($\beta = 0.095$, t = 2.229, p<0.05), employee attitude ($\beta = 0.190$, t = 4.019, p<0.05) and employee trust ($\beta = 0.133$, t = 3.102, p<0.05)have positive and significant effect on workplace climate of selected Food and Beverage companies in Lagos State, Nigeria, while employee knowledge ($\beta = 0.005$, t = 0.119, p<0.905), employee skill ($\beta = 0.018$, t = 0.359, p<0.720) have positive but insignificant effect on workplace climate of selected Food and Beverage companies in Lagos State. The adjusted R^2 (0.474) indicates that human factor dimensions account for 47.4% variation in workplace climate of food and beverage companies in Nigeria. The F – statistics (48.672, p<0.05) indicates that human factor dimensions have a positive significant combined effect on workplace climate.

Table 2: Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Effects of Human Factor Dimensions on Workplace Climate of selected Food and Beverage Companies in Lagos State

N	Model	В	Sig.	T	Anova	R	Adjusted R ²	F (df)
376	(Constant)	1.221	0.000	7.153				
	Employee Involvement	0.098	0.009	2.642		0.696α	0.474	48.672 (7,363)
	Worker's Knowledge	0.005	0.905	0.119	0.000β			
	Employee Skills	0.018	0.720	0.359				
	Employee Engagement	0.144	0.007	2.730				
	Employee Commitment	0.095	0.026	2.229				
	Employee Attitude	0.190	0.000	4.019				
	Employee Trust	0.133	0.002	3.102				

Predictors: (Constant), Employee Trust (ET), Employee Involvement (EI), Employee Engagement (EE), Worker's Knowledge (WK), Employee Attitude (EA), Employee Skills (ES), Employee Commitment (EC)

Dependent Variable: Workplace Climate (WC)

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Discussion

The findings reveal that employee attitude had the highest effect on workplace climate (β = 0.190, t = 4.019, p<0.000), while employee involvement(β = 0.098, t = 2.642, p<0.05), employee engagement (β = 0.144, t = 2.730, p<0.05), employee commitment (β = 0.095, t = 2.229, p<0.05) and employee trust (β = 0.133, t = 3.102, p<0.05) had significant effect respectively on workplace climate. This findings therefore correspond with the works of (Albdour et al., 2014; Armstrong, 2009; Carbonara, 2013; Neubert et al., 2001; Iddagoda et al., 2015; Kariaet al., 2006; Shin et al., 2012; Visagie et al., 2011) which indicates that human factor dimensions (employee attitude, employee involvement, employee engagement, employee commitment, employee trust) were critical to the way in which work roles/tasks are executed and are major determinants of conducive or unconducive workplace climate.

In this study, employee skill and employee knowledge were found to have a positive but insignificant effect on workplace climate in food and beverage companies in Nigeria. The positive result from the study corroborates with the findings of Appiah (2010); Abbas (2014); Rizescu (2014); Kim (2005); Stenmark (2001); Lubit (2001) which assert that combination of skills and knowledge of employees determines the success or otherwise of an organisation. However, the insignificant effect of skill and knowledge on workplace climate in the food and beverage companies in Nigeriaindicated that knowledge is not being shared in the workplace. This finding is not in tandem with Kaplan et al. (2001) who found that knowledge had a significant relationship with organisation's prosperity in a competitive world. Moreso, Maaluet al. (2016) indicated that employee knowledge is significant to organisational sustainability; therefore it should be effectively harnessed as recommended by Stenmark (2001) and Lubit (2001).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study examined the effect of human factor dimensions, measured by employee involvement, employee knowledge, employee skill, employee engagement, employee commitment, employee attitude, and employee trust on workplace climate. The t statistics of the multiple regression output revealed that employee involvement, employee engagement, employee commitment, employee attitude, and employee trust significantly affect workplace climate with coefficient and probability values of ($\beta = 0.098$, t = 2.642, p<0.05), ($\beta = 0.144$, t = 2.730, p<0.05), ($\beta = 0.095$, t = 2.229, p<0.05),($\beta = 0.190$, t = 4.019, p<0.05) and ($\beta = 0.133$, t = 3.102, p<0.05) respectively. While employee knowledge, employee skill have a positive but insignificant effect on workplace climate of Food and Beverage companies in Lagos State as depicted by the following coefficient and probability values: $\beta = 0.005$, t = 0.119, p<0.905, $\beta = 0.018$, t = 0.359, p<0.720 for employee knowledge and employee skill respectively. The study concluded that human factor dimensions have a significant combined effect on workplace climate (F-statistics = 48.672, p<0.05).

Furthermore, the study established that the attitude (β = 0.190, t = 4.019, p<0.05)of an employee towards work is the most valuable asset in an organisation, with highly significant impact on how the workgroup would relate with one another within the group. Due to the positive but insignificant effect of employee skill and knowledge on the workplace climate, which indicated that knowledge sharing was not practised within the team as advocated by Zafirovski (2005) and Aliakbar, Yusoff and Mahmood (2012) that both tangible and intangible resource should be shared with all relevant parties to achieve a good workplace climate for organisation's sustainability. Results from this study is limited to food and beverages companies in Lagos state, Nigeria, and as such cannot be applicable to other sectors of the economy.

The study recommended that organisations should employ human factor dimensions, particularly, employee involvement, employee engagement, employee commitment, employee attitude, and employee trust towards the enhancement of the workplace climate. It is also recommended that the food and beverage companies in Nigeria should deploy knowledge sharing strategies which lead to the transformation of individual knowledge to organisational knowledge. Future studies on knowledge sharing strategies can be deployed within team members which would enhance good workplace climate should be considered.

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