

The effect of economic measures on employee morale in Kwara State public service commission

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Abstract

Failure of workers to comply with the laid down rules results in inefficiency, low morale, poor performances and low level of productivity. Major factor to be considered is Discipline of employees which is very necessary to every aspect of life and to every human being, therefore the critical tool for management to succeed is disciplinary measures. The specific objectives are to: Examine the effect of economic measures of disciplinary actions on employee morale in Kwara State public service commission, the objective explored the various disciplinary measure such as query, compulsory retirement, dismissal ,withholding of salaries, demotion and suspension were the most common disciplinary measures used in Kwara state public service commission, purposive and convenience sampling approaches were adopted in the selection of the respondents from each of the commission. The study adopted an ethnographical research design which enabled the interaction with the population of the study. The design is relevant to this study because it offered solid convenient units of research by addressing the practical issues in disciplinary measures in Kwara state. The major instrument used was a mixture of close ended and open ended questionnaire designed, and data analysis were collected and stored in NVivo 12 qualitative data software. The Instrument of data collection for this study was observation and structured interview. The study reveals that in testing the hypotheses, multiple regression was adopted. Economic measures were proxy by demotion, withholding of salaries, termination and withholding of promotion. The finding in the hypotheses state that 'There is no significant effect between economic measures of disciplinary measures and employee involvement. The study hence concludes that disciplinary measures must indicate gradual stages to be followed in inflicting punishment against erring staff which include calling attention of the superior officer, advanced warning, immediate application of the punishment and fair hearing. The management should ensure effectively use of economic measures available to promote the employee morale.

Keywords: Economic measures, Employee morale, Disciplinary Measure, Organization.

Introduction

Coordinating the affairs of workers is a complex task which managers cope with, irrespective of the extent of diversity which exists in the organization. Ideally, organizations have basic usefulness which are essentials to alluring to employing the best, almost provided by the staff of the organization to achieve the objectives. Among many methods used by human resource manager is the disciplinary measure. Disciplinary measure is usually commenced by management of the organization to acknowledge and discriminate the performance of employees and unsatisfactory conduct as regards the command of the management, purposely on curbing the employees of the organization to desist from the conduct which can discriminate and discard the organization performance Chethah (2010).

Disciplinary measure is to guide employees in complying with the organizational policy. Failure of employees to comply as expected could be directly related to the work performance of the employee or to the laid down policy that demonstrate proper conduct at work. Generally, the code of conduct was designed to cater for the public service workers are categorized. However, in practice, the general code of conduct is still applicable to the sector, disciplinary action such as economic measures are perceived as inconsistent in Kwara state public service commission. Also, the implementation of employee's disciplinary measures not properly adherent to, towards the organization policy hinder the altitude of employees in Kwara state public service commission. The broad objective of the study intends to examine the effect of economic measures of disciplinary measures of disciplinary actions on employee's morale in Kwara state public service commission. Disciplinary measure is to enhance or sustain effective teamwork between the supervisors and subordinates. Effective administration of discipline will not only enhance employees' conduct but will also reduce future disciplinary problems provided there is a positive supervisor subordinate relationship (Grobler, Wanmich, Carrel, Elbert, & Hatfield, 2011). Over the years, human resources managers in the Nigeria Public Service have been confronted with the complex task of dealing with the problems arising from the deficiency of character, lack of self-control, disregard to rules and regulations, laxity at work and other manifestations of indiscipline. Scholars such as Eghe (2016); Ejiolor (2011); Adu (2012) are of the view that despite the various reforms put in place by successive government in Nigeria on the conditions of service and related matters, particularly in the public sector, which by extension applicable to the private sector, the performance of the average workers have continued to degrade. For instance, indiscipline in different forms has been the order of the day, with rules and regulations being broken with impunity and in a situation where by disciplinary measures are taken, they are not consistent, and this negatively affects performance.

Statement of the Problem

Generally the code of conduct was designed to cater for the public service under which public service workers are categorized. However, in practice, the general code of conduct is still applicable to the sector, disciplinary action such as economic measures are perceived as inconsistency which greatly affect the employee involvement in Kwara State Public Service Commission. Also, the implementation of employee's disciplinary measures not properly adherent to, towards the organization policy hinder the attitude of employees at Kwara State Public Service Commission.

Research Objective

The objective of the study is to examine the impact of economic measures of disciplinary actions on work efficiency at Kwara State Public Service commissions.

Conceptual Review

Economic Factors

A climate of pervasive poverty and the relatively low and irregular payment of salaries to worker will promote indiscipline and large scale corruption not only among the civil servants but also among the elected representatives. A healthy economy is a prerequisite to promoting high quality of worklife that brings about the satisfaction of high order needs. This cannot be if workers cannot predict when their salaries will be paid. According to Onah (1995), associated with this is the high rate of indiscipline that precedes adverse situations. At times, salaries are not paid as and when due owing to late release of funds. Such situations predispose staff to various acts of indiscipline such as absenteeism, lateness, indolence and other negative attitudes to work, all because of lack of incentives. Such situations tarry for months; management do finds it difficult to discipline staff as they tend to be uncontrollable.

Later, when the meager salary is paid in the phase of inflation, the workers do not enjoy it as they have a log of debt to settle which was incurred when the payment of salary was being delayed. The balance, if any left, will not be able to sustain them till payment of another salary, partly due to the high level of inflation in the country. Hence, most civil servants are left with no choice but to source for money elsewhere so as to supplement their salaries, and the vicious circle begins again. The civil servants in this precarious condition can hardly maintain discipline and the only options to them include indulging in corrupt practices as a means to survive. The consequences of the attitudes of these civil servants is not limited to them but pervades the entire economy with virtually the same negative result on productivity and discipline.

Employee Morale

Employee morale is simply an individual state of mind, which in the event of any given activity, affects job performance of a given task. High morale produces confidence, optimism, and enthusiasm and will to succeed, while low morale produces negative attitudes toward job performance.

Benton (2012), morale is a buoyant spirit of a whole-hearted cooperation in common effort accompanied with zeal and self-sacrifice or prevailing mood conducive to willing and dependable performance based on faith of the company and its leadership. Umeden and Sharman (2013) see morale as the adjustment of the individual worker in an organization which tends to affect, not only his performance, but that of his colleagues as well. For example, if worker exhibit irritation and frustration, it tends to add to similar feelings in others on the job. On his own contribution, Eghe (2016) puts it that, "morale is the state of mind of an individual with respect to his work environment". It is referred to as the ability of a group of people to put together consistently and persistently in pursuit of a common goal. White (2015) stated that morale reflects socio-psychological condition; a state of mind in which men and women voluntarily seek to developing and applying all their energy to the tasks which they are engaged; the reason for the intellectual or moral satisfaction which they derive from their own self-realization; their achievement in their decision field and their pride in the service. Accordingly, Dimock (2016) put it that, "morale is a by-product, a combination of components which brings about a balance, health situation in which people may work with self-respect and have the opportunity for individual development". In a more comprehensive perspective, Davis (2012) maintains that morale though intangible, can be measured because absence of it in an organization is usually manifested by poor attitude such as lack of respect for constituted authority, excessive lateness and absenteeism, excessive proportion of low quality of work and low productivity in general; general lack of co-operation, derogatory comments about the company and its executives and the community ... a high proportion of grievances

In an attempt to relate morale with employees' performance in the military field, Bernard (2013) gives definition in the context of military management. He says morale means: the state of mind which makes a soldier contended with his surrounding, confidence of himself, his congress and his, and determined to execute all of his missions with effectiveness and efficiency. It relates to the condition of an individual or a group of people with regards to courage, confidence and enthusiasm towards the performance of duty.

Unarguably, it is the view of the researcher that, it is easier to describe the concept of performance in relation to morale using some variables than attempting at having a consensus definition. Therefore, performance as it relates to staff in organization (public or private) is determined when the organization expectations in relation to the duty assigned to individual worker, attained to a satisfactory level

(i.e. good performance) and vice versa for poor performance. Also, closely related, are the concepts of discipline, performance and morale, in which case and in some instances, the same measurable elements can be used to describe each either in positive perspective or negative perspective (i.e. indiscipline, poor performance and low morale), since the three concepts are inseparable.

Theoretical Clarification

Progressive Discipline Theory

This theory was advanced by Brent (2013) through his research on implementation of disciplinary policies in the UK firms. The term progressive discipline signifies an approach to modify undesirable employee behavior through the use of a range of disciplinary consequences that are applied depending upon the nature and history of the particular employees' misconduct. These disciplinary actions often include verbal warnings, formal probationary notices, suspensions without pay and demotions (Brent, 2013). He further stated that most undesirable behavior does not result in immediate discharge, but rather in imposition of some lesser sanctions. If the behavior is repeated, progressively more severe disciplinary action is taken, ultimately leading to termination.

Although progressive discipline as a practical matter is nearly universal, the manner in which employers communicate and apply progressive discipline varies greatly at one end of the spectrum lays a very formal, written policy, in which exact sequences of progressive disciplinary action are mandatory for specific offenses or categories of offences (Bragon, 2015).

Employers who practice progressive discipline but choose not to publish or communicate that practice may do so out of fear of legal claims assertion based on the policy. Yet the absence of any "formal" or "published" policy does not eliminate employer's exposure. Employers generally follow at least informal procedural guidelines in disciplining and terminating employees, which can in turn subject them to lawsuits for breach of implied contract, promissory estoppel and other claims. If carefully drafted, reviewed and implemented, progressive discipline policies can minimize employer's liability and improve employee performance. Employees who utilize progressive discipline may successfully correct a problem and enjoy many years of productivity from the employee (Brent, 2013).

Punitive Theory of Discipline

Punitive discipline is alternatively known as "zero tolerance" and this is a situation where any and every employee infraction results in immediate discharge or hidden dissatisfaction. A discharge takes place when management decides that there is a poor fit between an employee and the organization. The discharge is a result of either poor performance or the employees' failure to change some

unacceptable behavior that management has tried repeatedly to correct (Armstrong, 2012).

Brent, (2013) emphasized that all employers practice progressive discipline whether they know it or not and whether they have a formal progressive discipline or not. The only alternative is the punitive approach whereby employees are arbitrary discharged without warnings. He further noted that overall workplace morale and productivity will undoubtedly suffer if employees perceive that an employer unfairly terminates employees without offering an opportunity to correct the problem.

Empirical Clarification

In complementation of this study, some compiled works of other researchers are empirically reviewed. First, Mailafiya (2006) in a study titled: "Assessment of disciplinary procedures on employee' in Kaduna State Ministry of Water Resources hypothesized that ignorance of rules and regulations led to perpetuation of indiscipline act among staff as well as failure of superior officers to take disciplinary action. Though, significantly the study is, by concluding that ignorant of laid down rules and regulations leads to the commitment of in-disciplinary act, it doesn't examine how effective is the disciplinary measures on staff morale and performance. Also, Etu (2007) in his study titled "Impact of Discipline on Employees" Performance in Federal Road Safety Commission, Zaria Unit focuses in unraveling the nature of disciplinary measures and procedures in the command, without commiserating effort in relating it with staff performance, that is, after the penalties are inflicted on the erring staff, by determining the pre and post-performance.

In his study titled "Discipline and Disciplinary Procedure in Kaduna State Civil Service" Gabriel (2008) selected five (5) ministries for that purpose. The study concluded that non-conformity and non-punctuality to works negatively affect performance (which is obvious). But, no attempt was made in relating discipline as punitive measure, corrective measure and adherence to rules and regulations with performance, as each category may either make(improve)

or mar (discourage) performance. Thus, looking at the foregoing, and the identifiable shortcomings or gaps (though the significant contribution of the studies) this study on "Impact assessment of Disciplinary measures on staff performance in Kaduna State Water Board Zaria, City District and Sunseed Nigeria Limited, has brought to the fore an attempt at looking at disciplinary measures and procedures in the public and private sector. A comparative analysis of the system in either case, differences in nature, forms and of the measures in relation to performance is determined. Also, it sees discipline as punitive measure, corrective measure and obedience to rules and regulations, and, the relationship with staff performance (and morale) is highly emphasized.

Methodology

This study adopted an ethnographical research design which enabled the interaction with the population of study. The design is significant to this study because it offered solid, convenient units of research by addressing the practical issues in disciplinary measures in Kwara State public service commissions. Moreover, ethnographical approach is a feature of the case study and overlaps other qualitative methods and field research concerned with meaning and interpretation. Ethnography is the first-hand fieldwork or studies of people, especially using interviews or participants' observations. This method is also aligned with administering questionnaires to individuals. The researcher adopted the usage of these instruments in this research process in the fieldwork in Nigeria to explain the interaction patterns that lead to changing scripts. In order to answer the research questions, the researcher adopted ethnography, qualitative method with a single case study.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Findings

- a. predictors: (constant), Demotion, Withholding of Salary, Termination, Withholding of Promotion

Independent variable: (Economic measures) I Summary

Model Summary ^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.451 ^a	.203	.195	.92779
a. Predictors: (Constant), Demotion; withholding of salary; termination, withholding of promotion				
b. Dependent Variable: Employee morale				

Source: Author's Fieldwork Computation, 2021

Multiple regression was used to test hypotheses one which states that there is no significant effect between economic measures of disciplinary actions on employee morale. The

results presents the model summary which shows that regression coefficient adjusted r is 0.451, R² = .203, std error= .92779.

This were in line with submission of Huang & cornelt (2008), Regureo and Bracy (2014)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std error	Beta	T	Sig
1. (Constant)	1.793	.248		7.224	0.000
Withholding of promotion	-0.29	.045	-0.34	-.638	0.004
Termination	.158	.039	.204	4.080	0.000
Withholding of Salary	.199	.048	.209	4.161	0.000
Demotion	.321	.048	.312	6.612	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee moral

Among the four predicting variables, demotion is the variable that best predict the criterion with the following values ($\beta = 0.321$, $t = 6.612$, $p < .000$). The next vital predictor in order of importance is the withholding of salary ($\beta = .199$, $t = 4.161$, $p < .000$). This is closely followed by termination with the following values ($\beta = .158$, $t = 4.080$, $p < .000$). Three out of four independent variables impacted on the directional hypothesis. Therefore, the null hypotheses is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted.

Respondent's Background

The study explored the views, experiences, and perceptions of critical stakeholders because they portend the possibility of yielding most relevant data for the study. The respondents were in the staff of Kwara State civil service commission and Local Government service commission. Before the commencing the questionnaire proceedings, verbal

consents were obtained from all the management of the commission. Also, all the respondents were informed of the study's objectives, methods as well as assured confidentiality. Every participant was assured that none of them was identified by name or any other means that can reveal their identity at any time, before, during or in the analysis of this study.

Thematic Analysis of Disciplinary Measures and Performance of Employees

In line with qualitative approach, primary data was analyzed base on the content, the result anchored on the effects of economic measures on employee performance.

Research Objective

To what extent does economic measures of disciplinary actions affect employee morale in Kwara state public service commission?

Table 1: Economic measures of disciplinary actions affecting employee morale in Kwara state public service commission

S/N	Respondent	Definition Of Disciplinary Measures
	CSC0 (2)>	According to economic measures is a way of making things right in manner of obeying the rules and regulations to be effective in working place.
	LSC0 (13)>	It is an act of obeying the guideline and the lay down rules of the organization
	LSC0 (14)>	It is a process of correcting job related behaviour in an organization
	LSC0 (19)>	A process of correcting a misbehavior after its occurrence
	LSC0 (20)>	These are rules and regulation in any organization that guide all the employee against wrong altitudes or misbehavior
	CSC07>	the implementation of economic measure control the altitude of employees such as disobedience, ungodliness, rebellion, revolt, perversity

Based on the responses of the staff, seven commonly used measures were identified, namely: Query, compulsory retirement, dismissal, withholding of salary, verbal warning, demotion and suspension. For example respondent CSC01, CSC03, LSC01, LSC07 CSC020, CSC02 and

LSC03 highlighted some of these measures as the common approaches to disciplinary actions.

Figure 1 shows the representation of the various disciplinary measures in Kwara State.

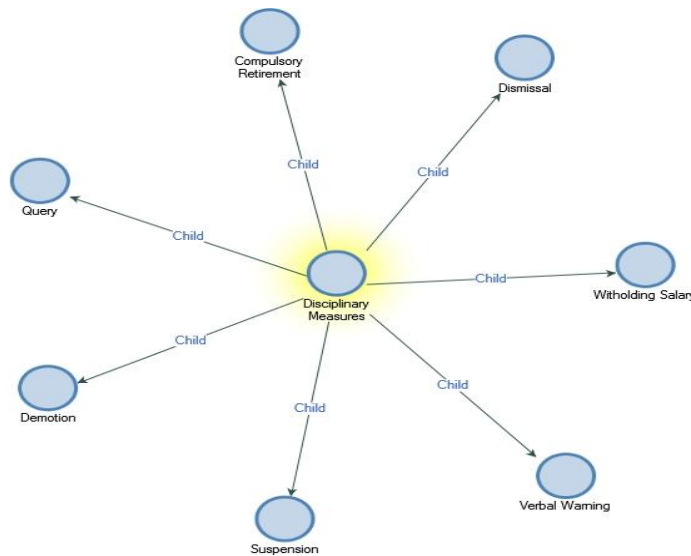


Figure 1: Representation of the various disciplinary measures in Kwara State

Discussion of Findings

The objective of this study was to examine the effect of economic measures of disciplinary actions on employee morale Kwara State public service commission. This section reported the findings of the study which answered research questions 1 to 4 which were analysed based on the content of the questionnaire administered to the staff of civil and local government service commission in Kwara State. The findings of this study were specified by the responses of the open ended questionnaire.

Objective explored the various economic measures available in Kwara State Public service commission. The study found that disciplinary measures such query, compulsory retirements, dismissal, with holding of salaries, demotion and suspension were the most common economic measures used in Kwara state civil and local government service commission. This were in line with submissions of (Huang & Cornell, 2018), Peguero and Bracy (2014), Kotok,(2016) which suggest that workplace environment/climate can shapen the modalities for disciplinary measures and the behaviours of the employees. Kotok (2016) submit that the work place environment and climate affect the economic measures in place. The study is also in line with Peguero and Bracy's approach which revealed that if strong disciplinary actions were reinforced by the organization, it could lead to a high probability of increased performance by employees. The results highlighted the significance of careful planning and the implementation of school discipline and safety policies (Peguero&Bracy, 2014). With similar results as Peguero, Bracy and Kotok discovered in their studies that organizations with equitable disciplinary processes has a higher probability of increased performance; whereas organizations with the inequitable disciplinary process are less likely to have a higher performance.

Summary of the Study

The study adopted an ethnographical research design which enabled the interaction with the population of study. The targeted populations were 11,730 civil servants Kwara State Public service commission. The study employed purposive and convenience sampling techniques and to select sample of 370 staff. The data was collected using survey questionnaire and interview. The data were analyzed using content analysis, and the analysis of variance (ANOVA). The study adopted the two approaches to complement the findings

The findings in hypothesis which states that 'There is no significant effect between economic measures of disciplinary actions and employee involvement in Kwara State public service commission; established that coefficient of correlation R was 0.451 an indication of strong correlation with the variables. The findings also established that coefficient of adjusted R2 was 0.203 which translates to 20%. This explains that 20% changes of employee involvement can be explained the following variables; demotion; withholding of salary; termination, withholding of promotion. Also, the F Calculated was 23.307, an indication that the overall regression model was significant for the study. The study established that the p value was 0.00 which is less than 0.05 and indication that at least one variable significantly influenced, position corroborated by the qualitative findings.

Conclusion and Recommendation

It is strongly believed that disciplinary procedures have the propensity to make certain the existence of an amicable work condition for the management and the employees to attain efficiently without discipline, similarly, the organization cannot perform well without efficient employee performance. In the same vein, the unifying force is to discharge effective disciplinary procedures. This must

define the level of administration which has the authority to take various forms of disciplinary action, ensuring that immediate supervisors do not have the authority to dismiss as far as senior management is concerned. Once the management and employee are able to perform in the area of employment, it must be said that economic measures on employee morale pressing issues in Kwara State public Service Commission. The study examined the effect of economic measures on employee morale at Kwara State public Service Commission. The study covered issues boarded on misconduct among experience staff in various departments at the selected commission which consist of the members of staff of both professionals and admin department of the civil and local government service commissions.

From the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

After a thorough research and analysis of data collected in relation to the effect of economic measures on employee morale in Kwara State public service commission, the following recommendations are down for consideration and possible implementation. The management should ensure effectively and adequately use of the disciplinary measure available to promote the employees performance. The outcome of this research shows that discipline in Kwara State public service commission has the control of impacting employees' performance, even though some challenges were identified. It is therefore recommended that management should improve on what has so far been accomplished. This can be done by taking precautions and setting clear expectations on employees' performance, and ensuring that written policies procedures and work rules regarding discipline are communicated through employees' manual.

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