

# Leadership and Employee Productivity in Anambra State Government System

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**Abstract:** *The study is on Leadership and Employee Productivity: A study of Anambra State Ministry of Works, (2009-2016). The underlying motive for the study is poor service delivery in Anambra State. The objective of the study was to assess the effect of leadership on employee productivity in Anambra State Ministry of Works Awka. Three hypotheses were formulated as guide to the study. The study adopted the Transformational Theory of Leadership propounded by James MacGregor Burns 1978 as the theoretical framework. Cross sectional survey was adopted for the study and data were obtained through primary and secondary sources. The population of the study is 204 made up of the entire staff of the ministry. Generated data were collated and analysed using simple percentage while the chi-square  $\chi^2$  statistical tool was used to test the hypotheses formulated for the study. Findings show that supervision affects the quality of employee output; motivational packages affect employee commitment to the realization of goals and communication system affects employee task accomplishment in Anambra State ministry of works. The study recommended among others that Anambra State Ministry of Works Awka should always optimize effective supervision. Since supervision is inevitable in achieving organizational goals, better communication system and motivational forces should be put in place for better supervision.*

**Keyword:** Commitment, Employee Productivity, Employee Service Delivery, Influence, Leadership

## Background to the Study

Leadership is vital to employee performance and corporate excellence. Leading is a process of influencing and directing the activities of an organized group to accomplish goals by communicating with them. Leadership is therefore premised on interpersonal relationship; hence a leader must influence the employees for better service delivery.

According to the leader-member exchange relationship, the quality of the relation that develops between a leader and a follower is predictive of the outcomes that will be attained (Pierce & Newstrom, 2011). The key element of the leader followers' relationship is the leader's behaviour as perceived by followers. Followers evaluate their leaders. They do interpret every single action of a leader and find its meaning. Every action, every word, every emotion, every gesture from a leader be it oriented to the interest of the organization or the interest of followers, has its meaning in the mind of the follower. This interpretation may shape the behaviour of followers toward organization interest.

Nwachukwu (2000) sees "Leadership simply as an act that involves influencing others to act toward the attainment of a goal". Ubeku (1975) define leadership as the act of motivating or causing people to perform certain task intended to achieve specified objectives. Leadership is the act of making things happen rather than letting things happen. This the leader does by exerting both intrinsic and extrinsic influences on the group. Even though leadership is the most visible of the management functions, largely because it deals so much with people. It has variedly been referred to as directing, commanding, guiding, inspiring, initiating, and activating. However, all stand for the same purpose whatever denotation used. The user, as the striking feature of all suggests a relationship through which one person influences the behaviour of other people.

Leaders are entrusted with not only to manage the organization's affairs but also to deal with the general employees face to face. Leaders are responsible to communicate to employees the organizational goals, visions and ideas. They are also responsible for maintaining and implementing organizational rules and systems and even have the final say on promotion, retention, disciplinary measures and dismissal. Consequently, leaders at all levels are spokespersons of their own organizations, serving as the bridge and link connecting employees (Jing-zhou, Xiao-xue, & Xiaqing, 2008). Researchers show that leaders symbolize the organization situation in which they lead. Their actions and utterances project and shape imagery in the minds of the led, which is influential one way or another in shaping actions within the setting as a whole. The leaders' action may generate a variety of interpretations that set the basis for meaningful action (Pierce & Newstrom, 2011).

On the other hand, the role of employees in organization is also crucial for they are the ones who make things move. Alabar & Hadiza (2013) have shown that employees are critical prerequisites to the satisfaction of external customers especially in service organizations. This role is crucial to the extent employees are comparable to the service itself. Their importance to the firm is critical to not only service production but also to service delivery. The employees are the service and the brand (Zeithaml, Bitner, & Gremler, 2006). In the service industries the people factor in services is a very important element. The reason is that employees play a great part in service delivery and thus influence the customer perceptions (Zeithaml, et al., 2006). What employees portray is what the customers see and use in their evaluation of the service experience. As leaders link employees to the organization, the employees in services link customers to the organization.

Cambra-Fierro, Melero-Polo, & Vazquez-Carrasco (2014) have shown that the more frontline employees are empowered to deliver excellent service; the more customers are engaged toward the company. Therefore understanding the needs and expectations of employees makes them to treat customers better and offer improved service. This is applied to private industries which sell products and services to customers, as well as to suppliers of public services. Consequently, service providers, by the nature of the service business, are very dependent on their employees to achieve customer satisfaction. The support of their employees to achieve customer satisfaction is unique. The power to provide excellent services is significantly influenced by the willingness of employees to operate strategies aiming on establishing a strong relationship between organization and its customers. Such relationship is significantly impacted on by the quality of the interactions between the frontline employees and their customers (Cambra-Fierr, et al., 2014).

Consequently, leadership style is one of the factors that play a significant role in the success or failure of an organization. Leadership is a critical management skill to lead a group of people or an organization towards a common goal. It involves establishing a clear vision; sharing that vision with others so that they will follow willingly; providing the information, knowledge and methods to realize that vision; and coordinating and balancing the conflicting interests of all members of the organization and its stakeholders. A leader is a person who influences, directs, and motivates others to perform specific tasks and also inspires his subordinates for efficient performance towards the accomplishment of the organization's objectives.

All this means that leaders are responsible for modeling the behaviour which will set the company apart as a provider of exceptional service. They are also to set up a culture that values, trusts and provides employees with the flexibility to make decisions that impact on providing differentiated services. Such culture provides with them the feeling that they will not be punished for their decision.

Effective leadership enhances the productivity of employees in all the sectors of the economy in a country. Leadership skills such as technical skills, conceptual skills, interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence and social intelligence have an impact on increasing the productivity of employees (Lewis & Gilman, 2013). According to Graen (2013) leadership impacts productivity in the following ways; it improves employee morale, it's a source of motivation, forms basis for cooperation, divides work as per capability, gives necessary guidance and creates effective communication. Leadership is very important to the survival and effectiveness of organization's performance. As organisations grow and expectations about their performances increase, demand for good leadership tends to multiply. From every indication, there seems to be a strong link between leadership style and performance of employees in an organization (Eze, 2011).

Several Service Delivery is an imperative aspect of productivity by making sure that the lives of the people are improved. The Anambra State Ministry of Works has a responsibility to accelerate the effective and efficient delivery of services. Service delivery is a tremendous challenge in the public service, and leadership and management are often expected to contribute in its realization. The motivation to deliver service should not only be to satisfy the goals of the strategic plans, but to improve the lives of customers (Batho Pele Handbook, 1999).

The Anambra State Ministry of Works was an established government ministry created to carry out functions like construction of road, rehabilitation and maintenance of roads and bridges, storage of bulk supply of petroleum etc. In addition to this, it renders consultancy services to other bodies or establishments that need its services other than the government that established it.

Unfortunately, many of the roads awarded by the Anambra state government were haphazardly constructed and abandon, the constructed ones lacked maintenance which claimed lives of poor masses, was as a result of inadequate supervision and monitoring which are some of the quality of a good leader.

However, the extent to which members of the ministry of work, Anambra state contribute in harnessing the resources of the organization equally depends on how well the managers (leaders) of the organization understand and adopt appropriate leadership style in performing their roles as managers and leaders. Thus, efficiency in resources mobilization, allocation, utilization and enhancement of employee productivity depends, to a large extent, on leadership, among other factors. Akpala (1998) identifies attitude to work, leadership style and motivation as some of the factors that exert negative effect on employee productivity in

Nigeria. The inadequacy of leadership and management skills negatively affects the acceleration of employee productivity in Anambra State Ministry of Work.

The leadership challenges accord with poor productivity as experienced in Nigeria and Africa at large. The fact that many people experience poor quality of life and lack of access to service delivery is among factors that triggered the concerns and dissatisfaction regarding the poor quality of life in Nigeria, where people blame leaders as a result of unproductively.

It is therefore imperative to capacitate the leadership of government departments with skills in order to effectively and efficiently realize productivity. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, stipulates that leadership plays a significant role in the administration and budgeting as well as the planning processes to provide priority to the needs of the community; to promote the social and economic development of the community and to facilitate participation in national and provincial development programmes. The competencies mentioned are achievable where leadership and the employees share common objectives in serving the communities. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to assess leadership and employee productivity in Anambra State Ministry of Work.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The broad objective of this study is to assess the effect of leadership on employee productivity in Anambra State Ministry of Works Awka, from 2009-2016.

The following objectives will guide this study:

1. To determine the effect of supervision on the quality of output in Anambra State ministry of works.
2. To ascertain the effect of motivational packages on employee commitment to the realization of goals in Anambra State ministry of works.
3. To examine the effect of the communication system on goal actualization in Anambra State ministry of works.

**Supervision and the Quality of Output** The relationship between supervision and employee job commitment/output cannot be overemphasized. Supervision is one of the important factors that affect organizational effectiveness. A good match between the supervision and operating realities of an organization will substantially influence its level of employee job commitment. In each organization, supervision influences the performance of individual employee and work groups, and thereby the whole organization's performance.

Luthans (2008) articulates that employees perceive the behavior and actions of managers as actions of the organization itself. Employees develop positive attitude towards the organization where the actions of the managers clearly show that employees are part of the organization. Pathack (2005) further affirms that supervision affect the effectiveness and performance of organization ns. This management scholar analyzed the impact of supervision on firm performance level and found a strong relationship between supervision and employee job commitment.

Staff supervision, also known as staff coaching, is described to be one of the components of professional development. This includes the variety of education, training, and development activities. The common goal of staff supervision is to increase the knowledge and skills of the staff in order to facilitate the improvement in their performance (Burkhauser & Metz, 2009).

Some scholars see the supervisor as an agent of the organization, who often interacts with employees on a daily basis, enabling the formal and informal procedures of organized activities and serving as an administrator of reward to subordinates on behalf of the organization (Farh et al, 1990; Chen et al, 2002). However, research has shown that the success of supervision in the workplace for employee job commitment depends on the style of supervisory behaviour employed by the individual supervisor involved (Eseka, 2009; Adebayo and Ogunsina, 2011). Dubrin and Maier (1993) identified supervisory behaviour as ranging from extremely autocratic, with all decisions made at the top to the extremely democratic with most decisions made by employees at the lowest level of the organization. Richmond and McCroskey (2000) identified subordinate perceptions of supervisor credibility and attractiveness in social and task as positively related to employee job satisfaction and motivation for higher productivity in the workplace. In this regard, Shaw and Ross (1985), observe that a sociable supervisor has the ability to enhance subordinates' job satisfaction and subordinates' perception of the supervisor's credibility as catalyst for employees' productivity in an organization.

McCroskey (2006) sees credibility as "the attitude toward a source of communication held at a given time by a receiver." This means that the more credible a supervisor is perceived by his/her subordinates in the workplace, the more likely the supervisor would be accepted, and also realize his/her goals of a worthy agent, and an administrator of reward for employee job commitment. The

implication of the above position is that though the role of the supervisor is crucial to the realization of organizational goals, yet, for any organization to achieve enhanced productivity of its workforce, there has to be deliberate efforts on its part at attracting supervisors that have the necessary skills to actualize quality supervision required to achieve employee job commitment, or else the importance of the supervisory roles for higher productivity of employees and that of the entire organization would not be realized. This implies that there is a relationship between, not just supervision and employee job commitment, but also, the style of supervisory intervention in an organization as basis for enhanced service delivery.

### **Motivational Packages and Employee Commitment to the Realization of Organizational Goals**

In this part we will try to make a link between motivation packages and employee commitment. Kahn (1990) and May, Gilson and Harter (2004) models of commitment argue that people need both self-expression and self-employment in their working lives. Moreover, they identified three psychological conditions for commitment i.e. psychological meaningfulness, safety and availability. Lee (2013) explained self determination theory and relates its three psychological desires of human behavior i.e. autonomy, competences and relatedness with employee engagement (Deci and Ryan 1985, 1991, cited in Lapointe, 2013; Lee, 2013). When these three desires are accomplished, employee considers themselves self determined motivated. Furthermore, these desires keep employees in job role as happy employee. When these desires are not accomplished, their motivation is called non self determined (Lapointe, 2013). Kahn (1990) and May, Gilson and Harter (2004) model of engagement shows some relationship with self determination theory. Both explains psychological conditions, if fulfilled can work as motivation (through autonomy, competences and relatedness) and employee engagement (through psychological meaningfulness, safety and availability).

Maskach and Leiter (2008) associated burnout to both positive and negative responses to the job. The positive responses are in the form of engagement (motivation) and negatives are in the form of job dissatisfaction, absenteeism, intention to leave the job, turnover, stress. They also identify few factors that can show the way towards employee engagement i.e. reward and recognition etcetera. These factors can be used to motivate employees and results in employee positive responses (engagement).

Social exchange theory (SET) of employee engagement normally based on reciprocity or repayment principal, where action of one party becomes the response or action of another party. If employees are getting resources and benefits from their organizations they in exchange will engage their selves in a way to contribute to organization. Employees can be benefited through motivational factors (intrinsic & extrinsic) and in exchange they will engage their self in order to benefit organization. SET can be used to insure both motivation (through benefits) and employee engagement (through exchange response).

Christain, Ghaza and Slaughter (2011), Kahn (1990) and May, Gilson and Harter (2004) linked motivation and employee engagement. Many studies found indirect relationship between motivation and employee engagement. Motivation and employee engagement result in increased firm productivity and employee performance, most scholars have linked motivation and engagement to high profit and employee performance. Intrinsic motivation has also been linked with employee engagement from organizational and contextual factors, but little empirical evidence support this statement (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Chalofsky & Krishna, 2009).

#### **Motivational packages to Encourage Employee Commitment**

*Pay-for-performance* incentives are often utilized in the private sector to encourage competition among and within team, but such a model may not be directly applicable to the public sector, as resources are often tighter, and money may not be the primary source of motivation for those with an ethos of public service. Research suggests that individuals are motivated to perform well when the work is meaningful and individuals believe they have responsibility for the outcomes of their assigned tasks. It is recommended following suggestions which may help to improve productivity among workers.

*Promote Challenges and Accomplishments:* Specific and challenging goals can lead to higher levels of performance, productivity, and creativity which in turn is linked with an overall stronger commitment to the organization (Perry, Mesch, & Paarlberg, 2006). We propose developing challenging goals and timelines together with employees. By setting goals, employees obtain a clear strategy for their own professional development, which creates greater satisfaction and motivation (Ambrose & Kulik, 1999). Goals should be challenging but also attainable. Complex and abstract goals may lead to decreased work performance and negatively impact employee morale. Accomplishing goals that challenge employee creativity and problem-solving skills can improve performance, enhance employee self confidence, and improve job satisfaction which can outweigh a one-time monetary award (Perry, Mesch, & Paarlberg, 2006).

Goal setting should be followed by regular and thorough feedback given by supervisors on employee's goal achievements.

*Create Organizational Learning Opportunities:* Goal setting should be challenging and achievable, goals can also promote learning opportunities. Organizations can integrate learning opportunities through setting goals that allow employees to engage in problem solving and knowledge acquisition. We have found that merit pay and pay-for performance systems yield little positive results on employee performance or learning opportunities, yet a system of progressively giving employees more complex tasks can stimulate employee learning and consistently improve employee performance. Organizational learning opportunities can also challenge an employee to think more expansively about their own personal goals (Perry, Mesch, & Paarlberg, 2006).

*Utilize Group Incentives as Well as Individual Incentives:* Organizational learning and employee personal growth are impacted by the incentives offered in the work environment. It is recommended, implementing a variety of awards such as team awards, individual recognition based on extraordinary performance, and rewards for all employees for their achieved goals. In order to strengthen teamwork, praise employees for performance that benefits the team.

Awarding only a few people with rewards might be counterproductive. According to Bob Behn, some hard working employees might feel treated unfairly and lose their work spirit or develop resentments to other employees and the team (Behn, 2000).

*Rethink Job Design:* Incentives are just one method used to promote motivation in the work environment, another method is job design. It is advised, implementing a job design in an organization in which employees rotate job positions (if possible), gain more responsibility over their work and resources, and engage in trainings and organizational learning opportunities.

Research has shown that job design is a central element in motivation. Employees work better if they are involved in the organizations decision-making process, and if they have control over their own professional development (Ambrose & Kulik, 1999). Jobs designed with a sense of challenge and task significance can facilitate a sense of meaningfulness, leading to better work performance and personal growth in the work setting (Perry, Mesch, & Paarlberg, 2006).

*Use Positive Reinforcement:* There is little research showing a significant relationship between merit-pay and performance, yet motivating factors such as job design and positive reinforcement has improved employee performance (Perry, Mesch, & Paarlberg, 2006). It is strongly suggested, using positive reinforcement as a key tool for motivation. The latest research about motivation in the public sector has shown that traditional approaches, such as incentive pay systems, do not lead to more motivation or better performance on the job.

*Promote a Healthy Work Environment:* Organizational practices that motivate employees and improve performance may be ineffective if little attention is paid to the working environment. It is recommend, eliminating dissatisfactory work conditions. Create an environment which your employees feel is fair and safe. Install motivators such as acknowledgment, responsibility, and learning opportunity to improve the employees' performance. There are two elements, crucial for motivated workers: the absence of dissatisfaction about the work environment and salary, which creates a neutral attitude towards work, followed by motivators to generate extrinsic and intrinsic motivation.

Contingent upon above suggestions, success requires a comprehensive strategy implemented thoughtfully. By working together, it can build a highly motivated and empowered team of talented, top performing professionals.

## **Communication System and Goal Actualization**

Satisfactory and effective communication contributes to an organization's success, employee attitude and morale, and customer satisfaction ( Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011; Neves & Eisenberger, 2012; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Shore & Shore, 1995; Tsai, Chuang & Hsieh, 2009). Communication is a means to improve commitment and to stimulate employees to achieve organizational goals (Tsai, Chuang & Hsieh, 2009). Organizations and managers that openly share information and encourage bi-directional communication have a higher rate of employee service delivery (Allen 1992; Allen 1995; Neves & Eisenberger, 2012) and found that employees enjoyed improved sense of well-being, happiness and job satisfaction (Anchor, 2009; Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011; Neves & Eisenberger, 2012; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Shore & Shore, 1995).

In their 2009 study, Tsai, Chuang and Hsieh found that employees do not always realize the importance of communication to organizational goals, or know how to establish and maintain healthy communication systems. It is the responsibility of managers to improve communication in the workplace, train employees in communication skills, and encourage informal communication (Tsai, Chuang & Hsieh, 2009). It was found that employee service delivery was positively impacted by effective communication from supervisors regarding expectations and feedback on job performance (Tsai, Chuang & Hsieh, 2009).

Husain (2013) identified that the role played by communication during change in the business organizations as essential for successful change management. The employees are the key sources to bring about change in organizations. To encourage employees for desired change, organizations must address the apprehensions and issues related with them. Job insecurity should be decreased and a sense of community should be created so that employees may feel their responsibilities. The need for change and its advantages will motivate the staff to participate in change plan and execute it.

According to Kibe (2014) investigated the effects of communication strategies on organizational performance. A descriptive research design was used in this study. 132 questionnaires were distributed employees. The findings of this research showed the importance of both the theoretical level and practical level. It concluded that for any organizational performance to be effective, an open communication environment should be encouraged. Once members of the organization feel free to share feedback, ideas and even criticism at every level it increases employee service delivery.

Bery, Otieno, Waiganjo & Njeru (2015), explored the effect of employee communication on organization performance in Kenya's horticultural sector. This study was carried out in flower farms in Kenya. The study found that communication facilitates exchange of information and opinion with the organization that communication helps in improving operational efficiency thus improving employee's service delivery. It concluded that communication is a major determinant of organization performance. The study

recommended that organizations should develop effective communication strategies since it will facilitate passing of information both within and outside the organization thus improving employee service delivery.

- Effective Communication will improve your overall work place culture. It can also eliminate barriers and resolve problems while at the same time building stronger work place relationships for increased productivity.
- Effective communication helps in improving relationship between management and staff, it is quite important and is often overlooked .Things will go on smoothly when everyone is on the same page ,understanding the goals and direction an organization is going.
- Effective communication in the work place plays a prominent role in developing long lasting employee motivation.
- Good communication skills also helps improve time management. The ability will exist for you to manage your own time as well as keeping other staff focused on deadlines.
- It is a vital tool for conflict management and redressing client grievances. Conflict in a workplace is virtually inevitable. Effective communication enables you to communicate or manage even negative or difficult messages without creating conflict or destroying trust.
- Increases efficiency. Effective communication promotes the sharing of information and training of employees thus improving overall staff skills and assisting management in decision-making process.
- Promotes public trust in the judiciary through enhanced quality of service delivery.
- Effective communication is also crucial in modifying individual's attitudes, as a well-informed individual will likely have better attitude than a less-informed individual.
- Assists in controlling and evaluation processes. There are various levels of hierarchy and certain principles and guidelines that employees must follow in an organization. They must comply with organizational policies, perform their job role efficiently and communicate any work problem and grievance to their superiors. Thus, communication helps the management in its controlling and evaluating functions.
- Effective communication aids the recovery of feedback from court users which, if appropriately utilized, will encourage continuous improvement in the quality of justice delivery.

### **Summary of Findings**

In summary, the findings are:

1. Supervision affects the quality of employee output in Anambra State ministry of works.
2. Motivational packages affect employee commitment to the realization of goals in Anambra State ministry of works.
3. The communication system affects employee task accomplishment in Anambra State ministry of works.

### **Conclusion**

This study aimed at examining the leadership and employee productivity in Anambra State Ministry of Works Awka. Different past researches indicated the effect of leadership on employee productivity. The findings of this present study also revealed the effect of supervision on the quality of employee output in Anambra State ministry of works; the effect of motivational packages on employee commitment to the realization of goals in Anambra State ministry of works and the effect of the communication system on employee task accomplishment in Anambra State ministry of works. The result is supporting to empirical findings of Igbaekemen G.O, Odivwri J.E (2015), Malik, S. H., Aziz, S., & Hassan, H. (2014), Egwakhe (2014) etc that there is a strong effect of leadership on employees' productivity. Moreover, in line with the findings of this study, it can be concluded that supervision, motivation and effective communication positively affects employee productivity.

### **Recommendations**

1. Adequate supervision is an important factor in determining the degree at which tasks done by employees are of the expected quality. Adequate supervision controls the direction of quality of output as it spots deviation from standard in good time and ensure tasks are accomplished as expected.
2. Leadership is all about motivation: A good leader must strive to use every incentive available to drive people to task accomplishment, findings from study shows that motivation affects employee commitment. The management of the ministry of works should therefore ensure adequate use of motivational strategies financially and more importantly non-financial motivational strategies to secure the commitment of workers in the ministry. This is because when workers are committed productivity increases.

3. Organizations, specifically Anambra State Ministry of Work Awka should always optimize effective communication as it improves organizational performance and encourages workers.

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