

The Impact of Employee Discipline on Organizational Survival: The Human Resource Management Perspective.

Ekeabasi Charles Akpan, Ebiasuode Awu

Department Of Management, Faculty Of Management Sciences
Ignatius Ajuru University Of Education, Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt
Rivers State, Nigeria

Abstract: *This study examined the relationship between the impacts of employee discipline on organizational survival. The study explored the variables in relation to human resources management and organizational survival. The study further explored the objectives of discipline in an organization, characteristics as well as its relationship with organizational effectiveness and survival. The findings revealed that discipline is an important factors for any organizational to enjoy effectiveness which breeds survival. Arising from these findings, the study recommended amongst other that there should be proper on boarding to enable new employees understand the objectives of the organization and also ensure that there is fair treatment of employees in organizations.*

Keywords: Employee Discipline, Negative Discipline, Positive Discipline and Organizational Survival

INTRODUCTION

In these turbulent times for business, maintaining a company is of utmost importance. It is now the employees' job as well as that of the owners or other leaders of the firm to maintain their position in this cutthroat environment. Employees are a valuable resource for the organization, and their knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience have been shown to increase through time.

Collaboration is essential for company success, and stakeholder interests must be aligned with one another in order for there to be no business disruption and the emergence of new partnerships (Venkatarman, 2001). Therefore, involving employees in the company's strategic decision-making involves utilizing their expertise and experience to acquire a competitive edge and keep talent on board. Many researchers and academicians have resorted to paying attention to the individual employees in the business since innovation in products and services is brought about by these individuals in the quest for survival in the global market place (Olughor & Oke, 2014). In any situation, organizations are made up of interconnected groups and individuals that collaborate to accomplish the aims and objectives of the organization. As a result, these employees regularly engage with one another in order to perform their job-roles and effectively support their businesses (Idris & Alagbeleye, 2015). Individuals, however, bring their own special skills, attitudes, values, and viewpoints to the job, and this can in and of itself be a source of friction in any organization (Knight & Ukpere, 2014). Similar to this, some people's behavior and attitudes in formal organizations and establishments deviate from the organization's ethos, rules, and regulations due to their competing interests and acquisitive nature. It goes without saying that individuals must exhibit a decent amount of predictable behavior in order for the company to attain its goals and objectives. Discipline is one tool for ensuring order, advancement, and organizational effectiveness. Effective organizational functionality will be disrupted in the absence of appropriate disciplinary measures for negligent employees. An organization is not created in a vacuum; it is made up of individuals who have aspirations and goals that they would like to accomplish while working for the company (Idris & Alagbeleye, 2015).

An organization should consider the people when attempting to achieve its goal by offering favorable working conditions, pay, and benefits, among other things. According to Agba & Abubakar (2013), when everything are put in the right location, people will have no excuse for not giving it their all to help the company achieve its stated goals and objectives. Every person's actions are a result of their own requirements and motivations. Employees must be disciplined if such individual goals of employees and corporate goals are to be achieved. They will be able to adhere to the organization's rules, objectives, and requirements thanks to their level of discipline. Every firm needs its personnel to uphold strict discipline in order to accomplish the goals that have been set. Therefore, people play a crucial role in how well a company performs. For that, the employees must uphold a high standard of discipline in order to boost system performance. The methods used to maintain discipline inside the organization play a significant role in whether or not the organization succeeds in achieving its goals and objectives (Ubah, Onyebueke, & Omodu, 2019). Discipline, according to Anyaoha (2010), is "the proactive strategy for fostering an attitude and having organizational employees abide by the set of rules and regulations of the organization." Applying incentives and sanctions helps achieve this. This ensures that firms don't focus solely on employee wrongdoing. Improved organizational performance will result from high levels of discipline across all stakeholders. In this context, organizational performance refers to the rate of growth, stability, profitability, sustainability, and productivity. The degree of employee contribution (discipline or indiscipline) in the workplace affects the effectiveness of the firm. Low employee commitment will result in low performance or productivity, or low commitment of the employee will result in low performance of the business (Ubah, Onyebueke, & Omodu, 2019). The point of departure is how crucial employee discipline can aid organization's survival.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Companies have utilized a largely consistent procedure over time to deal with common personnel issues like absenteeism, subpar performance, and other workplace infractions. This strategy, commonly referred to as "employee discipline," calls for a progression of harsher sanctions, such as warnings, suspensions without pay, and reprimands, when workers fail to live up to organizational standards. The manager's responsibility when issues develop is to choose the appropriate penalty. But today, an increasing number of businesses are abandoning the criminal justice model in favor of remedial action-based employee performance improvement.

They are giving up the outdated approach of only using punishment. Instead, they are implementing an accountability strategy in which workers with poor attendance, conduct, or performance are expected to accept personal responsibility for their actions. Despite all these advancements, businesses continue to use archaic, traditional methods to manage employee punishment. Saundry and Antcliff (2011) assert that personnel are depended upon to carry out organizational policies in an efficient manner, no matter where they are located in the world.

Employees are expected to provide clients and the general public with effective and efficient service delivery while also assisting the government in implementing programs that will enhance citizens' quality of life. Sadly, this has not been the case due to a number of causes, including inadequate employee performance management and a lack of employee discipline, among others. Negative work attitudes such as absenteeism, tardiness, and a general lack of commitment to duty have resulted as a result of the employees' complaints about poor working conditions, an opaque performance appraisal system, the selective application of disciplinary measures, and a lack of training opportunities. Several scholars have attempted to use various constructs to fix this problem, yet the issue still exists. It is therefore the objective of this study to examine how employee discipline can aid organizational survival through human resource management.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study's theoretical framework is based on Max Weber's bureaucratic management theory. According to Weber (1946), bureaucracy is the foundation for an organization's strategy creation, and the goal of bureaucratic management is to improve organizational management and efficiency. The use of bureaucracy in managing and running an organization is appropriate. Task specialization, hierarchical authority, formal selection, rules and standards, career orientation, and impersonality are the six guiding principles of bureaucratic management. According to the notion of rules and requirements, rules and regulations ought to be specific, foreseeable, and explicit. It is expected of employees to be aware of what is expected of them. The organization's policies and procedures should be followed exactly as they are laid out. The management's use of the law ensures that employees behave consistently and improves the coordination of their efforts.

Concept of Employee Discipline

Richard (2014) states that "Discipline may be viewed as a force that encourages individuals or groups to abide by the rules, regulations, and procedures that are regarded necessary for the efficient operation of an organization." According to William and Edward (2011), discipline is "the force that prompts an individual or a group to observe the rules, regulations, and procedures which are deemed to be necessary to the attainment of an objective; it is force or fear of force which restrains an individual or a group from doing things which are deemed to be destructive of group objectives." Additionally, it is the use of constraint or the imposition of punishments for breaking group rules. According to Ordway (2013), "Discipline is the order, members of an organization who adhere to its essential rules because they seek to collaborate amicably in advancing the purpose which the group has in mind." Since employees behave in accordance with the organization's norms and standards of acceptable behavior, discipline can now be described as a condition in the workplace. According to Cooke (2012), discipline refers to an organization's members conducting business in a methodical manner while carefully adhering to the fundamental norms and regulations. These employees/organizational members collaborate as a team to realize the objective and vision of the organization, and they genuinely comprehend that individual and group goals and aspirations must coincide in order to guarantee organizational success. According to Cooke (2012), an organized employee will always be disciplined, and a disciplined employee will be organized. The foundation of organizational discipline is employee conduct. Respecting the organization's code of conduct is implied by discipline. An organization's discipline ensures productivity and effectiveness. As well as acting as a morale booster for the workers, it promotes harmony and cooperation among coworkers. In the lack of discipline, an organization will descend into disorder, confusion, corruption, and disobedience. In essence, discipline entails maintaining proper subordination among workers, obedience, and order. Organizational discipline is influenced by a variety of factors, including job security, compensation structures that are suitable, and fair and equitable treatment of all employees. According to Cole (2016) Discipline is viewed from two angles/dimensions:

Positive Discipline:

Punishment-free discipline is referred to as positive discipline. The major objective is to promote and ensure employee self-discipline. The workers in this situation view the group goals as their personal goals and work arduously to accomplish them. The personnel follow and abide by the rules and regulations because they naturally want to work together to accomplish organizational goals, not because they are afraid of penalty. To accomplish these objectives, employees practice restraint.

Negative Discipline:

In order to avoid punishment, which could take the form of fines, penalties, demotions, or transfers, employees abide by rules and regulations. Employees in this situation do not see company goals as their own goals. Negative discipline refers to the measures adopted by management to enforce desirable standards of behavior or codes of conduct from employees in an organization. The staff stays on task because they are afraid of being punished.

Any organization's performance is based on the dedication and tenacity of its people capital. Companies have created disciplinary procedures to harness, enhance, and encourage all employees to establish and maintain standards of behaviour, attendance, and job performance. This is done to make employers and employees devoted to one another and to the advancement of the organization. Employee handbooks and workplace displays both make some of these practices available to employees, while others are posted online. In a perfect world, they would be uniform, fair, and applicable to all employees inside the company (Agbo, 2020). According to the United States Marine Corps (2009), discipline is the capacity to carry out the appropriate action even when no one is seeing or suffer the effects of guilt, which cause pain in our bodies and lead to discipline. The Latin term "disciplinary," which meaning "the technique of training people to obey norms or a code of behavior, using punishment to correct disobedience," is the source of the English word discipline. To discipline someone is to shape their behavior, manners, and entire personality. Therefore, rather than just punishing bad behavior, discipline should put more of an emphasis on increasing performance. Module 5 of the Society for Human Resource Management (2011), a person has the quality of being well-behaved when they are disciplined. The words conduct, behavior, and deportment are all connected to the word discipline in this sense. It is a crucial component of personality formation. In reality, discipline is a mix of positive reinforcement and negative consequences. Early discipline helps a youngster develop into a responsible, well-mannered adult. Competent, self-assured, and compassionate people are well renowned for living a disciplined lifestyle. Discipline can also refer to the application of sanctions for breaking an organization's rules and regulations (Ajila & Omotayo, 2012). According to the Australian Institute of Management, discipline is the acceptable behavior that group members exhibit in keeping with their mission and vision. The corrective measures that a group of negligent employees enforces are referred to as discipline. Actions performed to stop employees from breaking company policies could also be considered discipline. Bedeian (2007) defines discipline as a disciplinary action taken against an employee who violated an organization's established regulations. According to Bedeian (2007), employee discipline is important for improving both individual employee performance and organizational performance as a whole. Without staff discipline, individual employee job performance might not be up to the organization's standards.

Combining these concepts, discipline may be described as an employee's showing of appropriate behavior that complies with the policies and procedures of an organization. Organizations use staff discipline as a management technique to accomplish their goals. The purpose of staff discipline is to prevent and/or remedy irregularities and deviations from an organization's established processes and rules. Staff discipline, which entails complete compliance of the established processes, policies, and procedures of an organization, is essential to the effectiveness of a company.

Characteristics of Employee Discipline

According to Calhoun (2008), three peculiar traits define employee discipline. First of all, discipline for employees is a form of self-control. Employee discipline refers to individual efforts at self-control to follow the established policies and guidelines of an organization in order to guarantee the achievement of organizational goals. Secondly, Discipline of employees is a bad strategy. This means that discipline both encourages people to engage in particular activities and, conversely, deters them from doing other activities. Lastly, Discipline of employees is a punitive strategy. This implies that if employees disobey or violate the norms and regulations of an organization, discipline will result in punishment for them. Employees who commit errors are disciplined not to correct previous wrongdoings but to stop future instances from happening.

Objectives of Employee Discipline

Nwosu & Ugwuera (2015) averred that the purpose of discipline particularly in an organization is to curtail misconduct among employees, correct erred employees and to prevent such misbehaviors from reoccurring in the future. According to Apalia (2017), the objectives of employee discipline are:

1. To ensure employees adhere to the code of conduct and standards of performance of an organization. Employees are disciplined after failing to produce desired outcomes. The failure could be associated either to the responsibilities carried out by an employee or neglect of rules and procedures deemed necessary for appropriate work behavior.
2. To maintain respect between subordinates and superiors. Poorly-administered discipline could de-motivate employees or caused misunderstanding between employees. On the other hand, a well-administered discipline would enhance employee behavior, minimize acts of misconduct and foster a cordial relationship between employees and their employers.
3. To boost the morale of employees for improved job productivity and efficiency. Although, discipline should be enforced for poor performance, however, Nwosu & Ugwuera (2015) stressed that discipline for poor performance should be exempted for employees that are still being trained on the job. It is wrong for employees to discipline for outcomes beyond their capacities (Beidan, 2007).

Concept of Organizational Survival

Organizational survival is the capacity or condition of continuing to exist, frequently in the face of difficulty, obstacles, or threats. There are several subjective and objective meanings associated with organizational survival. Observing an organization's continued existence is the most scientific way to gauge its survival. Given the nature of mergers and acquisitions, this is problematic (Delacroix and Carroll, 1983). As long as a company "purchases inputs from suppliers and delivers product to a certain audience," it is considered to have survived (customers, clients etc). When coalitions of its resource suppliers are unable to be persuaded to contribute resources and the company is unable to compensate resource providers for prior contributions, the organization is viewed as having failed (Sheppard, 1989). Typically, when a business files for bankruptcy, it is deemed to have failed (Moulton, 1988). To put it another way, the company hasn't returned investors' and creditors' money in the way that was agreed upon, which would have given employees job security, given the government money through taxes, etc. Therefore, for the sake of this study, survival merely refers to an existing organization's avoidance of failure, i.e., bankruptcy. Therefore, surviving can be seen as a success. Profitability, inventiveness, growth, liquidity, and flexibility are signs of an organization's existence. Organizational failure is also defined as ceasing operations as a result of an inability to fulfill financial obligations to suppliers of financial resources, employees, and consumers owing to insolvency. As a result of failing to meet the financial requirements of the regulatory body, it may also happen when an organization files for liquidation or bankruptcy since such a filing revokes the agreement between a firm and its stakeholders and serves to recognize the firm's failure. If shareholders equity (i.e. capital ratios) is lower than the required minimum, the regulating government agency may take over any sort of business, including those in manufacturing, banking, exploration, and other industries. Example of such bodies in Nigeria is the Asset Management Corporation of Nigeria (AMCON), a body established by the Act of the National Assembly of Nigeria in July 2010. (Obiekwe, 2018) Survival and expansion of the organization are implicit organizational goals that need a commitment of time and money. Organizations that don't prioritize survival should reevaluate their strategy (Gross, 1968). All other aims are supported by the objective of organizational survival (Gross, 1968). The achievement and execution of other organizational goals are aided by paying attention to this purpose.

According to Gross, every organization has an unwritten rule based on the idea of survival. This implies that any organization should consider its ability to survive as an absolute necessity before pursuing any kind of goal (Gross, 1968). Organizational life cycle theory is based on the pattern found in living things (Bernstein, 1955). Instead of using calendar years, organizations are evaluated according to their stages of growth and development. The stages are connected in a subtle and undetectable way; however it is important to note that not every organization exhibits the characteristics of each phase as it advances. Organizations make an effort to keep things as they are, but the majority of their efforts are focused on surviving (Mindy, 1998). Therefore, it is crucial to recognize both internal and external dangers to an organization's survival. The extent to which an organization achieves its stated goals and objectives is referred to as organizational effectiveness, which fosters organizational survival (Armstrong, 2010). Effective organizational performance also implies that there is little to no difference between performance as it is and what is anticipated. Any firm cannot achieve its goals without the participation of its people since they are its lifeblood. This makes it necessary for management to have a friendly working connection with its staff. Employee effectiveness determines an organization's effectiveness. Although these notions are distinct, organizational efficiency and organizational effectiveness are frequently used synonymously in literature. Organizational efficiency, according to Fred (2012), is the skillful utilization of organizational resources to increase productivity and profitability. Organizational efficiency refers to a company's internal operating procedures. On the other side, the human components of organizational activities are linked to organizational effectiveness. Effectiveness is the ability of personnel to accomplish their goals within the allotted time.

Determinants of Organizational Effectiveness in Disciplinary Actions

Obisi, Samuel, and Elegbede (2013) noted that there are four elements that affect an organization's ability to effectively implement disciplinary measures, and they are as follows:

- Proper selection of employees: This implies that an organization's selection and recruitment practices determine how quickly it performs. Employers should base their hiring decisions on soft traits like integrity, honesty, and thoroughness. Employee traits determine the level of internal discipline in a company.
- An adequate system of motivation: To preserve appropriate behaviors and encourage employee performance, disciplinary actions are used. Employees who follow company policies and are disciplined should be rewarded for their good behavior. This significantly increases employee effectiveness, which in turn increases organizational effectiveness.
- Necessary rules and regulation: This implies that regulations in an organization must be onerous. Once a rule serves its purpose, it should be abandoned. Organizational policies ought to be periodically reviewed. If employees are still subjected to an excessive number of rules, the organization cannot function effectively.
- Awareness of rules enforcement: Employees are more likely to follow set rules if they are aware that breaking them will result in consequences.

CONCLUSION

The exploration into how discipline affects organizational survival in Nigeria was the major goal of the study. The concept of employee discipline and organizational survival were both examined in the study. The study also demonstrated the link between organizational survival and discipline. The true goal of punishment is to motivate staff to perform to standards, act responsibly, and behave safely on the job. Employees who are unable to follow instructions or perform to expectations are let go in a way that allows them to understand what constitutes acceptable performance and behavior. Individuals and the workforce must adhere to established organizational standards for job performance and for personal behavior that are influenced and upheld by discipline. Discipline based on established rules, regulations, policies, and procedures must be strictly enforced.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made;

1. It is crucial to prioritize orientation and training programs that inform staff members and new hires about the service's goals and objectives.
2. It is necessary to do away with the management philosophy that treats certain employees better than others based on their social standing.
3. It is important to emphasize the supportive social aspects that will encourage self-control.
4. The values of society and the family are involved here.
5. Some employees' salaries are insufficient to meet their necessities due to the significant social security gap; as a result, they turn to illegal activities in order to survive.
6. In order to maintain strong morale, management of firms should make sure that their staff is fairly compensated. Employee motivation should always be a top priority. Motivational benefits don't always have to be money. The organization's management should also practice self-control, self-actualization, and work enrichment.
7. Disciplinary issues should always be resolved quickly, and anyone found guilty should receive the proper punishment to serve as deterrence to others. Discipline cases must be properly documented, and they should frequently be used as a reference for promotions and other rewards.

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