



RESEARCH ARTICLE

WORKPLACE DISCIPLINE AND EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY: A STUDY OF SELECTED HOTELS IN IMO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to discover the effect of workplace discipline on employee productivity in the hospitality industry with a focus on selected hotels in Imo State, Nigeria. The study adopted a survey research design with primary data elicited from copies of structured questionnaire distributed to select respondents. Sample size of 230 was drawn from a population of 570 and the questionnaire was drafted in line with Likert's response scale. Theoretically, the study was anchored on Theory X. Regression analysis technique was used to test the hypothesis with the aid of SPSS. Based on the analysis, it was found that workplace discipline has significant positive effect on employee productivity in the hospitality industry. Consequent on the finding, the study recommended inter alia; the management of organizations should endeavour to have clearly stated rules/policies that guide employee conducts and behaviour. Furthermore, organizations should adopt progressive as well as positive disciplinary approach in treating cases of insubordination in the system.

Keywords: Workplace, discipline, employee, productivity, industry.

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1.0. INTRODUCTION

Every human person is associated with certain idiosyncrasy that often defines, determines and directs one's actions, inactions or behaviours. In organizations, these behaviours are usually checked to ensure they do not cause any form of organizational dysfunction. However, one of the ways this could be achieved and maintained is through effective disciplinary system. Institutionalization of discipline in organizations is as important as the organization because discipline exerts tremendous influence on employee behaviour which directly and indirectly influences employee productivity and overall output of the organization (Akinyele, 2018).

The complexity and dynamism of modern workplace needs effective discipline to improve operational effectiveness and efficiency as well as employee satisfaction (Ogunyemi et al, 2020). Furthermore, the implementation of organizational disciplinary policy should be handled with utmost objectivity because poor implementation may result to conflict situation that could further degenerate to reduced morale, and labour turnover (Eze et al, 2019). The hospitality industry is one of the positive economic contributors to any economy. However, to achieve this, the industry must maintain high quality services to attract high patronage (Adeyemi, et al, 2017).

Discipline is essential in every organization because it helps to maintain organizational standard, without which the ideology, mission and objective of such organization may not be achieved. Therefore, discipline should be part of the effective plan to run an organization that hopes to enjoy and sustain prosperity. However, despite the significance of discipline in improving employee productivity, numerous hospitality industries in Nigeria lag behind in implementing effective disciplinary practices (Akinyele, 2018). The lackadaisical attitude of organizations' Human Resource Management (HRM) towards implementation of effective discipline has led to a number of factors that are antithetical to organizational prosperity such as low productivity, poor service delivery, high labour turnover, and withdrawal (Ogunyemi et al, 2020).

There is a disturbing lack of empirical studies on the correlation between discipline and employee productivity in the hospitality industry in Nigeria. Many of the industries in the hospitality sector do not seem to understand the extent implementation of disciplinary practices can contribute to the sector's prosperity. The study, however, aimed to address this gap by investigating how discipline affects employee productivity in selected hospitality firms in Imo State, Nigeria. Essentially, the objective of this study is to find out the relationship between discipline and employee productivity in the hospitality industry in Imo State, Nigeria. Besides, the study sought to find out whether or not effective implementation of discipline affects the commitment behaviour of employees towards the growth of the organization.

1.1. Research Hypothesis

The null and alternate hypotheses that guided this study is presented thus:

H₀: Employee discipline has no significant relationship on employee productivity in the hospitality industry in Imo State, Nigeria

H₁: Employee discipline has significant relationship on employee productivity in the hospitality industry in Imo State, Nigeria



2.0. CONCEPTS, THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Conceptual Explanations

Workplace Discipline

Formal organizations usually operate with rules and regulations or policies that guide the behaviours of employees. These rules or policies are frameworks that also contain disciplinary measures against acts that are in dissonance or repugnant to the behaviours required for organizational growth and sustenance. According to Akinyele (2018), workplace discipline points to a set of rules, policies, and practices that regulate the behaviours of employees which make sure that adherence to organizational standards is strictly maintained.

The employees of organizations are experts from various social backgrounds and it is only the common organizational rules that are capable of creating a melting pot for all employees. Furthermore, workplace discipline denotes consciously taken corrective actions organizations take to address the non-compliant attitude of employees including performance and violations of policies of the establishment (Mathis & Jackson, 2011). Besides, according to Ogunyemi, *et al*, (2020), “effective discipline aims to improve employee performance, maintain a positive work environment, and protect organizational interests”.

For organizations to achieve their objectives there must be a systematic process through which it establishes and enforces rules to conform with its operational ideology in order to promote standard and achieve organizational objectives. This is part of the reason for workplace discipline. Many people misconstrue the concept of workplace discipline to only mean punitive or punishment side of discipline. This is not the issue especially looking at it from the management perspective. From this perspective, workplace discipline could mean corrective or preventive actions taken by superiors or the management to ensure employees do not make mistakes or act or behave in a manner that could hurt the interest of the organization. It is inclined to guiding the employees not to engage in any organizationally unacceptable behaviours as well as correct standards deviations and avoid any form of misconducts (Desseler, 2020).

Effective discipline ensures that employees understand the rules and regulations or policies of the organization and the need to keep them. It also educates them on the consequences of violating such rules, standards or policies. Furthermore, Armstrong and Taylor (2023) opined that workplace discipline is meant to control the behaviour of the workforce consistently with equity and fairness, without favouritism. Human resource practices reveal that when employees perceived that workplace discipline is implemented equitably and in fairness, they tend to accept corrective actions and willfully maintain commitment to the organization.

The effective practice of workforce discipline has shown its immense contribution to industrial harmony via employee-employer relations. It has reduced counterproductive behaviours from the system, thus inclining the system’s consciousness to positive behaviours that help to produce sustainable growth in the organization (Robins & Judge, 2019). Disciplinary action in workplace does not come suddenly. There are usually developmental dimensions which include progressive disciplinary systems. It starts with verbal warnings, and progressed to written warnings. When these



two are not heeded to, suspension and subsequently termination of appointment may follow. The progressive workplace disciplinary approach is designed to provide the erring employee with the opportunity to change to organizationally acceptable behaviour before the severe sanction or punishment is invoked (Grote, 2021).

Employee Productivity

Employee productivity deals with the appraisal of the expertise, aptitude and craftsmanship of employees or group of employees. In real terms, productivity is a factor that influences the company's profits directly (Gummesson, 1998). Productivity can be evaluated in terms of the time spent by an employee actively carrying out the job hired to do in order to produce the desired results expected from job description (Ferreira and Du Plessis, 2009). Productivity can be evaluated in terms of the output of a worker in a given period of time. Typically, the productivity of an employee will be weighed relative to an average output for employees doing related work. It can also be evaluated according to the number of units of a manufactured goods or service that an employee performs in a stipulated time space (Piana, 2001).

As organization achievements depend solely on productivity of its human resource, employee productivity has become a necessary objective for organizations (Sharma and Sharma, 2014). The fundamental problem many organizations encounter currently is the requisite and mandate to increase employee output. Many researches are centered on one or two ways to measure productivity and since many different approaches are taken, it can be demanding to contrast the outputs (Nollman, 2013). The time or period within which employee achieves a given task is of great relevance to the concept of productivity. Consequent upon this, Sharma and Sharma (2014) maintained that employee productivity largely depends on the extent of time an employee is physically present at work as well as the magnitude to which he is mentally present or efficiently working during the presence at the job. This further point to the level of commitment employee shows towards organizational responsibilities.

Research efforts of others have increasingly highlighted on the benefits of employee productivity. Sharma and Sharma (2014) further highlighted that high productivity results to economic growth, higher profitability, and social progress. Furthermore, for the employees of an organization to receive good salaries and wages, enjoy working conditions and other larger employment opportunities, there must be steady increase in the productivity level of the employees. In a similar vein, alliance of the strategic vision to worker productivity is a fundamental contributor to the accomplishment of an organization (Cato & Gordon, 2009). Besides, it has been asserted that this alliance in turn would bring motivation that will inspire the employee to initiate innovations capable of improving their performances which is instrumental to the effective achievement of the objectives of the organization (Obdulio, 2014).

According to Chas, Topp, Smith, Cohen, Fahrenwald, Zerwic, Benefield, Anderson, and Conn, (2013), it is only accurate measurements that can reveal how much time is spent on completing work task on time as well as how much time is lost due to illness or excessive rest period, work-relate conversations and disturbances such as SMS and social media. Milana (2006) opined that productivity measurement uses profit as effective tool to measure team productivity, thus further affirmed that measuring pure productivity using profit as yardstick is the most preferred approach for organizations.



However, it is increasingly accurate to believe that given the dynamics of the personal and professional life of employees, it is more appropriate to base productivity measurements on completion of tasks not how many minutes or how long one spent in the office (Hartanti, 2016).

2.2. Theoretical Framework

The scientific management system of organizational management has generated mixed reactions among both academics and practitioners of human resource administration. The management style was championed by Frederick Wiston Taylor in 1911, a steel engineer who almost construed man as a vending machine. His management style is dominated by the concept of discipline in order to correct the alleged inherent laziness in man. For this thought, inclusion of discipline as a cardinal management practice of organizations is necessary because it will motivate the workforce to be more committed to organizational responsibility in order to avoid any kind of behaviour which definitely will negatively impact their rewards. Therefore, the study “Workplace Discipline and Employee Productivity in the Hospitality Industry: A Study of Selected Hotels in Imo State, Nigeria” is anchored on Theory X as envisioned by McGuire (1960).

The assumption of the theory is that humans are inherently lazy at work and will not motivate self to be as productive as the organization may expect them if they are not regularly visited with strict supervision and disciplinary actions as preventive measures. The application of Theory X to this topic of study is clearly and directly drawn from its assumptions which stick to strict supervision and the assertion that discipline is key to productivity ensuring that employees respond to rules and punishment. The natural man has always seen this management theory as inhuman, harsh and unproductive but it has not been totally jettisoned by management experts. Even in the contemporary times of industrial humanism birthed by the outcome of Elton Mayo’s Hawthorne studies (1927-1932), human resource practice evidently shows that workplace discipline is an indispensable tool to enforce, preserve and achieve the organizational objectives (Sapru, 2013).

2.3. Empirical Review of Workplace Discipline

In 2022, Akpan & Awu embarked on a study titled “the impact of employee discipline on organizational survival”. However, the objective of the study was to investigate how employee discipline affects the survival of organizations. The study greatly underscored the importance of effective workplace discipline on organizational survival. In a similar vein, Apalia (2017) studied the effect of discipline management on employee performance. The result of the study showed there was a positive relationship between effective discipline management and employee productivity. Besides, the study on workplace discipline and organizational effectiveness was undertaken to ascertain the extent workplace discipline affects the effectiveness of an organization. The study affirmed there is a significant relationship between workplace discipline and organizational effectiveness. The study emphasized on the consistent need for fairness in disciplinary actions among employees (Tamunomiebi & Emeh, 2023).

A study titled discipline and organizational effectiveness: A study of Nigerian customs service was carried out to find out the relationship or how discipline affects the effectiveness in the operations of such public institution. The study revealed that for organizations to operate effectively, discipline should be implemented in line with the organizational or institutional requirement (Idris &



Alegbeleye, 2015). In related study with the title the effectiveness and consistency of disciplinary actions and procedure, the research sought to know how consistency in implementing disciplinary policies affects effectiveness of organizations in South Africa. The study highlighted, among others, the need for consistency in enforcing disciplinary actions (Knight & Ukpere, 2014). A study that investigated how work commitment, work discipline and workload mediate the relationship between organizational culture and employee performance was carried out. It was a quantitative study with the sample size of 109 civil servants. The result of the study revealed that work discipline significantly affects employee performance in addition to other environmental factors (Mahmud, Kalsum and Abbas, 2023).

Similarly, a study on the impact of employee discipline on organizational performance and evidence sought from Polytechnic Ibadan was completed. The empirical study that involved the employees of the institution reported that effective disciplinary systems correlate with improved organizational performance and higher adherence to institutional policies (Wei, Duraipandi, Junyi, Biao & Sichen, 2025).

An empirical study on the influence of work discipline and employee retention on employee performance with evidence sought from PT UGS was undertaken. It was a quantitative study that surveyed 94 employees of the institution. The outcome of the study showed that higher work discipline influences individual performance (Wahyuningtyas & Rifqi, 2025). Furthermore, a study on the influence of workplace discipline on employee performance at PT Daeah E&C RDMP Balikpapan was carried out. With the aid of questionnaire and regression analysis, the study reported that a significant positive influence of discipline on employee performance (Pratama, Hadiyanti, Askiah, 2025).

3.0. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a survey research design. The target population of the study was 570 of the five randomly selected hospitality firms in Imo state, Nigeria. The target respondents were the senior and supervisory level employees who are well versed and known to have requisite information about the topic of study. The five hospitality outfits under study are- Rockview Hotels; Immaculate hotels; Protea Hotel; Boulevard Owerri hotels; and Amber City hotels.

The study generated sample size of 230 through the application of Cochran's formula for finite population while Bowley's proportional allocation statistical technique was adopted to determine the allocation of questionnaire to individual hospitality firms. Data were collected from primary source through the administration of copies of questionnaire. The questionnaire was structured in a five-point Likert scale. Out of 230 copies of the questionnaire 200 copies were returned indicating 87% return rate.

Spearman's rank correlation co-efficient was adopted to determine the reliability of the research instrument because it measured the strength and direction of association between two ranked variables. The result gave a coefficient reliability index of 0.821 indicating a high degree of item consistency. The study used regression analysis with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) to test the hypothesis.



4.1. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Regression Analysis

The study conducted regression analysis to find out the effect of workplace discipline on the productivity of employees of above-mentioned hospitality firms/hotels in Imo State, Nigeria.

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis of Employee Productivity and Work place Discipline.

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Employee Productivity	13.5250	7.37629	200
Workplace discipline in organizations	12.4750	6.55152	200

Source: Researcher’s computation (SPSS version 20), 2026

The above table shows the descriptive statistics of influence of workplace discipline and employee productivity in hospitality industry with a focus on five hotels in Imo state, Nigeria, with a mean response of 12.4 and standard deviation of 6.5 for workplace discipline and a mean response of 13.5 and standard deviation of 6.5 for employee productivity. Observing standard deviation values of 6.5 and 7.3 means there is a variability of data points among the independent and dependent variables.

Table 2: Regression Model of Workplace Discipline and Employee Productivity

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson Sig. F Change
	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. Change	F Change	R Square Change	F Change	df1	
1	0.582(a)	0.338	0.321	6.07935	0.338	19.415	1	38	0.000	2.026

a Predictors: (Constant), Workplace Discipline. b Dependent Variable: Employee Productivity

Source: Computed by researcher.

Regression analysis model discovered the relationship that exists in the data of this hypothesis that achieves the objective. Other values like R-Squared and Adjusted R Squared are 0.338 and 0.321 respectively showed significance and quantifies model performance and complexity as can be seen in table 2.

Table 3: Model Summary of Workplace Discipline and Employee Productivity

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	Zero order	Partial	Partial Tolerance	VIF	B	Std. Error		
(Constant)	21.69	2.08	-.582	10.38	.000	17.46	25.92	-	-.582	-	1.00	1.00	
360-degree feedback	3	.149		9	.000	6	0	.58		.582	0	0	
		.655		4.406		-.956	.354	2					

A Dependent Variable: EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY

Source: Computed by Researcher. 2026

The above table shows the correlation coefficient that disclosed no significance value after the analysis was carried out with the data presented in this study. Computed coefficient (P-value =



0.000 < 0.05 $t = 10.39$ and $r^2 = 0.0338$) was obtained and based on this result, we reject the null hypothesis which stated that workplace discipline has no significant effect on employee productivity. The foregoing simply means the study accepted the alternate hypothesis which stated that workplace discipline has significant effect on employee productivity of hospitality industries in Imo State.

4.2. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This research effort is basically on workplace discipline and employee productivity in the hospitality industry with a focus on selected hotels in Imo State, Nigeria. Analysis of data from respondents reported that workplace discipline has significant positive effect on employee productivity of selected hotels in Imo State, Nigeria. The implication of this report is that managers and organizations of (hotels in Imo State in particular and other organizations in general) should double their efforts to ensure effective workplace discipline is regularly implemented. The findings of this study align with the position of Pratama, Hadiyanti & Askiah (2025); Wei et al, (2025); Idris & Alegbeleye (2015); Akpan & Awu (2022) and Appalia (2017) that workplace discipline is required to boost the productivity of the workforce.

It also asserts that workplace discipline does not totally mean the use of stick or punitive measures to ensure employees yield their best energy for organizational growth. The study significantly emphasized on effective workplace discipline because nature has revealed that human being tends to relax from active engagement on official duties except there is external pressure that comes with penalty. This is the concern of Fredrick Winston Taylor, the doyen of scientific management thought. It is germane to note that workplace discipline is not to be construed as always punitive such as queries, suspension, salary/wage deductions, or sack. It also means provision of preventive situations that will guide the employees against any act contrary to the policies and objectives of the organization.

5.0. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Every mortal is subject to mistakes and idiosyncratic dispositions that may jeopardize the interest of the environment/organization (corporate or informal) in which he finds himself. This is the reason organizations should establish effective workplace disciplinary system that should include clear policies, rules and regulations that must be obeyed by members of the workforce. It is apposite to note that the concept of workplace discipline should not be solely construed as punitive.

There are many best practices for implementing workplace discipline that help employees behave in a manner that makes them relevant to the organization. Consequently, employers of labour are encouraged to adopt such best workplace disciplinary strategies like ensuring there are clear policies that must communicate expectations and consequences to the employees.

There should be fairness-showing unbiased and consistent application of rules, showing no special consideration for any employee; progressive approach-meaning that employees should be warned many times before escalation of consequences for repeated offences and management should focus on the improvement of employees by locating and addressing the immediate and remote causes of their repugnant actions, and providing support for a possible improvement.



On the other hand, employees should know that it is more honourable to be part of a progressive organization. Therefore, they should accept and submit to disciplinary policies of individual organizations to ensure growth of the employee and the organization.

Finally, the provision of effective workplace disciplinary policies by organizations and acceptance of such policies by employees will translate to organizational equilibrium which is a major source of flexibility, competitiveness, sustainability and prosperity to institutions. Therefore, both employer and employee of labour should ensure work atmosphere of mutual inclusivity in order to promote growth and sustainability of workplace.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest in this manuscript.

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