

JOB ETHICS AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN AVIATION INDUSTRY IN RIVERS, NIGERIA

Dr Dumo Nkesi Opara & Nkiruka Joy Kalu

Department of Management, Faculty of Management Science

Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolueni Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The study was aimed at examining the effect of job ethics on employee performance in the aviation industry in Port Harcourt. The various concepts were reviewed and the study adopts the Justice Theory by Rawls (1971) to explain performance appraisal and Service Quality. The theory states that organizational justice refers to perceived fairness in the working place which comprises: Procedural, Distributive, Interpersonal, and Informational Justice related to performance appraisal exercise in an organization. The major conclusion drawn by the researcher was that, while it and is unarguable that the level of responsibility to job by employees varies in terms of effort and time, a higher sense of responsibility affects how an employee works and the amount of work carried out. The study recommended that It is imperative for organizations to defreeze inherent behaviour of new employees at the point of entry and inculcate acceptable norms and values of the organization. A way to do this is by ethic socialization and training which will help employees know what makes up ethical conduct of the organization.

Keywords: Job Ethic, Employee Performance, Integrity, Honesty, Timeliness

INTRODUCTION

Globalization has caused a very competitive market which is one of the issues in the increased concern of ethics in business (Berenbeim, 2000). Aviation companies are companies whose industry is complex, risk intense and highly volatile. Reason being that a single fault could spell doom, and result into colossal loses of both human and material resources. The industry is a complex one that relies on high mental and technical construct, sourced through human mental articulation. The industry operate on standard ethics. Any violation of this ethics could spell doom on the various chains of activities involving human being. For instant, if the aircraft engineer fail to carry out proper check and verification on each engine before certifying the safety of passengers and crew members will pose serious risk to both human life and resources. Standard compliance means taking precaution to guide against standard compromise. It is only when job ethics are properly observed can unpleasant job experience be averted. Scholars are now looking beyond financial reward as a means to enhance employee performance Job ethic is not financial reward, they are standard rules and regulation that guide both employee and employer at work place. In the aviation industry, abuse of integrity at work place every other performance indicators are reduced to mere tails because the job timeliness cannot be achieved? If job ethics are not properly defined, and implemented quality of job will be compromised. Quality compromise in airline outfit will be lethal to human life. It is on this basis it becomes imperative to carry out an indebt study of the relationship between job ethics and employee performance in the aviation companies in Port Harcourt.

Work ethics can be referred to as a cultural norm that advocates people to hold accountable and responsible for the work they done based on the belief that work has intrinsic value to the individual (Cherington, 1980; Yankelovich&Immerwahr, 1984). A corporate code of ethics is a statement of corporate principles, ethics, rules of conduct, code of practice or company philosophy regarding responsibility to employees, shareholders, consumers, the environment or any other aspects of society external to the company (Langlois&Schlegelmilch, 1990)

Employees' perception of their organization's ethical climate is found to be related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational performance (Kim & Miller, 2008; Pettijohn, Pettijohn & Taylor, 2008). Performance ratings by supervisor and peer is one of the method in measuring job performance in which performance is mostly viewed from human behavior with evaluative aspects (Newman, Kinney & Farr, 2004). Employee's behavior displayed at work is not necessarily related to job specific aspects but mostly on how well someone performs at their work (Jex, 2002). This is consistent with the definition of work ethics where individual are accountable to the work they done according to the acceptable ethical behavior

The job ethics is normative rules containing a system of values and moral principles as a guideline for employees in performing job duties within the company. Job ethics is a two directional system approach. This implies that ethics are not applied or intended for employees only it also apply to the management policy concerning employee, which should also be ethical, in terms of fairness and openness, compensation, career and evaluation of employee's performance. So every ethical decision in the company is not only linked to the interests of management but also employees. The job ethic is the attitude, outlook, habits, traits or characteristics of how a person, a group or a nation should work (Tasmara, 2000: 14). Job ethics can also be viewed as the ethical character of governance employees in an organization are required to work with that permit togetherness, complementing relationship between management and employees and ultimately foster fair dynamics within the organization. Such as: Accommodating, sensitive, responsive, and proactive. job ethics according to some scholar positive and significant effect job satisfaction (Rokhman 2010; Marri et al., 2012). Good job ethics has proved to be capable of improving the performance of the individual employee in an organization (WayanMarsaliaIndica, 2011; Ridwan, 2013; SyahrulNizam et al., 2016). However, the assertion is not a generally held opinion some scholars have argued otherwise that good job ethic has proved unable to improve individual performance (Shafissalam&MisbahuddinAzzuhri, 2014).

Conceptual Framework

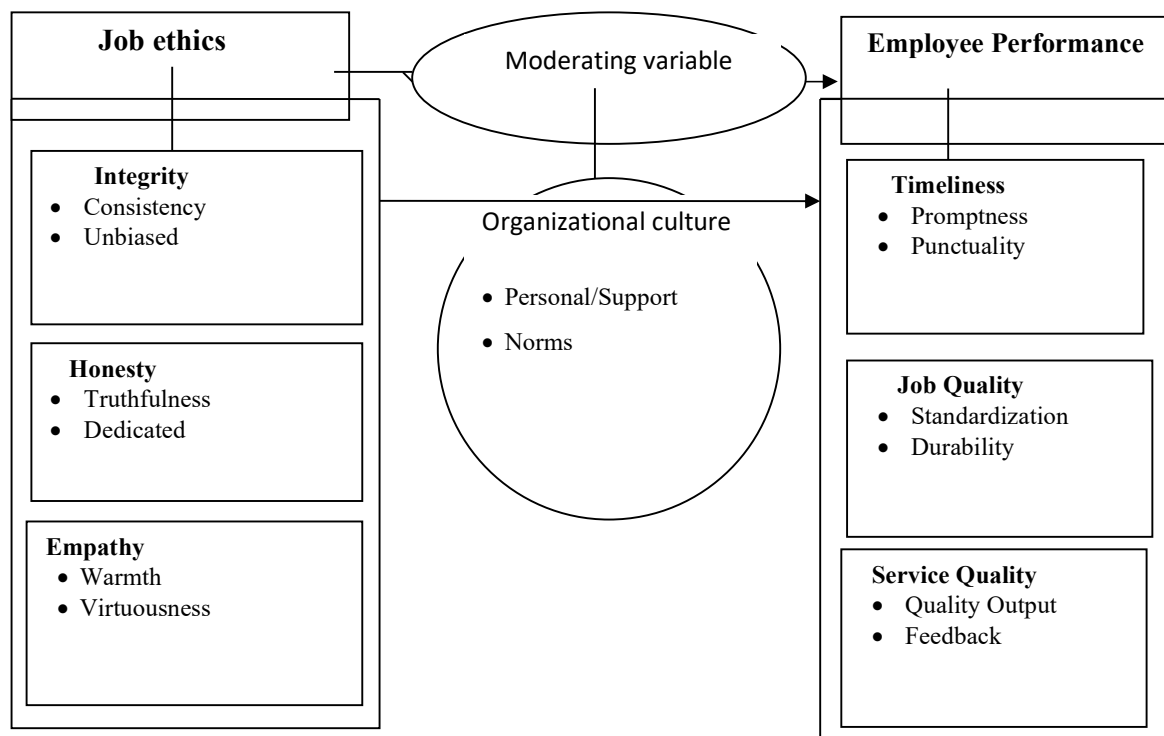


Fig 1.1

Source: Researchers' Desk, 2022.

The diagram above is the schematic representation of the functional relationship between Figure 1 above shows the diagrammatic representation of the relationship between job ethics (independent or predictor variable) and employee performance (dependent or criterion variable). Job ethics has the following dimensions: integrity, honesty and empathy, while the dependent variable is measured in terms of timeliness, quality of job and Service Quality.

The concept of Job ethics

'Work' is the synonyms of job. This is central to this review. It is a universal phenomenon which varies in usage from formal activities to informal activities whether in the primitive to the contemporary sense. Such definitions have distinct work from other activities as play, recreation, or art (Ogunbameru, 2000). In this context, work is viewed as "a human activity directed to an object, such lecturing, producing soap," Thus, work involves transitive activity existing for the sake of its object which intend to meet needs of people. As Kuper&Kuper (1996) put it, 'any physical and or/mental activities which transform natural materials into a more useful form, improve human knowledge and understanding of the world, and /or provide or distribute goods to others'.

Work from these views intends to serve a number of functions and these functions are for some purposes. The most obvious is the economic function of producing goods and services and in return for this exercise the employee is paid wages for doing the job right. Dessler (1983) suggests that work performance is a measure of how well an employee meets the standards that are required on a specific job. Work performance is the quality and quantity of human output necessary to meet work goals agreed upon between employees and their managers Ivancevich and Matteson, 1996). To achieve the job allocated to a worker, it must have been evaluated as either good or bad if a standard of performance has been agreed upon between employees and their managers. Ethics is derived from the Greek word "ethos" which means character or custom. According to Hubert *et al.* (2007), Ethics is the collection of values and norms, functioning as standards or yardstick for assessing the integrity of individual conduct. It defines what make behaviour to be right or wrong (Fajana, 2006). Ethical behaviour defines within a context or setting what is acceptable or not. In his earlier writings, Pojman (1990) offers four areas which ethic is usually conceptualized: Actions, the act (right, wrong, permissive), Consequences (good, bad, indifferent), Character (virtuous, vicious) and Motive (goodwill, evil will).

Thus, ethics is a field that involves the studies of human behaviour, in relations to what is expected of him/her by others (Malloy, 2003) and because we are interested in his/her work, it involves what is expected of him/her when performing his/her duties at work. Work ethics are the standards of behaviour that guide individual workers in their work and in relationship with fellow workers, customers and other economic agents (competitors, shareholders, suppliers, dealers, etc.). These ethics guide the thinking and decision making with respect to what is good and what is bad (Grace & Cohen 2005). The traditional work ethic stresses that, work is inherently good and by working hard one can overcome obstacles and succeed in life (Yoder &Staudohar, 1982). It is conceived as people's orientation to and expectation from work as informed by their convictions (Pojman, 1990; Norman, 1992). Fajana (2006) opine that, it consists of those principles and practices that are concerned with morals and good conducts in industrial life. Thus, work ethics represent what should or should not be done at work.

Employee Performance

The term "employee performance" signifies individual's work achievement after exerting required effort on the job which is associated through getting a meaningful work, engaged profile, and compassionate colleagues/employers around (Hellriegel, Jackson, & Slocum, 1999; Karakas, 2010). In order to utilize HR fully and augment organizational success, effective employee performance management system is imperative for a business organization. The performance driven objective is expected to be aligned with the organizational policies so that the entire process

moves away from being event-driven to become more strategic and a people-centric perspective (Jena, & Pradhan, 2014; London, 2003; Mone, & London, 2009).

Every organization has been established with certain objectives to achieve. These objectives can be achieved by utilizing the resources like men, machines, materials and money. All these resources are important but out of these the manpower is the most important. It plays an important role in performing tasks for accomplishing the goals. The question arises that how these resources are utilized by manpower. Further, the business environment is changing drastically. The environmental factors are uncontrollable. These are beyond control of management of the firms. One has to adjust with the external factors to do the business in the market. Every environmental factor like social, cultural, legal, political, economic, technology and competition gets changed very fast. For effective working the knowledge of these factors is must otherwise the plan will misfire. In present situation it is difficult to predict about anything. It is uncertain to say that what will happen tomorrow. Again the need for highly skilled and dedicated manpower is felt who can give the best output. Nowadays the markets are also very competitive and there is cut throat competition. For every organization it is difficult to start, survive, stabilize and excel in the business. The firm that gets the advantage over other competitors through their talented and dedicated manpower can take the lead in the market. The contribution of employees on job is the most important factor for development and excellence in business. The performance of employees on different jobs in close coordination is needed for success of the unit.

Theoretical Review

The study adopts the Justice Theory by Rawls (1971) to explain performance appraisal and Service Quality. The theory states that organizational justice refers to perceived fairness in the working place which comprises: Procedural, Distributive, Interpersonal, and Informational Justice related to performance appraisal exercise in an organization. The study incorporated all four justice dimensions into one theoretical framework. The procedural, distributive, interpersonal, and informational justice were related to social relationship, either with the organization (i.e. procedural and distributive justice) or with the supervisor (i.e. interpersonal and informational justice), whereas distributive justice is related more to an economic exchange relationship. The procedural justice concerned with the perceived fairness of the procedure that the PSIRS and raters use during the appraisal of employees' productivity.

The procedure can be in terms of involving employees in the process of organizational goals setting, and setting criteria of measuring employee's productivity. Distributive justice deals with the proportional relationship between employee's inputs in terms of effort, ability, time and training, and the outcomes they receive e.g payment, promotion and other rewards that are fair to employees in Plateau State Internal Revenue Service that motivate them to put their best. Also, interpersonal justice involves perception of fairness that relate to the way rater treats the person being evaluated; it concerned with the perceived fairness of interpersonal interaction between superior and subordinate during the performance appraisal session in the organization, while informational justice concerned with the perception of fairness in terms of information about procedures in form of honest, sincere and logical explanations and justifications of any component of the appraisal process. Within the context of performance appraisal system in Plateau State Internal Revenue Service, the most common information justice will involve the clarification of goals, productivity expectation and standards, routine feedback, and explanations during the performance appraisal period.

CONCLUSION

The study shows that there is a significant relationship between Work ethics and Job performance. Work ethics proved to be a good predictor of employee performance. The result is consistent with previous research by Hunt (1994), Miller et. al., (2001) and Fiorito et. al. (2007). It proves that work ethics will result into high in employee's performance and indicates that the implementation

of good work ethics can help aviation industries perform better to achieve great performance in overall.

However, the factor loading shows that the causal effect of work ethics in employee performance is low and in moderate relationship. This is due to the other variables that may affect employee performance such as job satisfaction, job involvement and organization commitment (Van Ness et. al., 2010). This research has significant on SMEs. It imparts the important of suitable code of ethics for employees as guidance, and encourages them to practice good work ethics for the sake of improving their performance. Thus, the efforts on improving employee performance in construction companies will no longer rely on compensation and reward system but instead focusing on work ethics too.

Strong work ethics has been proven in this study to be capable of creating a long lasting employees job performance while weak work ethics can only drive for a while but will eventual lead to poor job performance. To attain excellent job performance therefore, it is imperative for employees and organizations to promote good practices in the world of work. There are evidences that employees sense of responsibility to duties contribute to performance (Furby, 1991; Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004; Nyborg, 2014). While it is unarguable that the level of responsibility to job by employees varies in terms of effort and time, a higher sense of responsibility affects how an employee works and the amount of work carried out. Lack of responsibility infers poor or low effort and time allocated to duties by employees. In order to promote high sense of responsibility among workers, organizations must establish positive work ethics. When employee feels personally responsible for job performance, efficiency and effectiveness is often the order of the day.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our finding this study make the following recommendations

- (1) The employee's job performance is improved by the elements of work ethics (integrity, responsibility, equality and self-discipline). Moreover, the company should be provided the necessary information to all employee frankly.
- (2) Managers should authorize responsibility to employees, with unbiasedness.
- (3) Managers should treat all employees fairly, as to enable employees carried out the tasks assigned to them by self-monitoring.
- (4) To ensure ethical conduct every individuals must promote openness in operations. Management should promote open culture that can forestall unethical conduct from the top to all rank and files.
- (5) It is imperative for organizations to defreeze inherent behaviour of new employees at the point of entry and inculcate acceptable norms and values of the organization. A way to do this is by ethic socialization and training which will help employees know what makes up ethical conduct of the organization
- (6) Labour unions, the employers, and government can also aid the management of unethical behavior of individual workers by setting guidelines in the form of law and regulations for ethical conduct and ensure its implementation. However, every aspect of work behaviour must be covered if not it could lead to burdensome legal processes bogged down in interpretations of the law and debatable grey areas (Sacconi, 2004).
- (7) Increasingly, every stakeholder is motivated to become more ethical because their most important stakeholders expect them to put up good conducts in their dealings. Understanding what causes unethical practices is important to stakeholders. For instance, customers/consumers are usually the first priority because of the many interrelated business benefits that can be derived from increased consumer/customer satisfaction. Other stakeholders include investors (particularly institutional investors, regulators, academics, and the media).
- (8) There should be formal code of ethics which will serve as the official written guidelines on how individual workers must behave in situation prone to create ethical dilemma. The code

tries to ensure that individual workers behavior is consistent with the historical and shared norms of the work/job. Organizations can also appoint staff member to serve as ethical advisers' or create a unit to address such occurrence

- (9) There must be a whistle blower protection. Whistle blower is a person who exposes the misdeeds of others in organization in an attempt to preserve ethical standards and protect against wasteful, harmful, or illegal acts. Indeed Whistle blower face the risks of impaired career progress and other forms of work relations but signs indicate that courts have growing support for him, as legal protection can still be adequate.

REFERENCES

- Hellriegel, D., Jackson, S.E., & Slocum, J.W. (1999). *Management (8th ed.)*. Cincinnati, Ohio: South-Western College.
- Hunt, S.D., Sparkman, R.D. Jr. and Wilcox, J.B. (1982). The Pretest in Survey Research: Issues and Preliminary Findings, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 19 (May), 269–73.
- Jena, L.K., & Pradhan, R.K. (2014). Deliverables towards HR Sustainability: A conceptual Review. *European Journal of Business Management*, 6(23), 95–102.
- Karakas, F. (2010). Spirituality and performance in organizations: A literature review. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 94(1), 89–106.
- Mone, E.M., & London, M. (2009). *Employee engagement through effective performance management: A manager's guide*. New York: Routledge. Pradhan et al. 17 McCook, K.D. (2002).
- Pfeffer, J., & Salancik, G.R. (1978). *The external control of organizations: A resource dependence perspective*. New York: SAGE Publications Inc. (1988). An updated paradigm for scale development incorporating unidimensionality and its assessment. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 25(2), 186–192.
- San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass. Cohen, S.G., & Bailey, D.E. (1999). What makes teams work: Group effectiveness research from the shop floor to the executive suite. *Journal of Management*, 23(3), 239–290.
- San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. Hinkin, T.R. (1995). A review of scale development practices in the study of organizations. *Journal of Management*, 21(5), 967–988.
- San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. Huang, J.L., Ryan, A.M., Zabel, K.L., & Palmer, A. (2014). Personality and adaptive performance at work: A metaanalytic investigation. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 99(2), 162–179.