

Welfare Packages and Staff Performance at Benue State Independent Electoral Commission, Makurdi, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined how welfare packages affected staff performance at Benue State Independent Electoral Commission, Makurdi. The specific objectives were to ascertain how medical care services, housing facilities and recreational facilities affected staff performance in the organization. Primary and secondary sources of information were used for study. The population of the study consisted of 259 staff of the organization. The data were collected and analyzed using descriptive statistical tools such as tables and simple percentages, and the stated hypotheses tested using Chi-square. Findings of the study indicated that medical care services, housing facilities, and recreational facilities have significant effect on staff performance. The study therefore concluded that employee welfare packages have significant positive effect on staff performance. It was therefore recommended that the organization should ensure the improvement of medical care services, housing facilities and recreational facilities for employees to improve their living standards for maximum job performance.

Keywords: Staff; Welfare; Services; Makurdi; Organization

INTRODUCTION

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The major aim of establishing any organization whether in the private or public sector is to achieve the desired results. This explains why organizations worldwide are always concerned with the critical question of what should be done at a point in time to achieve sustained high level of performance using the human and material resources at its disposal (Bello, 2005). This challenge of realizing organizational goals in addition to ensuring its survival in a competitive environment is a function of giving attention to the welfare of its workforce through the provision of different socio-economic facilities to motivate the workers to put in their best for the realization of the overall interest of the organization. The summation of work environment incentives such as bonuses, rewards and allowances is what can be regarded as welfare packages.

Employee welfare is a comprehensive term which refers to the various services, benefits and facilities offered by the employer to employees with a purpose of enriching the life of employees and to keep them happy and contented (Mishra and Manju, 2007).

Jaiswal (1987), Robbins and Judge(2005) however consider the bonuses, rewards and allowances (working conditions, comfortable accommodation, job security, retirement benefits, training and development, health care services) availed workers in organizations for improved performance as intervening variables or factors which act as motivation to work. These services may be provided by the government, trade unions and non-governmental agencies in the work environment (Ankita, 2010). The welfare services need not to be monetary but in any kind/forms and they cut across intra-mural activities (latrines and urinals, drinking water, rest shelters and canteen, drinking water, health services such as uniform and protective clothing and shift allowances) and extra-mural activities (maternity benefits, family planning and child welfare, pension/gratuity, education facilities, housing facilities, recreational facilities including sports and cultural activities, transport to and from the place of work).

Welfare packages, according to Torjman (2004) account for performance of employees besides increasing their happiness and emotional quotient. He affirmed that once employees are happy with their work and work environment, they have a positive attitude towards same, and hence higher performance. Conversely, the author argues that non-challant attitudes are displayed in work environment when workers desires are not met by management. Therefore, workers deserve to be treated with respect and given proper incentives to improve their sense of worth and boost their self-esteem and financial status to enable them have more passion for their job (Thorsen, 2006). This is what is expected to be pursued by employers who look beyond instant profit making forself- aggrandizement as opposed to enduring sustainable business earning of profits in perpetuity (Deeprose, 2006).

The Benue State Independent Electoral Commission, Makurdi (BESIECM) is legally mandated to provide welfareservices to its staff as an enabler for effective and efficient performance. The organization has provided plethora of intra-mural and extra-mural incentives over the years to her workers for enhanced performance (Oravee, 2017).However, the job behavior of most of the staff is unsatisfactorily displayed in absenteeism or lateness to work, misuse/misappropriation/misplacement of resources, abuse of electoral laws, indolence, and a host of other unethical attitudes. What is responsible for the low performance of BESIECM staff as exemplified in the above statement? The negative behaviours of the staff, to an extent have negatively affected image of the organization as the State electoral umpire especially in conducting

transparent and credible elections, hence the need for the study to fill the void. In line with the general objective, the study specifically examined if: medical care services, housing facilities; and recreational facilities enhanced staff performance at BESIECM. The understated hypotheses were tested by the study:

Ho. i: Medical care services have no significant effect on staff performance at BESIECM

Ho. ii: Housing facilities have no significant effect on staff performance at BESIECM

Ho. iii: Recreational facilities have no significant effect on staff performance at BESIECM

METHODOLOGY

Information for the work were sourced from existing literatures in textbooks, journal articles, official documents, questionnaire, observation and oral interview. Staff of the organization were asked to say whether or not, the above stated incentives gingered them for better performance of assigned responsibilities. The 259 staff of the organization was the study population for the work. The entire population constituted the sample for the study, hence there was no sampling because the population is small and was effectively managed by the researchers. The 205 copies of questionnaire returned from field survey formed the base of analyses in the study via tables and simple percentages. The formulated hypotheses for the study were tested using chi-square at 0.05 level of significance.

Decision Rule

The decision rule for rejection of hypotheses was based on the Chi-square calculated value (χ^2_{α}) and the critical value. A hypothesis of no significant effect would be rejected for any cluster of items whose χ^2_{α} was greater than the critical value at 0.05 level of significance and with the specified degree of freedom; while it was not rejected for any cluster of items whose χ^2_{α} is less than the critical value at 0.05 level of significance and with the specified degree of freedom.

CONCEPTUAL/THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Welfare Packages

Welfare packages are additional entitlements given to employees by management of an organization to supplement their wages (Nwachukwu, 1981). French and Sawaro(1986) defines welfare packages as something of value, apart from argued regular monetary payments of salaries and wages given by an employer to employee. The incentives may include staff clubs, canteen facilities, medical facilities, transport facilities, housing facilities, industrial social security measures, and educational facilities (Harika,2010). Employee welfare packages are meant to reduce absenteeism and time off due to illness. They have taken a broader scope, especially in recent times and include almost all aspects that relate to an employee's wellness and personal development in the work place (Manzini and Gwandure, 2011).The purpose of providing such facilities is to make work life better and also to raise staff standard of living (Priti,2009). The services may be provided by the government, trade unions and non-governmental agencies (Ankita. 2010).

The International Labour Organization (ILO, 1948) broadly classifies welfare packages into two; intra-mural and extra-mural activities. Intra-mural activities are provided within the establishment such as latrines and urinals, drinking water, washing and bathing facilities, creches, rest shelters and canteen, drinking water, arrangements for prevention of fatigue, health services including occupational safety, uniform and protective clothing and shift allowances. Extra-mural activities are undertaken outside the establishment such as maternity benefits, social insurance measures like gratuity and pension, provident fund and rehabilitation, physical fitness and efficiency, family planning and child welfare, educational facilities, housing facilities, recreational facilities including sports, cultural activities, transport to and from the place of work (Mishra and Manju 2007). Employee welfare also includes monitoring of working conditions, creation of industrial harmony through infrastructure for health, industrial relations and insurance against disease, accident and unemployment for the workers and their families. Through such generous benefits the employer makes life worth living for employees.

Staff Performance

Staff performance refers to accomplishment of task or mere working effectiveness of employees (Thomas, 2014). It is a means by which organizations achieve their goals through its recurring activities. Lebens and Euske (2006) defines the concept as a set of financial and non-financial indicators which offer information on the degree of achievement of organizational goals and objectives. Good performance thus means how well employees have performed on assigned tasks. The emphasis on staff performance in organizations results from the fact that every organization is established with set objectives and human resources are the basic tools for attaining these goals (Abase, 2013; Oravee, 2015).

Staff performance can also be seen as achievement of specified task measured against predetermined standards of accuracy, completeness, cost and speed. It is the ability of an employee to accomplish tasks assigned to him/her in an organization (Arvery and Murphy, 1998). Aper (2005) opines that an individual's job performance behaviour depends on, among other factors a person's ability, the quality of his tools, the quality of his materials, the nature of the work environment and his morale. Many employers assess the job performance of staff on annual or quarterly basis in order to help them identify suggested areas of improvements and determine or raise eligibility, whether or not an employee is fit for promotion. Job performance is more than just completing the dreaded annual reviews in order to get the annual bonuses or pay increase. It is an on-going activity with the ultimate goal of improving both individual and corporate performance. An employee's performance is determined during job performance reviews. Mitsuhashi, Frey and Bjorkman (2003) stated that employee's performance is measured against the performance standards set by the organization. Mazin (2010) lists four different performance dimensions on which employees are measured: quality, quantity, dependability and job knowledge.

The paper adapted the Needs theory of motivation to relate welfare packages to staff performance at BESIECM. The theory, according to Maslow (1954), is based on the notion that people are motivated by the urge to satisfy certain basic needs which are arranged in hierarchical order of prepotency. The order is indicative of the fact that higher needs require some degree of satisfaction and the needs that workers seek to satisfy include: physiological needs, safety needs, social (belongingness) needs, esteem

needs and self -actualization needs. He proposed that these needs can be arranged in a hierarchy order of importance, with the most basic or compelling needs (physiological and safety needs) at the bottom. The satisfaction of one need leads to the thirst for the satisfaction of a higher needs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data obtained during field survey at BESIECM is presented and analyzed in this part of the paper using tables and simple percentages. The distribution and return of questionnaire to staff of the Organization was as presented on Table 1.

Table 1: *Distribution and Return of Questionnaire*

Respondents	Number Distributed	Number returned	Number not returned	% of Total Returned	% of Total not Returned
Mgt. cadre	20	13	7	5.8	19.4
Middle cadre	98	88	10	39.5	27.78
Junior cadre	141	122	19	54.7	52.78
Total	259	223	36	100Apr.	100Apr.

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The information on Table 1 shows that 259 copies of questionnaire were distributed to staff at the BESIECM during field survey for the paper. Out of the total number of questionnaires distributed to the respondents, 223 were returned and 36 were not returned. The analyses in the paper was therefore based on the questionnaires that were properly completed and returned from staff of the organization.

Results Based on Specific Objectives

The staff of BESIECM were asked to say whether or not the measures of welfare packages availed staff of the organization positively affected their performance; and their responses were as analyzed in Table 2, 3 and 4.

Table 2: *Medical Care Services Enhanced Staff Performance at BESIECM*

Respondents	Mgt. Cadre	Middle Cadre	Junior Cadre	Total	% of respondents
S/Agree	06	35	38	79	35.42
Agree	05	28	25	58	26.00
Undecided	00	02	13	15	6.72
Disagree	01	10	20	31	13.90
S/Disagree	01	13	26	40	17.93
Total	13	88	122	223	100Apr.

Source: Authors computation, 2021

The information on Table 2 shows that 137 (61.42%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed that medical care services enhanced staff performance during the period of the study, but 15 (6.72) respondents were undecided; while 71 (31.83) respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. In comparing weight of the responses, it can be inferred that medical care services positively affected staff performance at the BESIECM during the period of the study.

The staff of BESIECM were also asked to say if housing facilities availed them by the Organization enhanced performance of their jobs, and their responses were as contained on Table 3.

Table 3: *Housing Facilities Enhanced Staff Performance at BESIECM*

Respondents	Mgt. Cadre	Middle Cadre	Junior Cadre	Total	% of respondents
S/Agree	05	30	35	70	31.39
Agree	05	30	35	70	31.39
Undecided	01	00	10	16	7.17
Disagree	01	10	20	31	13.90
S/Disagree	01	18	22	41	18.38
Total	13	88	122	223	100Apr.

Source: Authors computation, 2021

The information on Table 3 shows that 140 (62.78%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed that housing facilities availed BESIECM staff enhanced their performance during the period of the study, but 16 (7.17) respondents were undecided; while 72 (32.28) respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. In comparing the number of respondents who agreed/strongly agreed with those who disagreed/strongly

disagreed, it can be seen that the drift was more towards the assertion that housing facilities enjoyed by BESIECM staff enhanced their performance during the period of the study.

Table 4: *Recreational Facilities Enhanced Staff Performance at BESIECM*

Respondents	Mgt. Cadre	Middle Cadre	Junior Cadre	Total	% of respondents
S/Agree	04	30	35	69	30.94
Agree	04	25	36	65	29.14
Undecided	02	03	10	15	6.72
Disagree	02	13	21	36	16.14
S/Disagree	01	17	20	38	17.04
Total	13	88	122	223	100Apr.

Source: Authors computation, 2021

The information on Table 4 shows that 134 (60.08%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed that recreational facilities availed BESIECM staff enhanced their performance during the period of the study, but 15 (6.72) respondents were undecided; while 74 (33.18) respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. In comparing the number of respondents who agreed/strongly agreed with those who disagreed/strongly disagreed, it can be seen that the drift was more towards the assertion that recreational facilities enjoyed by BESIECM staff enhanced their performance during the period of the study.

Test of Hypotheses

The hypotheses earlier stated are tested in this part of the study using chi-square as seen below.

Hypotheses 1: *Medical care services do not significantly affect staff performance at BESIECM.*

The hypothesis was tested using the analyzed responses on Table 2 of the study.

Table 5: *Chi-Square Test on How Medical Care Services Affected Staff Performance at BESIECM*

	Df	χ^2	χ^2_{α}	Sig.	Alpha Level	Remark
Pearson Chi-square	1	3.841	202.765	.000	.05	S, R

Number of Valid Cases 144

Df = degree of freedom, χ^2 = critical value, $\chi^2\alpha$ = chi-square calculated, Sig. = P-value; P < .05, S = Significant, R = rejected

Source: Computed from Table 2

The Table 5 shows a chi-square calculated value of 202.765 which is greater than the critical value of 3.841 at 0.05 level of significance and with 1 degree of freedom (i.e. $\chi^2\alpha = 202.765 > 3.841$). This indicates that medical care services significantly influenced staff performance during the period of the study. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate upheld.

Hypothesis two: *Housing facilities do not significantly affect staff performance at BESIECM.*

The hypothesis was tested using responses earlier analyzed on the subject matter in Table 3 of the study.

Table 6: *Chi-Square Test on How Housing Facilities Affected Staff Performance at BESIECM*

	Df	χ^2	$\chi^2\alpha$	Sig.	Alpha Level	Remark
Pearson Chi-square	1	3.841	242.864	.000	.05	S, R
Number of Valid Cases		144				

Df = degree of freedom, χ^2 = critical value, $\chi^2\alpha$ = chi-square calculated, Sig. = P-value; P < .05, S = Significant, R = rejected

Source: Computed from Table 3

The Table 6 shows a Chi-square calculated value of 242.864 which is greater than the critical value of 3.841 at 0.05 level of significance and with 1 degree of freedom (i.e. $\chi^2\alpha = 242.864 > 3.841$). This indicates that housing facilities significantly influenced staff performance during the period of the study. Therefore, the null hypothesis was again rejected and the alternate upheld.

Hypothesis three: *Recreational facilities do not significantly affect staff performance at BESIECM.*

The hypothesis was tested using responses earlier analyzed on the subject matter in Table 4 of the study.

Table 7: *Chi-Square Test on How Recreational Facilities Affected Staff Performance at BESIECM*

	Df	χ^2	χ^2_{α}	Sig.	Alpha Level	Remark
Pearson Chi-square	1	3.841	242.864	.000	.05	S, R
Number of Valid Cases		144				

Df = degree of freedom, χ^2 = critical value, χ^2_{α} = chi-square calculated, Sig. = P-value; P < .05, S= Significant, R= rejected

Source: Computed from Table 4

The Table 7 shows a Chi-square calculated value of 242.864 which is greater than the critical value of 3.841 at 0.05 level of significance and with 1 degree of freedom (i.e. $\chi^2_{\alpha} = 242.864 > 3.841$). This indicates that recreational facilities significantly influenced staff performance during the period of the study. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate upheld.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results analyzed above indicated that there is a strong relationship between the independent variables (medical care services, housing facilities and recreational facilities) and the dependent variable (staff performance). Existing labour literatures have shown that employees tend to put in their best, work effectively and efficiently if the work environment is conducive and the management and corporate executives demonstrate the flexibility that they often demand of their employees (Fernandez, 2003). The findings in Table 5 revealed that there is statistically significant relationship between medical care services and staff performance at BESIECM. The Chi Square result at 5 % level of significance in the table (5) indicated this. The finding is in agreement with Haines (2007) who emphasized that health promotion programmes positively impacts on the welfare of employees and hence service delivery. To Onitiri (1983), poor standards of living, bad health, lack of education, bad housing, poor transportation to and from work, bad conditions in the work place reduce workers' productivity.

Similarly, the findings in Table 6 revealed that there is statistically significant relationship between housing facilities and staff performance at BESIECM. The finding is in line with Mishra and Manju (2007) who asserted that welfare facilities such as

housing facilities help in raising employees' standard of living. The study by Onyegiri (2004) on Managing Staff and Students' Accommodation Problems in Federal and State Universities in Enugu State also shows that shortage of housing facilities or accommodation affects staff performance.

The findings in Table 7 equally revealed a statistically significant relationship between welfare packages (recreational facilities) and staff performance at BESIECM. The finding is tangent with the study by Umur (2010) who found that recreational facilities (social clubs) positively affects staff performance in organizations. Torjman (2004) demonstrated that welfare facilities and recreation accounts for healthy individual besides their happiness and emotional quotient.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The study was set to establish effect of welfare packages on staff performance at BESIECM, Nigeria. Data was collected using questionnaire, oral interview and observation. The findings of the study revealed that: medical care services significantly affected staff performance ($\chi^2_{2\alpha} = 202.765 > 3.841$) at BESIECM; housing facilities significantly affected staff performance ($\chi^2_{2\alpha} = 242.864 > 3.841$) at BESIECM; and that recreational/social facilities also have significant effect on staff performance ($\chi^2_{2\alpha} = 242.864 > 3.841$) at BESIECM. This is in line with Priti's (2009) notion that welfare activities promote economic and social well-being and increases efficiency and productivity with the underlying principle of making workers give their loyal services ungrudgingly in genuine spirit of co-operation and hard work.

Employees are an important resource that must be managed carefully in order to maximize return on investment and achieve organizational objectives. Thus, Pinder and Mathew (2011) opines that employee welfare measures serve as oxygen of motivation for workers and increases the effectiveness of the workforce. Employees' welfare is in fact becoming an important place in the modern world as it spurs staff to put in extra efforts in the discharge of their assigned tasks. Based on the results from data presented, analyzed and findings arrived at, it can be concluded that in order to maintain employees for efficient and effective performance of assigned tasks, they should be mentally and physically satisfied through provision of the varied welfare programmes. This is in consonant with the Needs theory of motivation which states that

a mentally and physically satisfied worker is most efficient in carrying out assigned responsibilities. It can thus be concluded that the provision of welfare programmes improve employees' satisfaction and promote a healthy work environment for higher performance. This portend that employee welfare programmes have a significant positive correlation with perceived staff performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made by the study where BESIECM should continue to provide adequate welfare programmes, especially medical care services in order to motivate and retain employees for better performance. The logic behind welfare package provision is to prepare efficient, loyal, and satisfied workers for the discharge of organizational assignments/objectives. In fact, the welfare packages covered in the study, when adequately provided will help in improving staff living standards and avoid turnover, and hence staff performance. It is also recommended that employees should be provided housing facilities fairly for their requirement for positive results or performance at BESIECM. The organization should always provide and also encourage their employees to participate in recreational or social activities in order to improve their wellbeing and performance in the organization.

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