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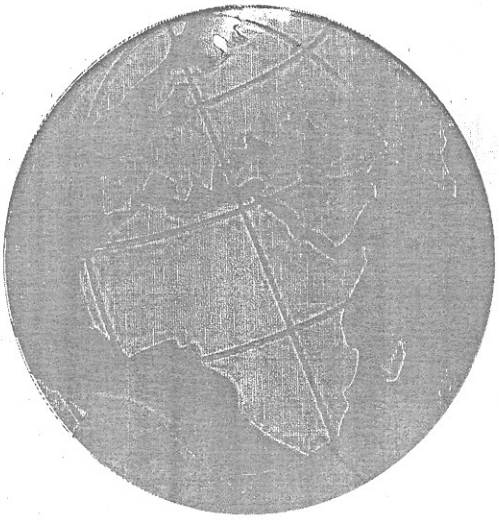

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES REVIEW

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# DELIVERING EFFICIENT PUBLIC SERVICE IN NIGERIA THROUGH BETTER PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORKS

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*Abstract*

*Efficiency and effectiveness in the Nigerian public sector has been the subject of controversy by all and sundry. Inefficiency, ineffectiveness, red-tapism and low productivity are common features of the public service. This paper examines performance management strategies and its impact on employees' efficiency. Thus, eight steps process of performance improvement as well as biographical factors and its effect on employees' performance and productivity were critically and analytically interrogated. In analyzing the issues raised in the paper, we adopted an eclectic approach of goal, feedback and self-efficacy theories, which enable us, direct our search light on the nature and strategies of performance management, as well as, the relationship between performance management and employee efficiency. Our findings revealed among others that, the Nigerian public service is faced with performance management problems which have created difficulties for the service to perform and deliver public goods and services expected of it. However, it is also established that, there is a positive relationship between performance management and employee performance and productivity. In the light of the findings, we concluded and recommended among other measures that, productivity is the objectives of all organizations and performance management is sine-qua-non for employees' productivity and efficient service delivery and improved performance of the public sector. Employee performance and productivity responds to many factors as x-rayed in the paper. However, how the leader in an organization use these variables determine the level of employees' performance and productivity. Knowledge of them and how to use them by leaders are therefore conditions precedent to performance and productivity improvement and unless the recommendations are implemented, workers performance and productivity will continue to dwindle in the Nigerian public service.*

**KEY WORDS:** Labour, Management, Organization, Performance, Productivity.

## Introduction

The efficiency and effectiveness in any work place either the private or the public sector; largely depend on the caliber of the workforce. The availability of competent and effective labour force does not just happen by chance or accident but through an articulated recruitment exercise (Peretomode and

Peretomode, 2001) and performance management. Performance management is an important Human Resource Management (HRM) process that provides the basis for improving and developing performance and is part of the reward system in its most general sense. Every organisation or establishment has an objective(s). The organisation realises these objectives through productivity. An organisation is productive, if and only it achieves its goals, and does so by transforming inputs into outputs at the lowest cost. So productivity in the words of Robbins (1998) is "performance measured in terms of effectiveness and efficiency"

In support of the above assertion, Okafor (2005) asserts that productivity is the product of effectiveness and efficiency, while effectiveness relates to performance, efficiency relates to resource utilization. Drucker (2004) rightly supports this submission when he posits, "even the healthiest business, the business with effectiveness can die of poor efficiency. But even the most efficient business cannot survive let alone succeed, if it is efficient in doing wrong things, i.e. it lacks effectiveness" That is, achieving with the least amount of resources. It is generally believed that the British colonial administration in Nigeria was efficient but not very effective. On the contrary, it is also believed that today's Nigerian Public Service is very efficient, but less effective.

Performance management process has come to the fore in recent years as a means of providing more integrated and continuous approach to the management of performance than was provided by previous isolated and often madequate merit rating or performance appraisal schemes. Performance management is based on the principle of management by agreement or contract rather than management by command. It emphasizes the development and initiation of self-managed learning plans as well as the integration of individual and corporate objectives. It can, in fact, play a major role in providing for an integrated and coherent range of human resource management processes that are mutually supportive and contribute as a whole to improving organizational effectiveness (Armstrong, 2009).

Efficiency and effectiveness in the public sector has been a subject of controversy and debate by all and sundry. Inefficiency, ineffectiveness, red-tapism and low productivity are all common features of the service. It is in line with this that Chukwudum (1998) and Umo (2001), after examining the attitude to work of Nigerians concludes that "Nigeria's ambition for rapid industrialization, economic prosperity, social and political stability will singularly and collectively be frustrated if the current poor work attitude of Nigerian public sector is not urgently and positively improved". The above opinion if properly analyzed, shows that improved or positive attitude to work by civil servants is an antidote for industrialization and economic stability and development.

Performance management as an important Human Resource (HR) strategy for achieving better employee performance and productivity is hardly taken serious by many organizations' and most especially public sector organizations. In fact, Nigerian public sectors Managers see performance and productivity management as a ritual and an academic exercise. A number of reasons have been identified as being responsible for this ugly situation and a number of solutions have also been suggested, but the problem remained endemic and persistent in the public sector, as their performance are still below expectation, their productivity is far below average, efficiency and effectiveness is virtually nil.

Yet, in the Nigerian public service, there are no predetermined standards and methodologies for measuring employee's performance and productivity objectively. In spite, the Udoji 1974, introductions and adoption of Management by Objective (MBO) management techniques, the public service in Nigeria still operate the system whereby individuals who join a government establishment around the same time are expected to be promoted at the same pace through career structure with little or no recognition for differential levels of performance and productivity; the reason being the inherited compensation system that promote official. Thus, inefficiency in the service as Nigerian civil servant sees promotion as a right after every three years rather than hard work and service delivery. This paper therefore, examines performance management strategies and its impact on employees' efficiency and productivity.

In the light of this development and for ease of analysis, the paper is pigeon holed into the following five compartments. The first section is the introduction; the second chronicled the conceptual and theoretical framework central to the discourse. Section three examines eight step process for performance and productivity improvement as well as its objectives while section four critically analyse biographical data and its effects on employee performance and productivity. The fifth examines the way forward and the concluding remarks.

**Conceptual And Theoretical Issues**

There is no one particular definition that suits performance as a concept. This is because authors have defined it in several ways depending on each perception. Within all organizations, the utility of labour to





accomplish organizational goals is emphasized, indeed, aside labor, there are a number of resources that contribute towards the success of any organization, such as machine, information, idea and material, etc. While these resources are important, the human factor is the most significant because it is the people who have to coordinate and use other resources to achieve specific goals (Chandan, 1987). Thus, in organizations, it is vital to agencies effectiveness and efficiency. However, the way and manners in which we react to work vary from one person to the other. Some people no matter what you do to them, they hardly improve. An attempt to locate this within a philosophical basis has been instructive.

The first philosophical perspective to work to be examined is that work is punishment, hardship or forceful. In religion, it is belief that man is sentence to work; this kind of philosophical basis actually influenced our behaviour towards work. We do work reluctantly. Religion has played a major role in the philosophical thought that believed that work is punishment, hardship and unpleasant obligation.

The second philosophical basis of work is that some people see work as a duty to fulfill their predestined calling. There is some work where people believe that they have been sent by an invisible hand to perform. For example, pastoral work, priesthood etc. In some organizations, some officials tend to see themselves as predestined to occupy certain position or post and to serve their organisation in a certain way. Such officials tend to be overzealous and they believe they are not answerable to men i.e. they do not see a congruence between human needs and God's needs.

The third philosophical perspective of work is that some see work as being central to man. Very early in the morning they are in their offices and they live offices late even when they are on leave. They are said to be workaholics. For instance, as far as culture is concerned, to the Greeks, any work that is manual is rated low, looked down upon while as intellectual work is highly rated among the Greeks. Among the Ibo Nation, work is highly rated and regarded as good, and determines one's position or social status in the society. In "Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart", work is substantiated. The Yoruba culture also, has something similar considering most of the wise saying, proverbs and Ifa liturgies. Some people do not like what they are doing while some others like what they are doing and are making millions out of it. In work organizations, human behaviour is a joint function of the degree to which that behaviour is instrumental to the attainment of an output and the probability that the outcome will be forthcoming. Secondly, individuals select that behaviour which they perceived as most directly leading to things they want (Vroom in Igbokwe-Ibeto, 2011). Consequently, some behaviour may lead an individual to gold mine while some may lead to forbidden. The above opinion if properly analyzed reveals that Individual's philosophy of work influences their attitude to work as well as performance.

Performance management process have come to the fore in recent years as means of providing more integrated and continuous approach to the management of performance than was provided by previous isolated and often inadequate merit rating or performance appraisal schemes. Performance management is based on the principles of management by agreement or contract rather than management by command. It emphasizes development and the initiation of self-managed learning plans as well as the integration of the individual and corporate objectives. It can, in fact, play a major role in providing for an integrated and coherent range of human resource management process that are mutually supportive and as a whole to improving organizational effectiveness (Armstrong and Baron, 2005).

Performance management is a means of getting better results from the organization, team and individuals by understanding and managing performance within an agreed framework of planned objectives and standard (Oladimeji, 1999). Performance management is a holistic approach and process of bringing together many activities to collectively contribute to effect management of individuals and teams in order to achieve high levels of organizational performance. No wonder performance management has been defined as a systematic process for improving organizational performance by developing of the individuals and teams. It is a means of getting better results by understanding and managing performance within an agreed framework of planned goals, standards and competency requirement (Armstrong, 2009).

Weiss and Hartle (in Igbokwe-ibeto, 2011) define performance management as "a process for establishing a shared understanding about what is to be achieved and how it is to be achieved, an approach to managing people that increases the probability of achieving success". Performance management is strategic in the sense that it is about broader issues, long-term goals and people's management, individuals and teams. Performance management requires willingness and commitment of both the management and the employee to focus on improving performance at all levels.

It is sometimes assumed that performance appraisal is the same thing with performance management. However, there are significant differences. Performance appraisal can be defined as the formal assessment and rating of individuals by their managers at or after a review meeting. It has been discredited because too often, it has been operated as a top-down and largely bureaucratic system owned

by the Human Resource (HR) departments rather than by line managers (Armstrong, 2009). In addition, as Armstrong and Murlis (1998) asserted, performance appraisal too often degenerated into 'a dishonest annual ritual'. In contrast, performance management is a continuous and much wider, more comprehensive and more natural process of management that clarifies mutual expectations, emphasizes the support role of managers who are expected to act as coaches rather than judges and focuses on the future.

Productivity is the objectives of all organization, which reflects multiplicity of factors, and many of these factors are interdependent; how the leader in the organization use these variables determine the level employee productivity. Knowledge of them and how to use them by leaders are therefore conditions precedent to better employee performance and productivity enhancement. Productivity is a result of the application of human and other resources. As such, it is a prime determinant of ability to pay. If production increases in the same proportion as wage costs, labor cost per unit remains unchanged. If, however, an increase in the wage level is not matched with a proportional increase in productivity, labor costs per unit rise. At some point, this mismatch runs the risk of exceeding the employer's ability to pay. Although productivity is not widely used as an explicit wage level determinant, it is always present in the form of the effort bargain. If the employer gets more output for each unit of input, the organization's ability to pay is increased.

The subject under interrogation could be predicated on several theoretical platforms. These include the goal theory, control theory and the social cognitive theory, and labour productivity theory, under which we have four major sub-theories of cost, efficiency and effectiveness and target theories. While other theories may be relevant in their right, we anchor the paper on an eclectic approach of goal, control and social cognitive theories. This is because of the advantages they present in analysizing the issues raised.

Goal theory highlights four mechanisms that connect goals to performance. These include: direct attention to priorities; stimulate effort; challenge people to bring their knowledge and skills to bear to increase their chances of success; and the more challenging the goal, the more people will draw on their full repertoire of skills. Goal theory underpins the emphasis in performance management on setting and agreeing objectives against which performance can be measured and managed (Latham and Locke, 1979).

The control theory focuses attention on feedback as a means of shaping behavior. As people receive feedback on their behavior, they appreciate the discrepancy between what they are doing and what they are expected to do and take corrective action to overcome the discrepancy. Feedback is recognised as a crucial part of performance management process (Armstrong, 2009).

The social cognitive theory is based on central concept of self-efficacy. This suggests that what people believe they cannot do powerfully impacts on their performance. Developing and strengthening positive self-belief in employees is therefore an important performance management objective (Bandura, 1986).

**The Objectives of Performance Management**

The overall objective of performance management is to develop the capacity of people to meet and exceed expectations and to achieve their full potential to the benefit of themselves and the organization. Performance management provides the basis for self-development but importantly, it is also about ensuring that the support and guidance people need to develop and improve is readily available (Armstrong, 2009). Performance is an important aspect of organizational behaviour because its level at any given time in an organisation is co-extensive with effectiveness or efficiency or otherwise. The conceptual reference for the effective performance of an organization in its statutory functions is productivity as defined above. For example, Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) is effective when it successfully controls commercial banks according to the terms of its statutory duty, it is effective when it can do so at a low cost for example, carrying out a measure of control function such as auditing or inspecting the returns made by commercial banks using reduced number of staff (personnel) or days (time).

The importance of productivity in an organization cannot be over emphasized. As an economic standard, productivity is an important factor in determining prices and wages. Economists are far from a full understanding of the relations among the variables, but there is substantial agreement on the following points: a).The large increases in real wages that have come about over the long term in many countries are closely associated with large increase in labour productivity in these countries. b). In the absence of increase in labour productivity, a stable price level is inconsistent with persistent increases in money wages. c). Industries in which sales of products are comparatively insensitive to price changes, increases in labour productivity will tend to reduce employment and possibly also reduce wages and d). An increase in





labour productivity or in the productivity of other factors usually brings with it a reduction in cost and hence tends to result in price reductions, wage increase, or both.

As a measure of efficiency, productivity is also used to measure efficiency, as an aid in economic planning and forecasting, and as a means of assessing the uses to which resources are being put. Productivity may yet serve as a standard for grading and evaluating any group of workers performing common task, distinguishing the more productive from the less productive. Productivity is a helpful analytical tool in studying the possible allocation of resources among different use. The extent to which resources flow to various uses depends among other things, on their productivity in each of those uses.

A nation or industry advances by using less to make more. Labour productivity is an especially sensitive indicator of this economizing process and is one of the major measures used to chart a nation's or an industry's economic advancement. An overall rise in a nation's labour productivity signifies the potential availability of a larger quantity of goods and services per worker than before and accordingly; a potential for higher real income per worker. The change in a nation's overall labour productivity during any given interval represents the sun of changes in the major economic sectors and industries.

**Challenges of Measuring Efficiency in the Nigerian Public Service**

The efficiency of the public service in Nigeria has often posed a problem for public administration system in Nigeria. Going by the report of various commissions of inquiry into the affairs of public agencies, inefficiency and low productivity has often ranked high. In response to this ugly situation, Udoji 1974, Public Service Review Commission report identified some of these problems to include: Competition between primordial loyalties and loyalty to the state which creates the problem of nepotism, resulting in systems of supervision and control that are, inevitably in conflict with the best principles of management; poor regard for time and numbers; shortage of skilled and experienced personnel; pervasive, greater reverence for the past than for the present or the future resulting in static institutions, norms and practices in a largely dynamic environment; interpersonal relationship characterized by a spirit of animosity and jealousy rather than co-operation and teamwork; low regard for research and research findings; the reluctance of supervisors to delegate responsibilities to subordinates as well as the observed reluctance of subordinates to accept responsibility; and a pervasive lack of appropriation of the role of specialization knowledge and of professional training in the management of public service.

Other elements associated with inefficiency and low productivity of the service are cultural factors, i.e. those job-related attitudes and emergent behavioural patterns derived from prevalent societal values acquired or transmitted from one generation to another with respect to the worth of work (ecology of Nigerian public administration); managerial factors and job-related factors, the leadership of public administration system in Nigeria is bedeviled by poor visions, lack of work and job designs, lack of creativity, poor utilization of federal character principle and lack of clear objectives, poor work methods and organizational culture. Managerial problem indeed, is a major factor in assessing employee efficiency in the Nigerian public service.

**Eight Step Process for Performance Improvement**

The following eight-step process for improving employee performance can be very useful in efficient public service delivery. The concepts are reasonably simple. However, implementation can be more difficult than one might think because it requires change in how people do things; hence the adoption of New Public Management. Change is threatening and habits are hard to break. As with most things, which are worthwhile, this process requires management time and commitment. Kazemek and Glime (2006) have identified the following eight-step process:

Link Employee Performance to Organization Guiding Principles: Employee commitment to organizational goals can only be attained when employees understand the organization's goals. Employees need to know what the organization's overall performance goals are in measurable terms. Many organizations use consultants to help them set forth their goals in a "mission statement" and help them to devise measures of success. Communication about the organizations goals and how the organization is doing relative to those goals needs to be frequent and timely. To use a metaphor, if you are shooting at a target, but you aren't allowed to see the target and no one tells you how close you are to the target until you have shot all the bullets in your gun, then you aren't going to do very well and you will have very little chance of increasing your accuracy.

The more information one get about the location and characteristics of the target, and the more frequent and timely the information he gets about how close he is to target, the better his chances of hitting it. Organizations can get help from consultants in developing an employee communications plan and

communications programs which will make the target clear to employees and keep them informed about how the organization is doing.

Link Employee Performance to Commitment: Employee commitment comes through a demonstration of management commitment not only to the organizations success, but also to the employees. Employers need to offer a competitive pay and benefits package, a progressive disciplinary process, formal or informal on-the-job training, and visible advancement opportunities based on clear criteria. In addition, benefits programs need to reflect the changes in employee needs as the demographics of the workforce changes. Most important are the daily spoken and unspoken messages received from the supervisor, which communicate the organization's attitudes towards its employees and the performance improvement program. Therefore, organizations must obtain the commitment of supervisors and managers to the process by taking the time to explain the need for change and the rational for the approach utilized. They need to be made aware of how their actions affect employee attitudes.

Management should also be ready to solicit and listen to employee input. Employees need to feel that they are part of a team. Management should use employee input to solve problems related to "working smarter", not just harder, and to identify time and money wasters. This also means that management should be willing to share information with employees about how the organization works, how it is doing, and about what factors are affecting success. The organization needs to be constantly vigilant to the messages it is sending to employees about how it values employee contributions and the messages it sends about commitment to goals. Communications should be frequent, clear, positive, and should come from every level of management. Commitment also comes from the employee perception that their efforts will be rewarded. The organization should share the fruits of its success with the employees. Developing incentive pay and recognition programs, which tie individual performance, group performance, and organization performance to employee rewards, is relevant here. In addition, commitment to goals is related to the pride that each employee takes in the job he or she is doing and in the pride that they have for the company. Pride can be instilled through fanfare - publicizing achievements and successes of the company and the contribution of individuals who made it possible.

Assess Work Team Strengths and Weaknesses: Has the organization been hiring the right kind of people? How do employees fit the agency, commission or ministry's organizational culture, the department head's managerial style, and the type of job assigned? Nigerian work population demographics have changed a lot in the last ten years and are going to change even more by the year 2015. The influx of more women; the aging of the work force, and the change in worker values will all make these issues even more important.

The approaches to dealing with these problems will have to be a combination of better screening and better methods for dealing with work force diversity. The better the organization is at identifying the ideal profile for each job and for the employee work force overall, and the better the organization is at screening potential employees for these factors, the fewer headaches it will have in managing employee performance. Interviews can be structured to screen for these factors. Tests are also available to determine employee work styles, work related values, and skill levels.

Reviewing the characteristics and skills of top performers and marginal performers will help the organization in developing a profile for each job and for the agency overall. Once profiles have been developed, the organization should clearly communicate these expectations to employees. In addition, supervisors and managers need to be trained to understand cultural differences and how to deal effectively with them.

Link Performance to Training and Development: Training and development is an antidote to productivity improvement. A program of productivity-oriented training can translate directly into bottom line results. Productivity oriented training should focus on the following areas: Setting performance standards and objectives for all employees; leader facilitation of group problem solving; supervisory training in performance review and feedback; and job knowledge and skills development (Armstrong and Baron, 2005).

To maximize learning and operational impact, training should be specifically tailored to industry needs, jobs and organizational culture. Managers should be held accountable for providing on-the-job training plans for each subordinate in addition to classroom training. It is not unusual, for managers to interpret training as simply sending an employee to an outside commercial program offered by the local college or the professional Management Association. While these programs may provide useful information, they are not enough.

Link Department Goals and Individual Performance Standards: Once the organization's mission and strategic objectives are determined, they need to be translated into division and then department





performance objectives and standards. A top down approach should be utilized. Normally, the top management needs to work with departmental heads in a participative process to determine what departmental standards of performance need to be in order to reach overall corporate objectives. Department objectives can then be translated into individual performance standards and objectives. Performance planning is often neglected at the individual level. Employees need to understand how they can contribute to meeting the organization and department goals, and the need to have the opportunity to be involved in developing a plan for performance improvement. Managers and supervisors need training on how to set objective, measurable, relevant, realistic, and challenging standards of performance for each subordinate's job. Such training programs are typically 1 to 2 days in length and promote a participative process between supervisor and employees.

If employees are to embrace these standards and objectives then they should be given the opportunity to make input to the process. Often no one knows the job better than the employee doing the work. Supervisors and managers should meet with each subordinate on a regular basis to establish an ongoing dialogue about the employee's performance, motivations, aspirations, and work related concerns. Once a year is not enough, once a quarter is better and for salaried employees once a month is best. Not all of these meetings need to be long or formal. If the manager can make the employee feel comfortable in these meetings and generate trust, then the manager or supervisor can learn how to better motivate the employee, can identify the obstacles to improved performance, and devise an effective performance improvement plan for each employee. Supervisors may be reluctant to make time for intensive performance planning and review, but it takes this kind of effort to make big strides in productivity.

The employee should go away from performance planning and review meetings with greater clarity about the employer's work expectations, a realistic assessment of how he/she is doing, the opportunity to express personal needs which affect work performance, and a plan of action for improving job skills/knowledge and improving performance. Typically, this kind of planning, assessment, and feedback information is documented in a performance appraisal system. This documentation should serve as a tickler system for future performance review meetings, provides some structure for the types of items to be reviewed, provides a tool for top management and the personnel department to monitor performance review activities, and is necessary for keeping the organization out of legal trouble when poor performance leads to a termination contested by the employee.

The performance appraisal form should be simple, flexible, and structured. However, it should not be the limiting kind of checklist system so often seen which depends on nebulous definitions of quality and productivity. It also should not use criteria, which are not directly related to results achieved in the job such as personality traits.

Track Employee Performance: If you cannot measure an activity then you cannot manage it. Therefore, any activity in the organization that is important should be measured. Managers sometimes resist measurement of results because it focuses top management attention on accomplishment of outcomes rather than on an appearance of "working hard". In fact, good performance measurement may reward those who "work smart" and work normal hours as much or more than those who work hard, but not smart. A good performance measurement system should ideally meet the following criteria: Provide frequent and timely reporting; simple to maintain and utilize although it may be complex and time consuming to set up; focus on results achieved more than on activity required to achieve results; should not ignore important performance areas just because they are difficult to measure; and provided and publicized to employees whose performance is being measured (Kazemek and Glime, 2006).

Tie Employee Performance to Rewards: The challenge for every organization and every manager in the organization are to tie the organizational goals to each employee's personal needs: The need to belong (involvement); the need for recognition (feedback and rewards); the need to achieve life style objectives; the need for security and predictability; the need to achieve and to make a difference; and the need for growth.

Most public sector organizations lack effective incentive systems. The greatest motivational impact can be achieved when rewards are frequent, immediate, can be related to individual contribution, and are of significant value to the employee. Typical profit sharing plans and merit salary increase plans are ineffective as employee motivators because they often fall short in all of these areas. They may pay out only once a year. In the case of profit sharing plans, the monies may not become available to the employee until retirement or termination. The employee may have great difficulty in seeing the link between the amount of the payout and his/her work performance, and the payout may be too small to be of significant value.

in most public sector organizations, merit increases given to superior performers vary by only one or two percent from those increases given to average performers. This is a more symbolic than real recognition of the difference in skill and effort required in achieving high levels of performance. Often there are few measurable performance standards and objectives related to merit increases. Increases may be linked more to appearances of working hard rather than results achieved. All this may lead to an employee perception of "merit increases" as entitlements or cost of living increases rather than as incentives for performance.

We suggest the development of group and/or individual incentive plans in which the individual can more easily see his or her impact on results achieved and rewards received. Such plans may also have links to overall organization performance. These programs can be funded by splitting the value of productivity increases between the organization and the employee. Yet, it is also important to fully exploit nonmonetary forms of rewards. Recognition, immediacy, and sincerity in giving the reward are a key to effectiveness with nonmonetary rewards.

A variety of other innovative compensation techniques such as "pay for knowledge", lump sum increases, employee phantom stock plans etc, are being used and studied. However, we believe that these techniques do not suit every organization and in fact may be useful in only limited situations. It is prudent to let the operational strategy of the organization drive compensation systems, and not the reverse.

Show the Employee that "You Mean Business": People change slowly. They will often test your commitment to your avowed goals and objectives. No matter how important you say something is, if you do not measure it, employees will quickly realize that it is not very important. In addition, every employee will say "What's in it for me?" The organization must communicate the answer to this question clearly and regularly. Then management must follow through in terms of rewards for meeting or exceeding standards/objectives and in terms of consequences for poor performance.

Making pronouncements will not be enough. A performance improvement plan must be developed with detailed steps, goals, and implementation timetables. A haphazard approach will create poor results. Performance management and improvement is a continual process - there is a beginning, but there should be no end. Dedication and persistence are required for success.

The major determinant of productivity i.e. independent variables, which explains the productivity level of an organization, includes personal characteristics of employees, the group values of the employees and the organizational structure. Does management to enhance or improve employees' performance and productivity use these factors? This is the question, which this paper seeks to answer.

The public sector in Nigeria is replete with performance and productivity improvement opportunities. In order to discover these opportunities, one need to ask a few penetrating questions about the operations of the public service. What do people really do in each group or level of management? Should what they do be done at all? Can it be done better with the same number of people or with greater number or smaller number? Could it be better with a new technology? Moreover, at reduced cost? Government/management's action is needed and its unwavering commitment is necessary for performance and productivity improvement measures to come to the fore and be harnessed.

The major determinants of an organization's performance and productivity are classified for the purpose of this discussion into individual level variables, group level variables and organizational system level variables.

**Individual Level Variables:** All other organizations have people (employees) entering it with certain characteristics that influence their behavior at work. The more obvious of these are personal or biographical characteristics such as age, gender, personality, values, attitudes and basic ability levels (competency). These characteristics are essentially intact when an individual enters the workforce and for the most part of his or her working life, there is little management can do to alter them, yet they have very real impact on employee's performance and productivity.

**Biographical Factors and their Effects on Performance**

Age: The relationship between age and job performance is important for the following reasons: first is the wide spread belief that job performance declines with increasing age. Secondly, the aging workforce is a reality. A study reveals that workers of 55 years of age and above are the fastest growing sectors of the Nigerian labor force. Thirdly, there is a retiring age in organizations, for instance, in Nigeria, the retiring age for public sector employees is 35 years in service or 60 years of chronological age whichever comes first.





What is management usual view about older workers? On the one hand, older workers are seen as having a number of positive qualities, which they bring to their jobs; specifically, experience, judgment, a strong work ethics and commitment to quality. However, older workers are also perceived as lacking flexibility and as being resistant to new technology. In a time when organizations seek individuals who are adaptable and open to change; the negatives associated with aged workers and against the hiring of the aged increases the likelihood of their being the ones to be retired of their positions during downsizing, rightsizing or rationalization.

Indeed, there is a wide spread believe that productivity declines with age. It is often assumed that individual skills – particularly speed, agility, strength and co-ordination decay over time and that prolonged boredom and lack of intellectual stimulation all contribute to reduced productivity. However, research studies contradict these basic assumptions. The findings have shown that demands of most jobs, those with heavy manual labor requirements are not extreme enough for any decline in physical skills due to age have an impact on productivity or if there is some delay due to age, it is offset by gains due to experience. If this conclusion is universally sound, is it true at all stages of life span of an individual employee? Is performance in organizations enhanced under the present policy, which sets retirement age for public sector employees at 35 years of service or 60 years of chronological age whichever is earlier? If creating employment opportunities for the younger generation is the objective of the policy, is effective and efficient performance of an organization and its means for achieving it (using it experienced but not tired workforce) not sacrificed for employment generation or opportunities for its potential employees? If the assumption in the above questions is misconceived, what is the explanation for the differential between the retirement age of Directors/Employees in the Nigerian public service and that of High Court Judges and university professors, which is now fixed at 70 years? We therefore contend that while performance and productivity decline with age, however, it is offset by gains due to experience; thus, leading to efficiency of the public service.

Gender: Who should be employed in order to enhance performance in organization, male or female? Conclusions in literature on gender recognized that there are few, if any important differences between men and women that affect their job performance. Yet, recurrent literature clearly observed that, there are no consistent male – female differences in problem – solving ability, analytical skills, competitive drive, motivation, sociability or learning ability. Supporting the above position is the psychological studies, which have proved that women are more willing to conform to authority; and that men, are more aggressive and more likely than women to have expectations of success are, but these differences are minor (Vlaccoby and Jacklin in Arhuidese, 2003).

In line with the above submission, and given the campaign by Nigerian women for empowerment after the Beijing Conference, the increasing female participation in the workforce as well as the emerging rethinking about what constitutes male and female roles; it is safe to conclude that there is no significant difference in job performance and productivity between men and women. The conclusion therefore, is that in terms of efficiency and productivity improvement in the public service, it does not matter which gender an organization employs or retains –male and female.

Marital Status: According to Dunnette and Robbins (in Arhuidese, 2003), there are not enough studies to draw any conclusions about the effect of marital status on efficiency and productivity. However, research consistently indicates that married employees have fewer absences, undergo less labour turnover and are more satisfied with their jobs than their unmarried co-workers. Even at that, unmarried workers sooner or later will also marry. We therefore concur with the argument that there is no significant relationship between marital status, efficiency and performance.

Tenure: Is there relationship between seniority and performance? If we define seniority as time spent on a particular job. We can say that the most recent evidence demonstrates a positive relationship between seniority and job performance and productivity. So tenure, expressed as work experience, appears to be a good predictor of employee productivity. These biographical characteristics of employees are readily available in the personnel department of an organization. They include date that is contained in almost every employee's personal file. The value, which this information has for managers, is that, it can help in making choices among job applicants, training retraining and transfers and redeployment.

Competencies or Ability: According Arhuidese (2003), ability refers to an individual's capacity to perform the various tasks in a job. It is a current assessment of what one can do. An individual's overall abilities are essentially made up of two sets of factors: intellectual and physical abilities. He went on further to posit that an individual's overall abilities are those needed to perform neutral activities. He noted that the seven most frequently cited dimension making up intellectual abilities are: Number aptitude;

Perceptual speed; Inductive reasoning and Deductive reasoning; Verbal comprehension; Spatial visualization and Memory.

The physical abilities are those needed to do tasks demanding stamina, dexterity, strength etc. Indeed, research has identified nine basic abilities involved in the performance of physical task. These include: Dynamics (ability to exert muscular force repeatedly over time); Trunk strength (ability to exert muscular strength using the trunk, particularly abdominal muscles); Static strength (ability to exert force against external objects); Explosive strength (ability to expand a maximum of energy in one or a series of expensive acts); Dynamic flexibility (ability to make rapid and repeated flexing movements); Extant flexibility (ability to move the trunk and back muscles as far possible); Body co-ordination (ability to co-ordinate the simultaneous actions of different parts of the body); Balance (ability to maintain equilibrium despite forces pulling off balance); and Stamina (ability to continue maximum effort requiring prolonged effort over time).

The Ability - Job Fit: In support of the above assertions, Robbins (in Arhuidese, 2003), posit that jobs make differing demands on people and people differ in the abilities which they possess. He maintained that employees' performance is therefore enhanced when there is a high ability job-fit. The specific intellectual or physical abilities required for adequate job performance depend on the ability requirement of the job. For example, senior executives need verbal abilities, an accountant needs number aptitude, a supervisor who needs to choose between two different suggestions offered by employee's need deductive reasoning. Also, task that require strength require dynamic, trunk, static or explosive strength while task that require flexibility need extant or dynamic flexibility.

As managers, the conclusion that can be made is that if employees lack the required abilities, they are likely to fail. If you are hired as an accountant and you do not have number aptitude, your performance will be poor irrespective of your positive attitude or your high level of motivation. Therefore, it is pertinent to know that if employee ability far exceed those necessary to do the job, job performance is likely to be adequate but there will be organizational inefficiency and possible decline in employee satisfaction. Therefore, management will be paying more than it needs to, and this ultimately leads to inefficiency. Significantly, abilities above those required can reduce the employees job satisfaction especially when the employees desire to use his or her abilities is particularly strong and is being frustrated by the limitations of the job.

**Group Level Variables:** At the group level, the variables, which we have selected for discussion, are the issues connected with team and contemporary leadership. By leadership here is meant the ability to influence a group towards the achievement of goals. The source of the influence may be formal such as provided by possession of managerial rank in an organization. It may also arise from outside the formal structure of the organization – non-sanctioned leadership. Whatever may be the source of the leader's influence, the issue of our concern here is what makes an effective leader i.e. leader that will influence employees to perform effectively.

This requires a discussion on leadership theories, which is not our major concern here. Suffice to refer to the classical approach to administration under which leadership style is described as autocratic. Under the theory, the leader gives instructions to his followers who must carry out the instructions without questioning. The main focused of the leader is on the needs of the organization and not the needs of the individual. He concentrates power and decision making in himself. He takes full authority and assuming responsibility. To him, the carrot and stick approach is what is appropriate to enhance performance in workers.

The criticisms of the classical approach have led to the emergence of human relations and behavioral approaches to administration. Under this approaches, leaders are democratic with the focus of attention on individual needs and not the needs of the organization alone. The leaders use participatory and democratic style of leadership.

A recent variant of the approach leader is leading through empowerment by which is meant putting employees in charge of what they do. Specifically, managers are being advised that effective leaders share power and responsibilities with their employees. The empowering leader's role is to show trust, provide vision, remove performance-blocking barriers, offer encouragement, motivate and coach employees etc. As a team leader or coach, the manager is expected to provide guidance, advice, encouragement, clarity expectation and roles teaching offer support and help employees improve their performance. Managers who are so concerned with the empowerment of their subordinates are increasing being described as **COACHES** rather than **BOSSES**.





As a team leader or coach, the manager is expected to provide guidance, advice, encouragement, clarity expectations and role teaching offer support and help employee improve their job performance. For directors and managers who want to transform themselves into a coach, there are three general skills, which they should exhibit. They include:

Ability to Analyze Ways to Improve an Employee's Performance and Capacities: A coach looks for opportunities for employees to expand his or her capabilities and improve performance. For this purpose, the following are relevant to leaders in organization:

- Observe your employee's behaviour on day – to – day basis.
- Ask questions from the employee, why do you do task this way? Can it be improved upon? What other approaches might be used?
- Show genuine interest in the person as an individual, not merely as an employee. Respect his or her individuality. More important than any technical expertise you can provide about improving job performance is the insight you have into the employee's uniqueness.
- Listen to the employee. You cannot understand the world from an employee's perspective unless you listen.

Ability to Create a Supportive Climate/Environment: It is the coach's responsibility to reduce barriers to development and facilitate a climate that encourages performance. To this end, the following are useful to managers:

- Create a climate that contributes to a free and open exchange of ideas.
- Offer help and assistance; give guidance and advice when asked.
- Encourage your employees; be positive and upbeat; do not use threats.
- Focus on mistakes as learning opportunities. Change implies risk and employees should note that mistakes will be punished. When failure occurs, ask "what did we learn that can help us in the future?"
- Reduce obstacles. What factors do you control that if eliminated, would help the employee to improve his or her job performance?
- Express to the employee the value of his or her contribution to the unit's goals.
- Take personal responsibility for the outcome, but do not rob employees of their full responsibility. Validates the employee's efforts when they succeed and point to what was missing when they fail. Never blame the employee for poor results.

Ability to Influence Employees to Change their Behaviour: The ultimate test of coaching effectiveness is whether an employee's performance improves. However, this is not a static concept; we are concern with the ongoing growth and development. In order to achieve this: Encourage continual improvement. Recognize and reward small improvements and consistently treat coaching as helping employees to continually work towards improvement. There no absolute upper limits to an employee's job performance; use a controllable style, employees will be more responsible to accepting change if, they participate in identifying and choosing among improvement ideas; break difficult task down into simple ones. By breaking down more complex jobs into a series of tasks of increasing difficulty, discouraged employees are more likely to experience success. Achieving success on simpler tasks encourages them to take on more difficult ones; model the qualities that you expect from your employees. If you want openness, dedication, commitment, and responsibility from your employees, you must demonstrate these qualities yourself. Your employees will look on to you as role model, so make sure your deeds match your words (Arhuidese, 2003; Armstrong and Baron, 2005).

**The Socio-Cultural Environment as a Contingency Variable:** One common conclusion in the study of leadership is that there is no best style of leadership. The effectiveness of any style is situational. So, leaders adjust style to the situation. One of the features of Nigerian socio-cultural environment in which managers and their subordinates operate is the attitude of those in positions of authority/leadership and followers, which is authoritarianism. This is a colonial tradition that is reinforced by the civil service organizational structure. This structure finds its root in the classical approach to administration. We are taking your knowledge of relevant information in this regards for granted. Suffice to ask whether the domineering contingency variable in the Nigeria socio-cultural environment with special reference to the imbibed colonial tradition of aristocracy of leaders, lack of a sense of belonging in followers and a wide

gap between government and employees of its agencies, are not antithetical to all the above preaching about coaching.

Managers and their subordinates are not exceptions to the described attitudinal problem. Has the organizational structure with all the features of Webber's type of bureaucratic organization, which emphasizes strict compliance with rules and regulations, conformity with exiting procedures and effectiveness as its watchword. helped the situation? This question takes the discussion beyond the group level variables discussed above to the organization system level variables. Formal organization, its work procedures and jobs, human resource policies and practice (selection processes, training and development programmes, performance appraisal methods and the internal culture) all have impact on the effective performances and employee productivity.

**What to do as Directors/Managers**

Performance management and improvement procedures should be completely woven into overall goals and objectives of organizations and should be carefully sold to workers. we The conclusion which we can draw from the discussion so far is that ability directly influences an employee's level of performance and satisfaction through the ability — job fit. For directors/managers who work through subordinates, they can do any or all of the following in order to get a compatible fit.

An effective selection process will improve the fit. A job analysis will provide information about jobs currently being done and the abilities that individuals need to perform the job adequately. Applicants (new or current staff) can then be tested, interviewed and evaluated on the degree to which they possess the necessary abilities.

Promotion and transfer decision affecting individuals already in an organization's employment should reflect the abilities of the candidates. As with new employees, care should be taken to assess critical abilities that incumbents will need on the job and to match those requirements with the organization's human resources planning.

The fit can be improved by the fine turning of the job to better match an incumbent's abilities. Often, modifications can be made in the job so that, while it is not having a significant impact on the job's basic activities, it better adapts it to the specific talent of a given employee. Examples would be to change some of the equipment used or to re-organize tasks within a group of employees.

Yet, another alternative is to provide training for employees. This is applicable to new workers and present job incumbents. Training can keep the abilities of incumbents current or provide new skills as times and conditions change. Indeed, in order to get an acceptable fit for jobs as Managers of an organization through this last alternative approach is the main objective of this section of the paper.

Furthermore, Robbins (ibid) posits that personality is the sum total of ways in which an individual react to, and interact with others. It is the result of both hereditary and individual interaction with his environment. He listed among the known personality traits to include aggressiveness, laziness, shyness, ambitions, submissiveness, timidity and loyalty. Robbins clearly and strongly submitted that in order to enhance performance and productivity, management must match personalities with jobs. For instance, a shy person or an introvert cannot perform well as a front desk officer (receptionist).

Productivity is the result of employee's behaviour. Almost all-complex behaviour is learned. So in order to predict behavior that enhances performance and productivity, management must understand how people learn. Learning in the words of Robbins (in Arhuidese, 2003) is any behaviour that occurs because of experience. He stressed that for learning to be useful to the organization, the change, which it brings about, must be a favorable permanent change in the employees behavior and not in his thought process.

One of the managerial tools for achieving this is the shaping of employees behaviour. This is done by molding the individual employees by guiding his learning in graduated steps. The need for this arises where the employee's behaviour is significantly different from that sought by management. There are four ways in which behaviour can be sharpened: 1. through positive reinforcement; 2. Negative reinforcement; 3. Punishment and 4. Extinction.

Following a response with something pleasant, is called positive reinforcement e.g. praising an employee for a job well done; following a response by termination or withdrawal of something unpleasant is called negative reinforcement. Punishment is causing an unpleasant condition in an attempt to eliminate an undesirable behaviour. Giving an employee a query followed by a work suspension without pay for coming late to work is an example of punishment. Eliminating a reinforcement that maintain is called extinction. College instructors who wish to discourage students from asking questions in the class can eliminate this behaviour in the students by ignoring those who raise their hands to ask questions. Hand raising will be extinct when it is invariably met with an absence of reinforcement.





Both positive and negative reinforcement result in learning. They strengthen a response and increase the probability of repetition. Both punishment and extinction weaken behaviour and decreases its subsequent frequency. Although, punishment eliminates undesired behaviour more quickly than negative reinforcement does, punished behaviour tends to be only temporary suppressed rather than permanently changed. In addition, punishment may produce unpleasant side effect such as lower morale and higher absenteeism or turn over. In addition, the recipients of the punishment tend to become resentful of the punisher. Managers are urged to use reinforcement rather than punishment for enhancing employee performance.

Finally, managers should lead by example, managers who are constantly late to work or take two hours instead of one hour for lunch should expect their subordinates to read the message that they are sending to them. Before concluding this section, we must state that motivation as a tool for enhancing effective performance and productivity is left out deliberately because it is trite. Furthermore, motivation plays fewer roles in the subject of discussion in view of our conclusion under ability job fit above.

**Conclusion**

The concept of performance management as captured by scholars and social commentators has been espoused with an attempt at clarifying the intellectual "cobweb" surrounding the issue of performance management. Searchlight was also beamed on the theoretical framework for a better understanding of the concepts under consideration. To this end, the different theories on the concept of performance have been examined as postulated by scholars. Some of the schools of thought on performance management and employee productivity as examined in the paper include those enunciated by Buchner, Latham and Locke, and Bandura among others. An attempt has also been made to establish the nexus between performance management and employee efficiency in the public sector.

However, how to combine the demands of the Nigerian socio cultural environment and its structure, the ingrained attitudes of the employees with the requirements of the contemporary approach to workers empowerment is the real practical problem. The problem as it affects performance and productivity enhancement manifests at group and organizational levels. They are however, without prejudice to the value of the knowledge of the relevant variables at the individual level for performance and productivity improvement.

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