

Workers Attitude and Productivity in Rivers State Civil Service**Asor Confidence Asor**

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ABSTRACT

This paper aimed at investigating workers' attitude and productivity: A study of Rivers State civil service. The paper was guided by five objectives and five corresponding research questions. Relevant literature to the study was reviewed. Two theories, Elton Mayo's human relations and social behaviour theories were utilized for the study. The paper adopted the descriptive survey design. The area of study is Rivers state, specifically the civil service commission. Data were gotten from both primary and secondary sources. The sample size for the study was 400 respondents. Stratified sampling and purposive sampling techniques were used. The instrument for data collection was a self-made questionnaire. The study used simple percentages, mean and standard deviation as statistical methods for data analysis. The findings revealed various workers' attitudes that were either negative or positive and their impact on production. It shows how negative attitudes retrogress productivity and that management's failure to address the needs of civil servants is disastrous. The study thus concluded that workers' attitude has a strong impact on productivity in Rivers State civil service. Therefore, the paper recommended among other things that management/government should do the needful to ensure that workers' demands are met and if this is achieved the civil servants will immensely contribute a good quota to the success of the civil service. Also, the government should avoid all forms of distraction causing factors, should regularly ensure the security of their workers, regular salary payment, and implemented promotions.

Keywords: Workers, Attitude and Productivity**I. Introduction**

Workers play a vital role in an organisation's productivity. Rivers State is endowed with an abundance of natural resources that give them every opportunity to experience enormous economic success if adequate consideration is given to workers' attitudes towards work in order to achieve productivity in the civil service. Managing employees' attitudes is a critical management function. Managing employee attitude is basically managing expectations and contributions from employees and employers. This entails having a working knowledge of what the employers expect from employees as their contributions towards organisational goals in justifying their pay or salaries and likewise what employees expect from their employers as appreciation for their efforts towards achieving the organisational goals (Ile, 2002). These expectations are anchored on the employment relationship between organisations and their employees. The employee must provide the efforts and skills to work for their employer while the employers must provide the employees with a good salary or wage for work done, (Leaker, 2016)

Many studies have shown a strong relationship between employee attitude and morale; and workplace productivity. People will work harder, faster and better when they are happy and positively motivated. Employers expect personnel to behave in a manner consistent with the organisation's mission and goals. By establishing standards for business conduct, organisation executives set expectations about acceptable behaviour. A positive attitude toward maintaining high standards for work ethics usually creates a productive environment in which people take pride in their work; thereby making customers, suppliers and partners eager to conduct business (Harrison, and Martocchio, 2017). Attitude exhibited by workers can directly affect the atmosphere and productivity within organisations. An environment that is professional and conducive to work needs to be created by workers in order to keep them motivated. If this environment is created, the workers are likely to work hard and successfully complete each assignment as expected of them.

An attitude is a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour (Johns, 2017). Attitude describes the way an employee feels inside. These are an employee's feelings toward his employer, his co-workers and his position within the organisation. All employees display an attitude toward their working environment. It is the way a person thinks about situations, which ultimately determines their behaviour. In the workplace, employees can have either a positive or negative attitude about specific work tasks, products or services, co-workers or management, or the organisation as a whole. A positive attitude among employees makes workdays more enjoyable. Tasks are performed to a higher standard and without complaint. However, a bad attitude results in apathy toward daily tasks. Employees are easily agitated by minor problems. Tasks are completed at substandard levels (Leonard, 2018).

According to Konovsky and Cropanzano (2014) when an employee feels good about the work he does and feels as though the work is essentially valued, he can feel a positive drive to complete work on time and to the best of his ability. In contrast, when employees are not satisfied, committed or fully engaged in their work; they may develop a negative attitude which has adverse effects on workers' productivity.

It is a common phenomenon in Rivers State civil service to see workers going to work late, closing early from work, taking French leave, sleeping on their table in the office or indulging in gossip in or outside their offices when there is work to do. It is also observed that some workers do not attend to files except corrupt money is paid, while others sometimes steal government money and also damage government properties, etc. A good number of public servants believe that the public service belongs to the colonial masters, and as such, they throw caution and discipline at work to the winds. Under such conditions of indiscipline, productivity in the Rivers State civil service is adversely affected. There is a very common saying in local parlance among workers in most Nigerian government establishments that "Government work no be anybody work". This attitude to work of most Nigerian workers is a very common phenomenon in most of the government establishments and it is very bad. Consequent to these, there is a general drop in productivity in the Rivers State civil service. It is based on this, the researcher is carrying out research work on workers' attitudes to work and its effect on productivity in Rivers State civil service.

Statement of the Problem

Every organisation, sector and institution is established with a desire to ensure its success and growth. Generally, workers' attitudes and productivity have been a contemporary study by some researchers to explain attitudes that can drive and retrogress productivity. Workers' attitude has a direct impact on the work performance of an employee. Although there are a number of other variables that influence employees to work-related performance or productivity. In Rivers State Civil service most workers are lacking satisfaction, which has made them develop a negative

attitude. This act has led to the problem of a strike by workers to show their anger at the government. Equally, Lydan's work (2019) shows that most civil servants come to work late and are always absent. This is impacting their products, especially in the teaching sector, where most of the students are not productive. Sadly, some teachers for over ten years have not been promoted, those who are promoted cannot enjoy the benefit due to poor implementation. This has negatively influenced workers' attitude towards putting in their best in the work process, and if this is not taken into due consideration, productivity will be depreciated. It was against this backdrop that the researcher focused his study on workers' attitudes and productivity in Rivers State civil service. This is a gap the study seeks to fill since other studies could not address this issue holistically. This study will generate more empirical data on the issue of workers' attitudes and productivity within the scope of Rivers State civil service

The objective of the study

The main objective of the study is workers' attitude and productivity in Rivers State civil service. Specifically, the study also sought:

- I. To establish if there is any link between workers' attitude to work and productivity in the area of this study.
- II. To identify common negative attitudes of workers towards work and how it affects productivity in the area of this study.
- III. To identify the level of productivity and if it is caused by poor work attitude in the area of this study.
- IV. To identify the factors that promote workers' poor attitudes that affect productivity in the area of this study.
- V. To proffer a solution that will boost workers' performance through a good attitude to work in the area of this study.

Research question

- I. Is there any relationship between workers' attitudes to work and productivity in the area of this study?
- II. How can one identify common negative attitudes of workers towards work and how it affects productivity in the area of this study?
- III. How can one establish the level of productivity and if it is caused by poor work attitude in the area of this study?
- IV. What are the factors that promote workers' poor attitude toward work and how it affect productivity in the area of this study?
- V. What solution can be suggested to boost productivity through workers' good attitude to work in the area of this study?

II. Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework for this study is based on Elton Mayo's human relations theory and the theory of social behaviour by Getzels Guba.

Elton Mayo's Human Relations Theory

This theory produced from a landmark study by a group of researchers at the Harvard business school, led by Elton Mayo forms the basis for the positive change in human relations practised around the world. Through a series of experiments undertaken between the mid-1920 to early 1930s to investigate the effect of physical working conditions on productivity. The researcher showed that the productivity levels of the workers increased remarkably irrespective of changes in the lighting conditions, hours of work and breaks. The increase in the productivity level is the result of the fact that the workers worked harder because they were receiving attention. Through

incentives and other forms of care, from their employers through this experiment, it has been demonstrated that increases in workers' productivity and efficiency were not just associated with rewards but also with the contributions and participation of employees and the obvious attention given to them by their superiors and employers. For instance, seeing the workers as vital tools for organisational productivity whose individual needs should be cared for, and according to them, the desired maximum attention will bring out the best in them. This phenomenon is known as the Hawthorne effect (a name coined from the electrical plant within which the experiment was conducted). This theory has drastically changed the approach to human relations practiced during production from the focus on efficiency that was the hallmark of the period of the classical school of management to the behavioural era which focused on the utilisation of psychological, sociological considerations and other human relations approaches to have a proper understanding of the organisational environment, especially as it pertains to its human capital.

Elton Mayo's human relations theory places emphasis on the recognition of the human capital as the life wire of every organisation. This theory had shown that workers are an important tool for productivity in any organisation and should be part of the decision team to facilitate organisational development. Elton Mayo had collaborated with this position through this assertion which showed that seeking the opinions of workers and establishing a friendly working atmosphere makes them feel secure and motivated. Consequently, employers of labour now ensure through the appropriate policies procedure and processes that a culture of mutual influence is built between them and the employees to enable them to work harmoniously.

Maslow's Hierarchy Theory

This theory was propounded by Maslow, (1943). According to Abraham Maslow's need theories of motivation are based upon a consideration of human needs. His theory of human needs has three assumptions. Human needs are never completely satisfied human behaviour is purposed and is motivated by the need satisfaction and needs can be classified according to a hierarchical structure of importance from lowest to highest. Maslow's needs hierarchy is broken down into five steps which include;

- Physiological needs are the basic needs and necessities of life. They include food, water, air, shelter and sex. It is in order to satisfy these basic needs that people work in an organization.
- Safety needs are protection against bodily harm, danger, loss of employment and deprivation. People work in order to satisfy three basic needs.
- Love or social needs include hunger for friends, sweetheart, wife, children and a general longing for affecting and relationship with others.
- Esteem needs to be recognized to be respected and also to have status and prestige in society.
- Self-actualization needs include a search for self-fulfilment in what one is capable of becoming. It is the highest level of Maslow's needs hierarchy.

Once each need was significantly satisfied, it would lead to a driving force for the next need. People need to satisfy physiological needs first which act as a primary motivator; individuals then move up the hierarchy to seek to satisfy safety needs, self-esteem and finally seek self-actualization. This dominates a person's behaviour, especially among managerial personnel. Maslow provided that for an employee to be productive, he should be satisfied with these needs otherwise the failure to meet organization goals. However, in the current situation, most people want to get a job to make them sure daily bread, meeting their needs as much as a better future with

promotions and use of talent. Employees would also be more motivated if given the freedom and power to carry out tasks so as to give their results.

Relating this theory to the current study, it is ideal for management to understand the need of workers in Rivers State civil service. This ranges from ensuring the provision of physiological needs and security needs. The insecurity problem in River State may have influenced employees' performance and productivity; effective security will drive the teachers to put more impact on job delivery. Again, if they are certain of job security, the workers will be inspired to do more.

III. Methodology

Research Design

The case study research design was adopted as the study research design. However, it was significant to this study because it enabled the researcher to empirically and theoretically examine workers' attitudes and productivity in the civil service in Rivers State. This explains the choice of the design in the study due to its importance in problem identification and solving. The population for the study consists of the entire workers in Rivers State civil service, male and female, senior and junior staff. This population was drawn from all the ministries in Rivers State. In all, the total ministries are twenty-six. The sample size of this work was 400. The researcher used a stratified sampling technique to place the ministries into strata and hence used the simple random sampling through the lucky dip replacement (balloting without replacement) to select eight (8) ministries from the total ministries in Rivers State. The research instrument used was a questionnaire. The questionnaire was titled workers attitude and productivity. The respondent's response should be applicable to the situation found in the item given to them. In order to determine the reliability of the instrument, a test-retest method copies of the instrument will be given to 20 persons who are not part of the sample population within two weeks intervals. The two sets of scores was correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient which produced a reliability index of 0.5. Mean and standard deviation was used to analyse the research questions.

IV. Presentation of Data

Research Question 1: Is there any relationship between workers' attitudes to work and productivity in the area of this study?

Table 4.2.1 presents the relationship between workers' attitudes to work and productivity.

S/N	Questionnaire Items	N	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Workers' attitude influences the behaviour of others.	400	2.8	0.95	Accept
2	Workers incite others to carry out protest against management	400	3.1	0.77	Accept
3	Poor attitude to work reduces the benefit or organisational output	400	2.6	1.06	Accept
4	Positive attitude encourage a high commitment of workers towards production.	400	3.2	0.98	Accept
5	Poor attitude to work encourages low turnout or output.	400	2.91	1.07	Accept
6	Positive attitude of workers leads to more benefits through mass production.	400	2.97	1.00	Accept
Grand Mean			2.93	0.97	Accept

Source: Researcher's Field work, 2020.

Table 4.2.1 shows that the mean ratings obtained for various attributes and opinions measured were greater than the standard reference mean of 2.5. This indicates that the respondents were of the opinion or view that there exists a relationship between workers' attitude to work and productivity. Hence, item 1 had a score of (mean=2.8, SD=0.95). Item 2 had a score of (mean=3.1, SD=0.77). Item 3 had a score of (mean=2.6, SD=1.06). Item 4 had a score of (mean=3.2, SD=1.98). Also, item 5 had a score of (mean=2.91, SD=1.07). Finally, item 6 had a score of (mean=2.97 and SD=1.00).

Research Question 2: how can one identify common negative attitudes of workers towards work and how it affects productivity in the area of this study?

Table 4.2.2: Present mean rating and standard deviation for common negative attitudes of workers towards work and how it affects productivity.

S/N	Questionnaire Items	N	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Lateness to work	400	2.92	1.07	Accept
2	Absenteeism	400	2.95	0.94	Accept
3	Poor commitment to work	400	3.15	0.95	Accept
4	Gossip (grapevine) among workers	400	2.79	0.94	Accept
5	Theft	400	2.84	1.01	Accept
6	Early closure to work	400	2.90	0.97	Accept
Grand Mean			2.92	0.98	Accept

Source: Researcher's Field work, 2020.

Table 4.2.2 had a grand mean of 2.92 and SD of 0.98. Item 1 on lateness to work had the following score (Mean = 2.92 & SD= 1.07). Item 2 on absenteeism had the following score (Mean= 2.95 & SD=0.94). Item 3 on poor commitment to work had the following score (Mean = 3.15 & SD= 0.95).

Item 4 on gossip (grapevine) among workers had a score of (Mean = 2.75 & SD = 0.94). Item 5 on theft had the following score (Mean = 2.84 & SD = 1.01). Finally, item 6 on early closure from work had a score of (Mean = 2.90 & SD= 0.97).

By implication, it means that all the items were negative attitudes of workers towards work and is proof that these affect productivity.

Research Question 3: How can one establish the level of productivity caused by poor workers' attitudes to work in the area of this study?

Table 4.2.3: Present mean and standard deviation for the level of productivity caused by poor workers' attitude to work.

S/N	Questionnaire Items	N	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Job dissatisfaction	400	2.90	0.97	Accept
2	Conflict between management and staff affect production	400	3.00	0.80	Accept
3	Low turnout of production due to workers poor attitude.	400	2.70	0.93	Accept
4	High level of deviancy among staff	400	3.10	0.69	Accept
Grand Mean & Standard Deviation			2.92	0.84	Accept

Source: Researcher's Field work, 2020.

The table 4.2.3 presented how the level of productivity can be caused by poor workers' attitudes to work with a grand mean of 2.92 and SD of 0.84. Hence, item 1 on job dissatisfaction had the following score (Mean = 2.90 & SD= 0.97). Item 2 on the conflict between management and staff affects production, had a score of (Mean= 3.00 & SD = 0.80). Item 3 on a low turnout of production due to workers' poor attitude had a score of (mean = 2.70 & SD= 0.93). Items 4 on high level of deviance among staff had a score of (Mean = 3.10 & SD = 0.69). By implication, the items support the level of productivity and indicate that it is caused by poor workers' attitudes.

Research Question 4: What are the factors that promote poor workers' attitudes to work and how does it affect productivity in the area of this study?

Table 4.2.4: Presents the factors that promote poor workers using mean and standard deviation.

S/N	Questionnaire Items	N	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Poor working environment	400	2.97	1.00	Accept
2	Insecurity	400	2.89	0.97	Accept
3	Lack of implemented promotion	400	2.83	0.95	Accept
4	Poor salary without increment	400	3.05	1.09	Accept
5	Poor reinforcement	400	2.76	1.05	Accept
6	Job tasks that are not desirable or lack the necessary skill	400	2.58	1.05	Accept
Grand Mean			2.82	1.01	Accept

Source: Researcher's Field work, 2020.

Table 4.2.4 presents factors that promote poor workers and how it affects productivity in the area of this study, with a grand mean of 2.84 and SD of 1.01. Thus, item 1 on poor working environment had the score of (mean = 2.97 & SD = 1.00). Item 2 on insecurity had a score of (Mean = 2.89 & SD 0.97). Item 3 on lack of implemented promotion, had a score of (Mean = 2.83 & SD = 0.95). Item 4 on poor salary without increment had a score of (Mean = 3.05 & SD= 1.09). Item 5 on poor reinforcement had a score of (Mean = 2.76 & SD= 1.03). Finally, item 6 on job tasks that are not desirable or lack necessary skill, had a score of (Mean = 2.58 & SD = 1.05). By implication, it means that majority of the respondents were in support that the items are factors that promote poor workers' attitudes.

Research Question 5: What solution can be suggested to boost productivity through good workers' attitude to work in the area of this study?

Table 4.2.5: Present mean and standard deviation for a solution that can boost productivity through good workers' attitude to work.

S/N	Questionnaire Items	N	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Good working environment	400	2.85	1.02	Accept
2	Regular payment of salary	400	3.00	0.90	Accept
3	Effective implementation of promotion	400	3.10	1.05	Accept
4	Job Security	400	2.95	0.82	Accept
5	Assigning job tasks in which employees are professionals in, or training for	400	3.17	0.96	Accept
6	Granting leave/rest to workers	400	3.26	0.94	Accept
Grand Mean and Standard Deviation			3.05	0.97	Accept

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2020.

Standard Reference Mean =2.5

Based on the table above, with the grand mean of 3.05 and SD of 0.97, it presented a solution that can boost productivity through good workers' attitude. Item 1 on good working environment (mean = 2.85 & SD 1.02). Item 2 on regular payment of salary (Mean = 3.00 & SD = 0.90). Item 3 on effective implementation of promotion (Mean = 3.10 & SD= 1.05). Item 4 on job security (Mean = 2.95 & SD = 0.82). Item 5 on assigning job tasks which employees are professionals in or rained for (Mean = 3.26 & SD= 0.94). Item 6 on Granting leave/rest to workers (Mean = 3.26 & SD 0.94). Therefore, all the items are accepted and it means that they are solutions that can boost productivity.

V. Discussion of Findings

The study on workers' attitude and productivity have been effectively analysed as it affects civil servants in Rivers State. Hence, the study analysed the first research question which establishes any relationship between workers' attitudes toward work and productivity in the study. The findings show that workers' attitude influences the behaviour of other workers in the civil service. Such an attitude can lead to the reduction of organisational output and low turnout. However, if workers' attitudes are positive, the findings reveal that workers will show a high commitment to their work; and production will automatically increase. Hence, Leonard (2017) stated that the attitudes of workers have a significant impact on productivity. He correlated that a positive attitude is healthy for organisational growth while poor attitudes are disastrous to an organisation.

Research question 2 revealed various common negative attitudes of workers towards work and how it affects productivity. The findings show the following to be negative attitudes:

- Lateness to work
- Absenteeism, poor commitment to work
- Gossip or grapevine among workers
- Theft

All these behaviours are negative behaviours, which some workers exhibit that affect productivity. In extension, Leaker (2016), and Johns Nicholson (2013) saw absenteeism as consisting of direct and indirect effects in an organisation and it reduces the working rate of workers and production. Adfer and Golan (2004) wrote on lateness by staff in an organisation, revealed that lateness by workers is an indication that they are not happy with the organisation and as a negative behaviour, it shows low commitment to the organisation.

Again, the findings established the level of productivity and how it is caused by poor workers' attitudes to work. The respondents responded and approved that such can be measured through workers' job dissatisfaction, the conflict between management and staff through strike actions and other grievances, low productivity or turnout and a high level of deviance among staff. Additionally, Tolentino (2014) stated that job dissatisfaction among workers can lead to negative behaviours which affect production. Reacting to the conflict between management and staff and low turnout of production made Stormer (2013) state that when workers conflict with management, it leads to low turnout of production and it encourages deviancy among the staff against management.

Equally, the study analysed the factors that promote poor workers' attitudes to work and it shows its effects on production. The factors include poor working environment, insecurity, lack of implemented promotion, poor salary without increment, and poor reinforcement. On insecurity, poor salary without increment and non-implemented promotion led Lynda (2019) to posit that such factors demotivate workers. She added that when workers' salary cannot measure their job task,

workers' attitude changes negatively. Insecurity in most areas where workers reside also contributes to or promote poor workers' attitudes. Further, Williams (2018) averred that the working environment is an important factor for workers in an organisation. Hence, he posited that a poor working environments does not inspire a positive attitude to work.

Finally, the study through research question five raised some solutions that can boost productivity, and this is achievable through good workers' attitude to work. The study revealed that for workers to boost productivity, there is a need for good workers' attitude. Hence, such a positive attitude can manifest through the good working environment, regular payment of salary, effective implementation of promotion, job security, and granting of leave or rest to workers. If workers are in tune with such opportunities, there is a high tendency to boost productivity. Johnson (2015) explained that the promotion of workers can inspire them to be productive in the organisation, and this is because they are aware that their efforts are being rewarded by management. Lynda (2019) added that regular salary payment encourages patriotism in the organisation. Therefore, if management would ensure to support workers' desires, it will usher good attitude toward work and boost production.

VI. Conclusion and Recommendations

The need to address workers' need is an important element of organisational growth. Organisations need a workforce and these are humans. Considering the importance of humans to production, Elton Mayo 1920-1930, contends that management should place humans first by way of providing necessary incentives, good working conditions as well as what motivates each worker.

Workers show some negative behaviour if they are not satisfied with the nature of work or the area where they are assigned to work. Failures of the management to understand the agony of civil servants has led to various industrial actions such as strikes. Management should provide a variety of motivators rather than focusing on just a few known rewards. He observed that focusing on a known reward item even if of higher value, monotony is created that reduces such efforts to ordinary routines which creates a boring working environment.

Most scholars have pointed out that it is even better if workers openly show their grievances because it creates in management awareness of a problem and also gives an opportunity to solve such problem. Failure to show ill feelings by workers is harmful to an organisation. This is because some workers may be absent from work, come late to work, steal the organisation's properties and other anti-social behaviour (deviancy). Hence, government must always consider the input made by the civil servants and see reasons with them for promotion when due.

In Rivers State particularly, workers in the civil service have lamented the failure of the government to implement the new minimum wage. It is as if the government are given a deaf ear to it. Secondly, most civil servants have not been promoted for many years. Some who are promoted are yet to feel the impact of the promotion. All these affect workers' attitude as most will change from good to bad, and the result affects productivity or leads to low returns.

Extrapolating the problems introduced so far, it is disheartening on the part of the government if it fails to address the problem of civil servants in Rivers State. However, the study highlighted varieties of measures or recommendations. Frankly speaking, implementation of the recommendations given below, will aid or help to address some negative workers' attitudes that is antithetical to productivity in the area of the study. Hence, the following recommendations are as follows:

1. Since worker's attitude affects the production or output of any organisation, the management/government should do the needful to ensure that workers' demands are felt. If this

is achieved the civil servant will immensely contribute a good quota to the success of the civil service.

2. Again, the government should ensure quality leadership and governance. This will discourage negative attitudes of workers ranging from absenteeism, lateness, and theft and will usher in good attitudes such as job commitment.
3. For any organisation or the Rivers State government to ensure more output or patriotism from civil servants, they should look intently at what led to job dissatisfaction, conflict with staff and management, deviancy among civil servants, etc. If these are actualised, it will help to reduce tension among the employers and employees; also effective delivery is keen to improve.
4. Equally, the government should avoid all forms of distraction causing factors. They should regularly ensure the security of their workers, regular salary payment, and implemented promotions. These, if actualised will promote a sense of belonging among the civil servants.
5. Finally, the government should not see workers as robots or machines, rather they should give or grant them leave and rest. They should also assign civil servants in areas that are seen as satisfactory to their profession. With this, they would obtain positive returns from them.

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