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EFFECT OF CHANGE MANAGEMENT ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN ABUJA ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION COMPANY, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Change has been an ever-present component of organizational life as a result of increasingly complicated settings and frequently shifting external demands. The Abuja Electricity Distribution Company (AEDC) has undergone changes in terms of ownership and structure of operations over the years, but the effect of change management on employee performance in the company is still not documented. This study evaluated the effect of change management on employee performance in Abuja Electricity Distribution Company. The specific objectives of the study were to ascertain the effect of organizational leadership, and organizational culture on employee performance in Abuja Electricity Distribution Company. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design in which 364 respondents were selected from a population of 3494 employees using a stratified random sampling technique. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency count, percentage count, mean, standard deviation and Multiple Regression Analysis using SPSS version 23 software. The findings of the study revealed that performance was positively influenced by organizational culture ($p=0.000<0.05$) and organizational structure ($p=0.000<0.05$). Hence, the study concluded that the adoption of a combination of these change management components can substantially enhance performance of the company. Based on the findings, the study recommended that adequate training should be provided to employees when the change involves a shift in technologies or processes. Similarly, there should be proper communication and training on any change to be introduced into the company. Furthermore, leadership changes should be based on work values, norms, ethics, and behaviours. Equally, the company should develop a culture of introducing changes in phases and that a support structure to assist employees that may negatively be affected by the change should be provided.

Keywords: Change management, Organisational leadership, organisational culture, employee performance

INTRODUCTION

In a global knowledge economy, as we have today, organizations in advanced countries around the world essentially depend on their employees to stay alive (Methode et al., 2019). The competitive advantages that they enjoy are brought about through their employees. In today's world, the most important test for businesses is to uncover the dynamics that motivate workers to perform at their best on the job (Zulgurnain et al., 2019) and in the face of change. Change is unavoidable in organizations as a result of improvements in information flow and technology, as well as growing global participation of citizens in the affairs of their countries. As a result, management attention must be drawn to it to ensure unrelenting progress in organizational performance (Okeke et al., 2019).

Generally, organizational change may be driven by a number of factors that included; business and economic factors, competition, technological advancement and globalization, crisis, modification of goals and values (Safo-Adu, 2014). These change drivers may lead to improvements in work methods, administrative policies, technology, goods, or business culture, all of which can improve an employee's performance. However, public institutions across different economies have continued to lack the essential skills and ability to take and implement decisions to move them forward. This issue is significant to the Nigerian public sector and can be described by the amount to which policies have been implemented and change has been implemented (Daniel, 2019).

The Nigerian power sector is not isolated from this characterization (Okafor et al., 2015). In fact, due to the perceived high rate of inefficiency from the monopolized public sector (NEPA), it was privatized and broken into six generation companies and eleven distribution companies which are regulated by the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC), which was established in 2005 to encourage private sector engagement in this vital area of our economy (Okafor et al., 2015). It was believed that with the active participation of the private sector, the nation’s persistent power problem will be resolved, and this will contribute to boosting the nation’s manufacturing capacity. When the supply of energy is insufficient to the sectors of any economy, socio-economic and quality of life of the citizenry will be adversely affected, (Akinbami & Momodu, 2012; Kauzya, 2015).

However, Nigerians over the years have been lamenting over the continued low quality of services rendered by its public power sector despite the reforms and changes introduced at various times (Ukeje et al, 2019; Inuwa, 2020). Therefore, this study filled this important gap in the literature by assessing the effect of change management on employee performance in Abuja Electricity Distribution Company (AEDC). This is because knowing the extent to which human resource reforms and other changes affect employee performance in the company will substantially shape public policy to ensure that the company is effective in meeting its mandate to its customers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Change Management

Korir et al. (2012) describe change management as the successful management of a firm in which managers, executives, and frontline employees work together to successfully implement the required technology, process, or modifications. It's also known as the process of continuously renewing an organization's structure, direction, and capabilities to meet the changing needs of internal and external customers. Change management is the systematic technique and use of information, resources, and tools in order to leverage the benefits of change; it is a process of moving toward a more efficient function in the hopes of positively impacting performance (Alrumaih, 2017).

The goal of change management is to quickly implement business changes in order to improve organizational performance by limiting the effects on productive output, avoiding unnecessary turnover or loss of valuable employees, removing any negative impact on customers, and attain the best business outcomes as quickly as possible (Dalziel, 2003). Change can take place in two ways: proactive or reactive. Reactive change is defined as change that is undertaken in reaction to a large environmental trigger or significant internal operational and management issues. They define proactive change as anything that aims to improve the company's position or prevent future problems. Despite the fact that it is generally desirable to take a predictive approach to change, most businesses do so in practice, mainly because change is unavoidable. It is a widely held belief that if existing performance is sufficient, there is no need for change. Employees are shown to have unpleasant feelings throughout the change implementation and to 'scrabble' over how to deal with the repercussions of change. The employees' resistance is strongly entrenched in pre-conditioned and everyday subjection that they have previously been exposed to in the workplace. Managers play a variety of responsibilities during organizational transformation, including communicator, advocate, coach, liaison, and resistance. Change management, according to Ndahiro, Shukla, & Oduor (2015), is a method that involves professional adaptation and interpretation in order to provide the best match between being an organization's strategies and plans.

Dimensions of Change Management

Organizational culture

Human capital, abilities, mind sets, and knowledge will all play a part in a company's ability to adapt, initiate, and implement change. While change is a crucial element of the evolution process for companies who devote time, effort, and money to developing a successful formula, transformation may also lead to the demise of an organization. Managers must balance all vital aspects of the internal environment and external environment in order to place themselves in the current competitive market (Simanová & Stasiak-Betlejewska, 2018). "A concept of common meaning people who are members that distinguishes the organization from its competitors," according to the definition of organizational culture (Sinaga et al., 2018). Organizational culture, on the other hand, is a "system of shared activities, values, and beliefs which evolves in an entity and guides its members' behavior." Culture has "something to do with the people as well as the organization's particular quality and style" (Morgan & Vorhies, 2018; Joseph and Kibera, 2019).

Organizational culture, according to the definitions, separates one organisation from the other and has an impact on personnel. The culture of an organization summarizes the experiences of its employees and explains how organizations influence people's attitudes, behavior, and well-being. When organizations embark on implementing changes in their strategies or adapt to changing circumstances, it is critical they also implement corresponding changes in organizational culture. Given the importance of culture to any organization and the uniqueness of each culture, it can be argued that if an organization cannot strongly define and effectively manage its own culture, creating alliances with a strategic partner will result in even more challenges (Chatman, Caldwell, O'Reilly, Doerr, 2014).

Corporate culture not only has an impact on employees' behaviour but also on the way employees think and feel about a company. The major implication of constant change in the business world is that changes also affect other aspects of the functioning of the organization, such as organizational culture and organizational commitment. Similarly, organizational culture plays a significant role in organizational change (Fellows & Liu, 2013). Organizations are experiencing increasing difficulty with realigning their management responses to continuous change, implying strategies are likely to fail or reengineering efforts will be defeated before they even begin. Changing an organization's culture is one of the most fundamental challenges facing an organization because people's natural inclination is to hold onto whatever feels familiar, even when confronted with better options.

Organizational leadership

Organizational leadership change is the capability of an individual to associate, relate, influence and motivate a group of people towards the achievement of set goals, missions, visions and objectives of an organization. Korbi (2015) defined organizational leadership change as someone who is an agent of influence that possess the abilities and capabilities to build the confidence of other employees, convince them of the need for strategic change, overcome their resistance and set-up socio-political support for the new strategy. Organizational leadership change is the process of influencing and directing the activities of organized group of persons towards understanding values in the change policies and practices initiated by the management (Ibrahim & Daniel, 2019).

Othman, Saad, Robani & Abdullahi (2014) opine that appropriate leadership change strategies often play crucial roles in fostering culture that encourages knowledge sharing and employee retention, as well as, create loyalty to organization's goals and objectives. When a company lacks effective leadership, no changes will be accomplished since there are no leaders who can motivate and guide the organization's personnel while also providing a clear direction (Methode et al., 2019). In the study of Attah, Obera & Isaac (2017) titled effective leadership and change management for sustainable development in Nigeria, it was shown that effective leadership is the key to success of every organization and for Nigeria to achieve sustainable development, our leaders have greater role to play. Any change requires able, competent and qualified leadership. Thompson *et al*. (2012) argue that in order to overcome change resistance, top management and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) must lead the change effort and "marshal support for a new culture". Because middle managers and supervisors are major participants in implementing new work practices, it's critical that they stay informed. All employees have to be made aware that there is a need and reason for change.

Leadership must explain how the changes will positively impact on its aim to become an international healthcare provider, if management argues that new ways of doing things will benefit the company, employees are usually more willing to accept the need to change practice and implement new processes (Thompson *et al*., 2012). It was also argued that leadership should consider a number of initiatives for employees to see that leadership is committed to change, and may replace executives who are resistant. Leadership could further promote employees that advocate the change, and recruiting new employees ensure that recruits fit the profile of the company.

Employee Performance

There is no universally agreed definition of performance (Andersen, 2010). As a result, the basic principle of performance has now been viewed from several perspectives. Performance management is arguably based on employee performance as well as organizational efficiency and productivity (Ejumudo & Efebeh, 2015). Employee performance is essential for an organization's targets to be met. When analyzing an organization's performance, profitability, improved service delivery, customer satisfaction, market share growth, and increased productivity and revenues should all be considered. Organizational performance is influenced by persons, groups, and tasks, as well as technological, structural, administrative, and environmental factors. Employees are a vital asset that can have a beneficial or negative impact on a company. Organizations today face a difficult task in arguing for changes that affect employee performance as a result of unavoidable environmental changes (Al Kahtani, 2013).

Employee performance is defined as a set of behaviours in a workforce that can be investigated, measured, and assessed on an individual basis. Performance is reflected using a balance between quality, availability, time, and cost, as per Bhatia & Jain (2012). Originally, worker performance refers to how much an employee will or will not do. Performance is determined by the amount and quality of one's output, as well as the duration of one's output, the appearance of one's work, and the efficacy of one's work. Employee performance is often defined as the extent to which an employee of an organization is committed to achieving the organization's objectives first from perspective of the organization. Employee performance in the Nigerian Civil Service can be defined as civil servants carrying out their duties as assigned by the civil service in order to achieve service delivery efficiency (Agba & Ocheni, 2017). Employee performance shows higher productivity and efficiency as a function of staff growth (Khan & Jabbar, 2013).

According to Chien (2015), a successful organization requires workers that are willing to go above and beyond their regular job scope and offer results that exceed goals' expectations. Employee performance is crucial for organizational effectiveness in today's increasingly competitive market (Aryee et al., 2014).

Theoretical Anchor

The theoretical framework presents the models that formed the bedrock of this research. For this study, Burke Litwin Model of Change was used for the theoretical framework and its purpose is to describe and simplify the process of change. The model, according to the authors, depicts "...the major variables that must be addressed in any attempt to forecast and explain an organization's overall organization output, the most critical interactions between these variables, and how they effect change." The external environment, transformational factors, transactional factors, and performance are the four groupings of elements that make up an organization (Olivier, 2018). The various aspects of the organization are then divided into groups.

The input to the organization, the external environment, and the organization's output, individual and organizational performance, are represented at the start and end of the process. The external environment refers to any external forces or conditions that may have an impact on the organization's processes.

The entire output of the organization is the individual and organizational performance factor. This can be expressed in a variety of ways, including turnover, productivity, and customer happiness. The Burke Litwin Organizational Change Model is focused on evaluating organizational and environmental elements that can be tweaked to ensure a successful transition (Rahimi, 2020). The external environment is frequently the most important factor that affects organizational transformation (Shaikh, 2020). As a result, organizations must alter and change their mission and strategy, as well as the culture and structure of their organizations. When it comes to dealing with change, the Burke Litwin Change Management Framework is useful. Its efficiency, however, is determined by how well each of the 12 dimensions can be identified. Organizational issues must first be diagnosed before a plan of action can be devised (Coruzzi, 2020). This necessitates determining which element group is responsible for the change. Then, within that element group, the specific element must be found and analyzed. After that, you can see how this has affected other elements. In this study, the drivers of employee performance were organisational culture, technological change, organisational leadership change and organisation structure.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to achieve its set objectives. The goal of descriptive research is to get a better understanding of phenomena, generate new insights, and develop a more focused research problem or hypothesis. Descriptive research is organized around clearly stated research problem. In this study, descriptive survey was used to collect quantitative and qualitative data on change management and employee performance.

The targeted population of this study were the employees of Abuja Electricity Distribution Company (AEDC), Nigeria. The Company has about 3494 staff. The power distribution company has a franchise used for the sales and distribution of electricity in Abuja, Kogi State, Niger State, and Nasarawa State.

This study adopted a stratified random sampling technique to select the respondents. Respondents were drawn from every category of the workforce. This means that an impartial sampling procedure was used, with each member or group of the population having an equal probability of being chosen. To arrive at a representative sample size, the study used Yamane (1967) method of computation to determine the sample size, Therefore, the sample size of this study was 364. The study used a structured questionnaire as the main tool for data collection. The questions were ranked using Likert scale where responses were measured from strongly agree to strongly disagree rank 1 to 5. There are three sections to the questionnaire: individual background, change management, and staff performance. The surveys were placed into a google form and filled out by the respondents to help manage resources (particularly time and money) and improve data quality.

In analysis of the data collected, descriptive and inferential statistics were used. Frequency distribution, means and standard deviation will be used in describing the respondents' personal profile and perception on study variables. Similarly, multiple regression analysis was used to test the study hypotheses.

Model Specification

Multiple regression analysis was used to ascertain the relationship between employee performance (dependent variable) and change management (independent variable). The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Decision rule was that if $p \geq 0.05$, the null hypotheses were rejected, otherwise accepted. The model was adopted from the work of Sinaga *et al.* (2018);

$\gamma = a + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + + \beta_5 X_5 + e$ … … … …... … … … … … … … (1)

As shown in equation 1, Y= Employee Performance. This dependent variable is assessed using five key proxies, namely; Operational performance, Customer service, Metering, Billing and Collection, and the Financial Performance of the company. Similarly, a= constant, while β_1, β_2, β_3, β_4, and β_5 were the *parameters*. The predictor variables are; X_1= Organizational culture, X_2= Technological change, X_3= Organizational leadership change, X_4= Organizational structure, and X_5= Employee compensation (Control variable).

DATA ANALYSIS

Effect of Organizational Leadership on Employee Performance

Table 1: The Extent to which Organisational Leadership Affect Employee Performance in Abuja Electricity Distribution Company

S/N	Organisational Leadership Change	SD	D	U	A	SA	M	Sdv.
1	Change in leadership has influenced employee performance in the organization	9	20	25	192	118	4.07	.91
2	Ethical leadership gives trust to employees in the organization	14	24	40	166	120	3.97	1.02
3	Change leadership gives a conducive working environment	23	78	33	123	107	3.59	1.28
4	A clear vision for organizations motivates for increased performance	21	69	36	151	87	3.59	1.20
5	Leaders in my organization have clear expectations for how employees should treat each other and our customers/ clients.	27	111	72	136	18	3.02	1.08
6	Leaders in my organization give employees the authority to make decisions and take actions to meet the needs and expectations	47	142	63	89	23	2.72	1.15
7	Leaders and managers in the organization give authority for decision making and actions for employee's efficient performance	13	23	32	200	96	3.94	.96

Source; Field Survey, 2021

SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, U= Undecided, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree, M= Mean, Sdv.= Standard Deviation.

The responses in Table 1 show the effect of leadership change on employee performance in AEDC. The result revealed that most of the respondents agreed that change in leadership has influenced employee performance in the organization (M=4.07>3.00) and that ethical leadership gives trust to employees in the organization (M=3.97>3.00). This research implies that employee performance is influenced by employee trust in leadership, especially when that leadership is sensitive to employee demands. Similarly, most of the respondents were of the view that change leadership gives a conducive working environment (M=3.59>3.00), and that having a clear vision for organizations motivates for increased performance (M=3.59>3.00). This outcome suggests that the company should take cognisance of the kind of people it entrusts leadership positions; this is because a responsive leadership can greatly motivate its subordinates to carry out their duties diligently.

Equally, it was agreed by the respondents that organization leaders have clear expectations for how employees should treat each other and their customers/ clients (M=3.02>3.00). Also, it was agreed that leaders and managers in the organization give authority for decision-making and actions for employees' efficient performance (M=3.94>3.00). However, they disagreed that employees are allowed to make decisions and take actions to meet the needs and expectations (M=2.72>3.00). This finding brings to fore the role of delegation of authority by leadership of the company and how such can boost employee performance.

Effect of Organizational Culture on Employee Performance

Table 2: The Extent to which Organisational Culture Affect Employee Performance in Abuja Electricity Distribution Company

S/N	Organizational Culture	SD	D	U	A	SA	M	Sdv.
1	The rites/rituals in my organization help the employees to embrace change introduced in the company	5	14	21	135	189	4.34	.86
2	The rites/rituals at my organization foster loyalty and commitment to change programs	2	2	19	191	150	4.33	.65
3	My organization culture encourages some input into decisions that affect my work.	13	51	34	188	78	3.73	1.09
4	The organizational norms at my organization are supportive of change initiatives at the company	9	29	45	200	81	3.87	.93
5	The organization values influence the behaviour of the staff at the organization	61	97	44	111	51	2.98	1.34
6	The rites/rituals at my organization facilitate conflict resolution arising from change initiatives	59	120	39	99	47	2.88	1.35
7	The culture has a positive impact on the changes that take place in the organization.	10	20	25	192	117	4.06	.92
8	The culture of the organization promotes hard work and striving for excellence.	16	23	39	161	125	3.98	1.04
9	organization sub-cultures in services affects Employee Performance	16	25	18	157	148	4.09	1.05
10	Change in our Organizational values influences Employee Performance	9	40	34	168	113	3.92	1.03

Source; Field Survey, 2021

SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, U= Undecided, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree, M= Mean, Sdv.= Standard Deviation.

The result of the extent to which organizational culture affects employee performance in Abuja Electricity Distribution Company is presented in Table 4.4. The result showed that most of the respondents agreed to the assertion that rites/rituals in the organization help the employees to embrace change introduced in the company (M=4.34>3.00), and foster loyalty and commitment to change programs (M=4.33>3.00). This finding infers that it is important for the company to define the way employees can complete tasks and interact with each other in an organisation; this can promote healthy competition, teamwork, and loyalty to the company. This will go a long way in promoting employee performance for the overall good of the company. This finding suggests that when beliefs and ethical values align with the company's objectives, they can prove to be effective in building teams because rapport and trust quickly ensue. The respondents also agreed that the organization's culture encourages some input into decisions that affect my work (M=3.73>3.00), and that the norms are supportive of change initiatives at the company (M=3.87>3.00). In the same vein, most of the respondents disagreed that the organization's values influence the behaviour of the staff at the organization (M=2.98>3.00), and facilitate conflict resolution arising from change initiatives (M=2.88>3.00). The respondents further agreed that culture has a positive impact on the changes that take place in the organization (M=4.06>3.00) as it promotes hard work and striving for excellence (M=3.98>3.00). Similarly, most of the respondents agreed that organization sub-cultures in services (M=4.09>3.00), and change in our Organizational values influences employee performance (M=3.92>3.00). These findings imply that there is the need for culture and management systems to be aligned, and that the management must redirect them so that employee behaviour results in the achievement of organisational goals.

Test of Hypotheses

Table 3: Regression Output

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Remark
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	2.911	.245		11.862	.000	Significant
	Employee compensation	0.077	.030	.072	2.581	.010	Significant
	Organisational culture	0.199	.036	.214	5.517	.000	Significant
	Organisational Leadership	0.171	.050	.198	3.431	.001	Significant
	Organizational structure	0.402	.035	.431	11.609	.000	Significant

Source: Field Survey Result, 2021

The research hypotheses were tested using the Multiple Regression Analysis statistical tool. The essence was to establish how performance is directly affected by organizational culture, technological change, leadership change, and organizational structure while using employee compensation as a control variable. This was introduced to ensure that extraneous variables are measured and their effects on other variables are removed. To determine the relative contributions of each of the four indicators of change management on performance at the company, their relative β-values and their corresponding p-values were established and the results are presented in Table 4.6. The result shows that all the explanatory variables were statistically significant in explaining variation in performance in AEDC. Specifically, organizational culture ($p=0.000<0.05$), organisational leadership ($p=.001<0.05$), and organizational structure ($p=0.000<0.05$) respectively. Testing of research hypotheses are as follow:

Research Hypothesis One: Organizational leadership has no significant effect on employee performance in Abuja Electricity Distribution Company.

In the same vein, the result showed that there was a significantly positive relationship between organizational leadership and performance in the company ($\beta = 0.171$; $p<0.05$). Thus, the null hypothesis which states that organizational leadership has no significant effect on employee performance in Abuja Electricity Distribution Company is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This finding suggests that organizational leadership has a positive and statistically significant impact on employee performance.

Research Hypothesis Two: Organizational culture has no significant effect on employee performance in Abuja Electricity Distribution Company. Furthermore, the result showed that there was a significantly positive relationship between organizational culture and performance in the company ($\beta = 0.171$; $p<0.05$). Thus, the null hypothesis which states that organizational culture has no significant impact on employee performance in Abuja Electricity Distribution Company is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This finding suggests that organizational culture has a positive and statistically significant impact on employee performance.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Change has been an ever-present component of organizational life as a result of increasingly complicated settings and frequently shifting external demands. For organizations to attain organizational objectives, change is imperative. In the Abuja Electricity Distribution Company, this study has established that some aspects of change management positively influence performance in the company. In specific terms, this study showed that performance in the company is positively influenced by Technological change, organizational restructuring, organizational leadership, and organizational culture. This implies a combination of these change management components can substantially enhance the performance of the company.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made to enhance performance;

i. Adequate training should be provided to employees when the change involves a shift in technologies or processes, to help employees master the new way of doing things.

ii. Before making changes in the company, there should be proper communication between the management and the affected personnel. This can help in clearing misgivings among the employees and provide clarity on the company's goals.

iii. The management of the company should initiate appropriate leadership changes that are based on work values, norms, ethics, and behaviours. These leadership changes initiated should be able to help to stimulate enhanced employee performance in the company.

iv. The company should ensure that changes are introduced in phases. This will help in ensuring that errors encountered during any implementation stage are corrected before the next stage.

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