
WHISTLEBLOWING AND EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY IN SELECTED PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined whistleblowing and employee productivity in selected private secondary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria. The research population was 193 staff of the selected schools. A sample size was 130 was determined using the Taro Yamane formula. The convenience sampling technique was adopted used to select the test units. A total of 130 copies of the questionnaire were administered on the sample elements. 115 copies of questionnaire were retrieved and used in the data analysis. The questionnaire was tested using the test-retest method. Regression analysis and Correlation analysis were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance and 95% confidence level. The study found that whistleblowing significantly affect employee productivity. The study recommends that management should encourage whistleblowing and ensure that whistleblowers are protected from victimization and harassment.

Keywords: Employee productivity, whistleblowing, private secondary schools

INTRODUCTION

Whistleblowing became a world trending topic after the disclosure of the cases of Enron, WorldCom, and other similar organisations. Besides, the role of whistleblowers in cases basically plays a big role in preventing and overcoming even dismantling corruption syndicates and in the end will protect the state from more serious losses or it can be said that the existence of whistleblowers plays a big role in uncovering corrupt practices that occurs in an institution both government agencies and private institutions (Khairunnisa et al., 2023).

Whistleblowing may be helpful to the organization even if it violates the norms and standards of the organisation. Whistleblowing is an example of constructive deviant behaviour. Furthermore, manufacturing companies are also encouraging there employees to take greater individual responsibility in tackling problems and identifying chances for growth. In fact many companies had suggested that proactive behaviour like; whistleblowing, creativity and pro social rule breaking should be adopted in improving employees' productivity (Danish & Muhammad, 2023).

In addition, Kim and Zhan (2023) observed that often times employees are faced with the challenges of conforming to the existing laid down rules in their discharge of their duties when the specific task at hand demand a creativity or innovation, therefore such employee find themselves in a dilemma between been a law abiding employee or deviant employee. Personal cost is the reason individuals do not summon the courage to report suspected violations or fraud because they assume that the reports they provide will not be followed up, will experience a reply, and management will not provide protection from threats of retaliation, especially in violations involving managers (Khairunnisa et al., 2023).

Virtually in every organisation, different types of scenario like fraud in the procurement of goods and services and the realization of the operational budget, normally occur. However, Boaheng and Arku (2021) discovered that employees are usually given protection as a whistleblower, but this has not been able to encouraging in disclosing unethical practices of fellow employee. Moreover, there are intentions and actions to uncover bad conduct carried out by employees because of the encouragement of commitment and integrity to the organization.

Okeke et al. (2023) affirmed that employee theft, fraud, and sabotage, as well as cruel pranks, impolite behavior, and bickering, have been suspected to be the fastest developing workplace deviant behaviors among employees of Nigerian organisations in recent times. Ndubuisi-Okolo et al. (2022) stressed that constructive deviant behaviors like whistleblowing can be an antidote that can used for improvement of employees' productivity. The major objective of the study is to examine the effects of whistle blowing on employee's productivity in Brain Builders Group of Schools. The study was guided by the following hypothesis:

HO₁: Whistleblowing has no significant effect on employee productivity in private secondary schools in Lagos.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is disclosure by organizational members, of illegal, immoral or illegitimate practices or conducts of colleagues, to persons or organizations that may be able to effect an action. Whistleblowing benefit societies when the process works effectively to correct wrongdoing (Philmore et al., 2017). It is thus considered as an important tool for increasing organizational effectiveness and sustainability. Therefore, ways to increase effectiveness of organizations by whistleblowing have been the subject of research since the 1990s. When managers fully understand the contribution of whistleblowing to organizational climate and productivity, they can harness it to foster organizational sustainability. They will tend to support internal whistleblowing, which will make employees see themselves as important elements in the organization. Thus, the correction of mistakes in the organization will be possible without harming anybody (Mehmet et al., 2019)

Whistleblowers play essential roles in exposing mismanagement and other wrongdoing that threaten organizational performance, financial integrity, human rights, the environment, and the organization norms. Whistleblowers often take on high personal risk. They may be fired, sued, blacklisted, arrested, threatened or, in extreme cases, assaulted or killed. Protecting whistleblowers from unfair treatment, retaliation, discrimination or disadvantage, can embolden people to report wrongdoing and thus increase the likelihood that wrongdoing is uncovered and penalized. Whistleblower protection is thus a key means of enhancing openness and accountability in government and corporate workplaces (Transparency International, 2018).

Employee Productivity

Employee productivity is broadly defined as the efficiency of a worker, and it is important for an organization (Ma & Ye, 2019). It estimates the individual contribution of each employee in an organization (Kihama & Wainaina, 2019). It is also the degree to which employees execute their duties and responsibilities and produce required volume or value of output (Okochi & Ateke, 2020). Employee productivity is a key factor used to evaluate human capital in organizations.

Cardy and Leonard (2004, as cited in Okochi & Ateke, 2020) conceive employee productivity as outcomes, results and accomplishments emanating from an employee. Employee productivity also represent results of behaviours and actions of employees that result to attainment of organizational goals. Employee productivity is hinged on ability and motivation (Okochi & Ateke, 2020). Employees' productivity is a consequence of motivation and ability to perform. This suggest that at least some amount of motivation is needed for employees to perform their tasks successfully.

Theoretical Framework

The study is founded on Social Information Processing Theory (SIPT) developed by Salancik and Pfeffer (1978, as cited in Tartan, 2019). SIPT posits that people observe their environment in order to look for hints to interpret their work surrounding and to interpret acceptable ways to act. Subsequently, ethical climates may be seen as a guidance to enable employees understand which behaviors are acceptable or unacceptable in the workplace (Tartan, 2019). In the whistle blowing context, SIPT becomes a framework for understanding individual whistle blowing behavior. When an organization's whistle blowing policies and procedures are considered fair, the employee's intention to disclose wrongdoing will increase. Whistle blowing is the right channel for delivering information for any violations (Near et al., 1993).

Empirical Review

Anuradha (2020) examined the status of constructive deviance in the Indian insurance industry. The study explored the acceptance of six diverse dimensions of constructive deviance (creative deviance, issue selling, whistle blowing, organizational citizenship behavior, pro-social role behavior, and extra role behavior), using survey research method. The sample size of 510 employees was drawn from different insurance companies, while data was collected with the aid of structured questionnaire. The study reported a healthy acceptance and perceptual preparedness for constructively deviant behavior. Variations based on demographical variables such as age, gender, experience, and educational qualifications, was also examined. The paper concluded that adequate investment in employees propels the laws of reciprocity, as establishments who have embraced and embedded constructive deviance in their culture will reap that which they have sown. The study was carried out among insurance companies in India neglecting other services oriented sector. The study should have expanded beyond insurance sectors in India.

Maulida and Bayunitri (2021) investigated how whistle blowing system prevented fraud. The study adopted exploratory research method and simple linear regression analysis was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of 43 employee from Jabar Banten Central Bank in Bandung. The study concluded that the application of the whistle blowing system has an effect on fraud prevention. The study was only carried out among employees of Central Bank in Bandung, thus the findings of the study cannot be generalized in other financial institutions in Bandung.

Ezeamama (2019) investigated the relationship between job satisfaction and employee productivity in Anambra State University. The study adopted survey research design, and the sample size consisted of 312 non-teaching staff of Anambra State University. Descriptive statistics was used to analysis the demographic characteristics while chi-square was used in testing the hypotheses. The study concluded that job satisfaction is not a contributor to the employee productivity in the public sector of Nigeria. The findings of the study cannot be generalized because, the sample size used for the study was only limited to non-teaching staff, neglecting the academic staff of the university of Anambra State University.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out using survey research design. The population of the study consists private secondary schools in Alimosho Local Government of Lagos State, which is the largest local government in Lagos State of Nigeria. According to 2006 Census, Alimosho Local Government has the largest population in Lagos State, with 1,288,714 inhabitants. This study focused on members of staff of the selected private secondary schools. According to the Human Resource Unit of these schools (2021), the total population of staff as at the time of conducting the research is 193, most of whom are teaching staff. The breakdown of the staff is shown in table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of Staff of the Selected Secondary Schools

Staff level	Frequency	Percentage
Management Staff	25	12.9
Teaching Staff	138	71.5
Non-Teaching Staff	30	15.5
Total	193	100

Source: Field survey, 2021.

In order to arrive at the appropriate sample size, the research employed the Taro Yamane formula for sample size determination. A sample size selected is 130 was determined. Further to this, the study adopted convenient sampling technique. Data collection was done using questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A solicited for information on respondent's bio-data, while section B focused on constructive and destructive deviant behavior and its effects on organizational performance in a private secondary school with six (6) point Likert -type rating scale for measuring data. The items had six-point scale of strongly agree, agree, partially agree, partially disagree, disagree and strongly disagree with corresponding value of 6, 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

The instrument was developed by the researcher through relevant literature reviewed. The test-retest method and the Cronbach's Alpha test were used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. The Cronbach's Alpha test produced a coefficient of .824, which according to Oyeniyi et al. (2016), is a generally acceptable score for all types of reliability. Regression analysis and Correlation analysis were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance and 95% confidence level. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23 aided the data analyses.

Analysis of Demographic Information of Respondents

Personal information of the respondents were analysed in this section and they contain information on the gender, age, marital status, educational qualification and working experience. The analysis of the demographic was done using percentages. This is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Demographic Information

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	87	45.2 %
	Female	106	54.8 %
Marital Status	Single	118	60.9 %
	Married	72	37.4 %
	Divorced	3	1.7 %
Age	0-30 years	52	27.0 %
	31-50 years	131	67.8 %
	51 years above	10	5.2 %
Education	OND/NCE	22	11.3 %
	HND/B.Sc/B.Ed	136	70.4 %
	PGDE/M.Sc/M.Ed	35	18.3%
Working Experience	0-5 years	60.4	31.3 %
	6-10 years	60.4	31.3 %
	11-15 years	44	22.6 %
	16 years above	29	14.8 %

Source: Field survey, 2021.

From the frequency distribution in Table 2, 45.2% of the respondents were males while 54.8% of the respondents were females, and hence, majority of the respondents were female. Also, 60.9% of the staff was married, while 37.4% were single and 1.7% was divorced, therefore majority of the respondents were

single. In analysing the age of the respondents, 27.0% falls within the age range of 0-30 years, while 67.8% falls between 31-50 yrs and 5.2% falls above 51 years.

In analyzing the level of education, 11.3% of the respondents were OND/NCE holders, 70.4% were HND/B.Sc/B.Ed holders, while 18.3% were PGDE/M.Sc/M.Ed holders, and hence, there is high literacy rate among the respondents. As regards the working experience, 31.3% of the staff had less than 5 years working experience, 31.3% falls between 6-10 years working experience, 22.6% ranged between 11-15 years and 14.8% falls between 16 yrs and above.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Table 3: Model Summary Table of Hypothesis One

Model Summary ^b						
Model	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.207 ^a	29.411	1	113	.000	1.812
a. Predictors: (Constant), WHISTLE BLOWING						
b. Dependent Variable: EMPLOYEE'S PRODUCTIVITY						

The model summary in Table 3 showed the extent at which whistle blowing significantly affect employee's productivity. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.207$) showed that 20.7% of the variation in employee's productivity is accounted for by whistle blowing significantly. In addition, Durbin-Watson (DW) showed autocorrelation that exist between the two variables. Thus, if DW is closer to 2.00, it showed that there exist no autocorrelation in the model.

Table 4: Analysis of Variance Table for Hypothesis One

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	18.058	1	18.058	29.411	.000 ^b
	Residual	69.380	113	.614		
	Total	87.438	114			
a. Dependent Variable: EMPLOYEE'S PRODUCTIVITY						
b. Predictors: (Constant), WHISTLE BLOWING						

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of Table 4 showed the variation of the regression model which was used to predict the dependable variable significance. This result was significant because the p-value (0.000) of the generated result was less than the level of significant (0.05) used for the study.

Table 5: Coefficient Analysis Table of Hypothesis One

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.271	.330		6.874	.000
	WHISTLE BLOWING	.422	.078	.454	5.423	.000
a. Dependent Variable: EMPLOYEE'S PRODUCTIVITY						

$$EP = 2.271 + 0.422WB$$

An evaluation of the unstandardised coefficient of whistle blowing in the coefficient analysis of Table 5 and its associated p-value showed that whistle blowing ($\beta_{WB} = 0.422$, $p < 0.05$) was statistical significant and it can be used in predicting employee's productivity. This implied that for every unit increase in whistle blowing, employee's productivity increased by 42.2%. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected while

the alternate hypothesis was accepted. In view of this, whistle blowing significantly affect employee's productivity.

The result of test of hypothesis has shown that there is significant positive effect of whistleblowing on employee productivity. This finding is in tandem with the findings of Maulida and Bayunitri (2021), who investigated the influence of whistleblowing system toward fraud prevention, and found out that whistle blowing system affected fraud prevention by 54.3%. The finding is also in line with the findings of Rustiarini and Merawati (2020) which examined whistleblowing as an effective control mechanism for detecting fraud. The study showed that employee who experienced fair organizational justice (distributive, procedural, and interactional) have higher whistleblowing intentions than employees in unfair conditions.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that whistle blowing significantly affect employee's productivity, that reporting of an employee for wrong doing had an effect on employee performance, while such reporting staff tends to get motivated, it was also concluded that that whistle blowing should be encouraged within the organization, and the interest and personality of the whistleblower should be protected against victimization and harassment.

In view of the above, management should encourage whistleblowing and but discourage destructive deviant behaviors. Furthermore, organizations must create enabling environment to encourage whistleblowing. Also, management must protect the identity of the whistleblowers so as to protect them against victimization, harassment and emotional trauma from a reported staff. In addition, management should reward whistleblowers so as to encourage whistleblowing in the organization, this reward could be monetary or non-monetary.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Every research has several limitations associated with it. As a result of this, some limitations were identified in course of the research.

- i. The study examined whistleblowing and employee productivity in secondary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria. Future research should be extended to other States in Nigeria.
- ii. Data for this study was gathered using questionnaire, which may have biased responses. Future research should adopt interview, so as to get more insight on the interplay between whistleblowing and employee productivity.

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