

Behavioural School of Management and Performance: Interrogating its Application in Manufacturing Firms, Kogi State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The theoretical postulation of management serves as an instrument for effective application of management practices across the globe to both public and private firms. However, the pivotal role of human element of organization cannot be over-emphasized considering the critical role it plays in pursuance of firms' immediate and strategic objectives. This study on the Behavioural school of management is carried out to examine the practical application of Behavioural school of management on performance in West African Ceramics limited Ajaokuta, Kogi State. The study was induced by the quest and curiosity to ascertain the extent in which the Behavioural school of thought distilled with employees' attitude as a segment of management philosophy is being applied in the company and how this theory has been able to enhance the performance measured with employees' efficiency. The study empirically reached respondents using a structured interview where both the management, senior and junior employees of the company were interviewed and findings revealed that the application of Behavioural school of management have been able to enhance the performance of the company and strongly recommends that such be sustained in the company while periodic review be carried out so as to meet up the perpetual expectations resulting from global dynamics with the view to continuously meeting customers' expectations.

Keywords: Behavioural, School, Management, Performance,

Introduction

The practice of management is as old as man, management thought and philosophy could be traced back to the ages BC though its application varies and improves over time and magnitude. The use of behavioural sciences has been specifically evidenced right from the Hawthorne experiment and there has been an increased interest in this area and thus the application of this evolved into modern behaviorism. The term modern behaviorism is the current stage of evolution of the behavioural school of management that gives primacy to the psychological considerations but displays the fulfillment of emotional needs as the major variable of accomplishing other primary economic goal of firms (Ekong & Lashinde, 2016; Edna & Samson, 2021). The Behavioural school of management thoughts and philosophy is measured in the company through employees' attitude distilled with job satisfaction, workplace policies, management of workplace conflict whereas, firm performance is measured with employees' efficiency distilled with average time for completion of tasks, cost of completing assigned tasks, number of assigned tasks as well as response rate of task by employees' timely information for completion of assigned tasks. There have been several scientists who contributed to the organizational humanism in modern management theory. These scientists include Abraham Maslow, Douglas McGregor, Rensis Likert, Chester Benard, Mary Parker Follet etc. (Sarbapriya & Shita, 2011, Gitahi & Maina, 2015, Chukwuma, 2016, Nzewi & Audu, 2023). These scientists had rigorous orientation in social sciences.

However, Nedeiko and Potocan (2016) argued that the philosophical ideology to which the behavioural sciences are anchored extend to the modern organization. Though, it is worth to note that there is integration of other management philosophical views but other behavioural school of

management has played a significant role in achieving both immediate and strategic objectives. This is evidenced in West African ceramics Limited Ajaokuta, Kogi state where the management exhibits the behavioural anchored philosophy in pursuing its goal through which its workforce behavioural pattern is enhanced owing to critical study and influence of their behavior. In addition, the Behavioural school of thought extends to the marketing philosophy which contributes to the general performance of the firm.

Statement of the Problem

Management philosophies and postulations serve as roadmap toward firms' immediate and strategic objectives. Thus, management as the hub of any organization considering its significance role in its quest toward the utilization of human, material and information resources (Ofoegbu & Onouha, 2018, Malik & Audu, 2023). Thus, management plays a pivotal role not only in business climate but also extends to social and political terrain.

However, for firms to effectively utilize these human, material and informational resources for the immediate and strategic benefits of the firms there is need to properly adopt management thoughts, philosophies and postulations but adoption of the thoughts and postulations varies in magnitude, time and environment. Regrettably, most firms in developing nations particularly in West African Ceramics Limited Ajaokuta Kogi state uses blanket application of these theories without considering the uniqueness and peculiarities of the environment. Therefore, even though the application of these theories especially the Behavioural school of management thought enhances employees' morale it specifically the bahavoural school of management measured with employees' attitude but is still unclear how the domestication of this theory in West African Ceramics Limited Ajaokuta enhances employees performance and how such leads to efficiency. To this end, this research examines how application of Behavioural School of management enhances employees' performance.

Objective of the Study

To determine whether employees' attitude enhances efficiency in West African Ceramics Limited, Ajaokuta, Kogi State, Nigeria

Research Question

Does employees attitude enhance efficiency in West African Ceramics Limited, Ajaokuta.?

Scope of the Study

The research which examines the application of management thoughts and philosophy and how it enhances employee performance. The study specifically covers the Behavioural School as the independent variable and decomposed with employees' attitude while employees' performance as the dependent variable is decomposed with efficiency. In addition, the study covers the manufacturing firms and specifically, West African Ceramics Limited Ajaokuta, Kogi state and the period covered is ten years that is, between 2014 to 2013. The time frame is adequate enough to objectively examine employees' performance through the effective application of Behavioural School of management thought and philosophy.

Significance of the Study

This study upon completion will be of utmost significance to the manufacturing sub – sector in Nigeria particularly West African Ceramics Limited Ajaokuta Kogi State as the findings and recommendations borne out of the research will help the firm to have an in-depth understanding of the application of the Behavioural school of thought towards improved performance.

More so, the empirical, practical and theoretical outcome of this research will contribute to the body of existing literature thus, members of the academia will find this research area valuable as such will not only provide relevant literature but would contribute in meeting their intellectual curiosity especially as it concerns this subject area.

In addition, the findings and recommendations of this research will serve as a policy blueprint for government in vigorously pursuing the economic and social objectives of improved performance through breeding and sustaining employees' motivation because this will serve as an avenue to reinvigorating manufacturing sub-sector through the policies and programmes that would be borne out of this research.

Practical evidence of Behavioural School of Thought in West African Ceramics Limited

The study is anchored on empirical interaction and report from the managing Director of the company as well as other critical stakeholders such as customers, host communities and the government. From the reports it revealed that employee's behavioural pattern is anchored on variables such as the economic variables, social variable, demographic, psychological and political dimensions. These variables play a significant role in influencing employees' behavior which greatly enhances their performance. The management reported that the behavioral pattern of their employees is greatly influenced through employees' attitude distilled with job satisfaction, workplace policies, management of workplace conflict whereas, firm performance is measured with employee's efficiency distilled with average time for completion of tasks, cost of completing assigned tasks, number of assigned tasks as well as response rate of task by employee's timely information for completion of assigned tasks. Specifically, the following components of behavioural school of thought such as:

Nedeiko and Potacan (2016), Sanyal and Hisam (2018) and Torukwein (2021) noted that management of employees are greatly influenced through economic benefit such as salaries and wages, fringe benefits, allowances and other forms of monetary and non-monetary incentives. They revealed that the employees perform and behave better when they introduce new economic incentives or enhance the existing ones. According to the report this seems to influence the employees geometrically and there are always greater economic returns in form of profitability, increased sales and customers' patronage because economic incentives do motivate them to do better and behaves well by displaying better commitment towards their tasks. This finding could be aligned to the finding of Olusegun etal, 2018 and Uzo, Shittu and Meru (2018). This implies that an economic benefit greatly enhances employees' Behaviour.

The interaction with management of the company revealed that the employees' behavioural pattern is greatly influenced through social variables ranging from allowing the employees to form social group, team and giving them the freedom to interact freely as well as choosing work group willingly. According to the report this greatly influences their behavior thereby improving their output such as minimizing conflict, improved social interaction as well as group and inter-group dynamics in the

company. The management noted that through this there have been less supervision as well as high level of intuitiveness by the work team in carryout their functions. This finding is linked to the Maslow hierarchy of needs and specifically, the social needs as she stipulates in the pyramid.

The empirical evidence from the interaction with both the management, senior and junior employees of the company it revealed that the behavioural pattern of employees is greatly influenced by the demographic variable which is demonstrated on the population pattern as well as its distribution. The demographic variables include the employees' age distribution, marital status, gender, religion etc. This greatly influences the behavioural pattern of employees at the company and it affects their performance (Owhorji & Moses, 2018, Uchenna & Audu, 2021; Uchenna & Audu, 2022).

They further noted that for example, the age distribution of employees influences their behaviour in the sense that they relax when new task is introduced or when there is need to acquire an innovative skill towards better performance compared to the aged who sometimes sees this move as were witch hunt. More so, an unmarried employee feels relax when transferred to another section especially where closing late or doing overtime may not be avoidable as compared to a married employee who may interpret same as a way of separating them with their spouses and all these greatly influences their behavioural pattern in the work place. This finding could be aligned to the finding of Suleiman *et al*, 2018. This implies that demographic variables greatly enhance employees' behaviour.

The psychological component of behavioural school entails the emotional or psychodynamic dimension of employees and how such positively or negatively affects their performance. The management revealed that an employee inner attributes greatly influences their behavioural pattern and this comes to play when it comes to the way they perceive things and how such either positively or negatively affects their behaviour. Thus, the employees are perceived as a psychological being and this is anchored on their behavioural disposition either as individual or groups. This finding could be aligned to the finding of Noel *et al*, 2007. This implies that psychological variables greatly enhance employees' Behaviour.

The management of West African ceramics Limited Ajaokuta, Kogi state revealed that the political influences of employees greatly affect their behavioural pattern in the work place. They noted that some employees exert high level of political influences either on their superior or subordinates and this affects their behaviour. Thus, through this, their performance is influenced thereby leading to improved customer creation, customer retention and improved profitability. This finding could be aligned to the finding of Usoro and Udongwo, (2018). This implies that a political component greatly enhances employees' Behaviour.

The Study Area in Focus

West African Ceramics Limited is located in Ogura village behind Niger Bridge in Ajaokuta Local Government Area of Kogi State. The company is one of the major leading indigenous manufacturers of quality ceramic tiles in Nigeria. The company Group Executive Director is Alh. Lawal Idris and the company was established in 1995 with the name Royal Ceramics which specializes in the production of Porcelain, Vitrified and Glazed tiles in west Africa. The West African Ceramics Limited, Ajaokuta, Kogi State is the third largest Ceramic factory in Africa which produces Royal ceramic floor tiles, royal wall tiles, VIT porcelain vitrified tiles and royal roofing tiles of global standard. The company has workforce of over one thousand employees which cut across both management, senior and junior categories. Ajaokuta local government area was created from the old Okene local government area of Kogi State on 27th August, 1991. Ajaokuta local government area

has total landmass of 1,088 square meters. The local government headquarter is Adogo and it is bounded to the North East by Lokoja the State capital, Bassa Local Government to the North West, Ofu local government to the East and South / West by Okene and also Adavi local government areas. The total population of Ajaokuta local government area according to 2006 population and housing census is 97,904 and Ajaokuta is located in the tropical zone. More so, rainy season starts from April through October while dry season starts from November to April. The local government area has three political districts of Ajaokuta, Eganyi and Ebiya. The local government area also has a total of ten political wards while its paramount first-class ruler is Olu of Adogo. The major occupation of the people of Ajaokuta are farming, fishing, blacksmithing. The area has experienced rapid industrial development with the gigantic Ajaokuta steel company limited, West African Ceramics Limited and Geregu power station respectively. More so, as a result of the presence of these companies, strategic location and proximity to Lokoja the Kogi state capital the area has four commercial banks such as United Bank for Africa, Union Bank of Nigeria, First Bank of Nigeria and Ecobank.

Perspective of Management Thought and Philosophy

Management as noted by Usoro and Udongwo (2018) is an applied technique is closely related to several fields such as economics, psychology, sociology as well as political science. The history of management thought can be divided into six phases: the early influences, the scientific movement, the management process approach, the quantitative or management science movement, the human relations/behavioral science school and the systems school.

Ancient records in China and Greece revealed the significance of organization and administration, but do not give more insight into the principles of management. In the periods between 1400 to 1450, merchants in Venice, Italy, operated various types of business organizations, for example, partnerships, trust and holding companies. The Romans effectively used many basic management ideologies such as the scalar principle and delegation of authority. Concepts of the ideal state were also considered by many 16th century writers like Machiavelli, Babbage and Thomas Moore. The industrial revolution of 1780 changed and expanded the pattern of this style of administration and classification because businesses grew larger and more complex which brought about the emergence of another school of thoughts in which the behavioural school of thought is inclusive. The Behavioral School is more interested in the application of findings of social psychology and sociology for the purpose of understanding organizational behavior for management of problems. This theory deals mostly with employees' satisfaction, morale and productivity.

The system approach indicates a primary interest in studying the entire circumstances and relationships rather than organization segments. Thus, it pays attention to the identification of all functions pertinent for the achievement of organizational objectives. More so, with the passage of time, these management thoughts and concepts have been discussed, analyzed and reduced to the form of theories by scholars, to serve as essential tools and guide for a clearer understanding of management thoughts and concepts. Basic among them are the (a) Classical theory, (b) Behavioral theory (c) Decision-making theory, (d) Bio- mathematical theory (e) System theory and (f) Contingency theory. However, this study focuses mainly on the behavioural school of thought (Ekung, Lashinde, 2016., Ekung, Ekanem & Ibang 2016 & Ekung & Lashinde, 2018). Hence, the behavioral theory recognized the influence of people on organizational activities. In other words, the presence of people in an organization is bound to result in goals and expectations which can be at variance with that of the organization. This implies that it is possible for a person or group to act at variance with the organization's objectives.

Nature and Characteristics of Management

Management is an activity concerned with guiding human and physical resources such that organizational goals can be achieved. Nature of management as it relates to the behavioural sciences are described thus:

Management is Goal-Centred: The success of any management activity is assessed by its achievement of the predetermined immediate and strategic objectives. Therefore, it can be deduced that management is a purposeful activity. It is a tool which helps use of human and physical resources to fulfill the pre-determined goals. Adeniyi and Olusola (2014) revealed that this goal centeredness could be anchored on the economic, social or psychological dimension of behavioural sciences as practiced in West African ceramics limited Ajaokuta, Kogi state. For Instance, the goal of an enterprise is maximum customer satisfaction by producing quality goods and at reasonable prices. This can be achieved by employing efficient persons and making better use of scarce resources.

Management integrates Human and Material Resources: In every organization, be it public or private, profit or non-profit, the human elements work with non-human resources such as machines, materials, assets, buildings and so on. Through this approach management therefore integrates human efforts to those resources. It brings harmony among the human, physical and financial resources. Thus, Ofoegbu and Onouha (2018) and Torukwein (2021) this approach is evidenced at the company and such relates to the economic and social components of Behavioural School of thoughts since such integration portrays to very large extent economic benefits and the interactions exhibit the social dimension of the behavioural school of management thought.

Management is Continuous: Management is a systematic process which involves continuous handling of problems and challenges. It is concerned with identifying the problem and taking appropriate steps to solve it. For example, the target of the company is high returns through customers' satisfaction thus, in achieving this target various policies have to be initiated and pursued but this is not the end. There is need for an aggressive marketing for this policy hence considering the dynamic nature of customers' perceived value it can be noted that this is an ongoing process.

Management is all Pervasive: Management is required in every kind of organizations be it religious, political, social, cultural or businesses because it aids and directs various efforts towards a definite purpose. Thus clubs, hospitals, political parties, colleges, hospitals, business firms all require management. The moment there are more than one person that are engaged in working for a common goal, management becomes necessary. Considering the nature of transaction carried out by the company it can be concluded that the social, political and economic components are evidenced through their practices.

Management as Group Activities

Management is very much less concerned with individual's efforts. It is more concerned with groups and inter- group dynamics. Akpor-Robaro (2018) noted that it involves the use of group effort to achieve predetermined goal. Therefore, considering the fact that the company adopts the behavioural school of management it has been striving through this approach and the study can conclude that the social and political components are clearly evidenced here.

Management as both Science and Art

Management is both an art and a science. It is considered as a science because it has an organized body of knowledge which contains certain universal fundamentals. It is also called an art because

effective managing requires certain skills which are personal possessions of managers. Thus, science provides the knowledge while art deals with the application of knowledge and skills. Hence, for a manager to be successful in his profession he must acquire the knowledge of science as well as the art of applying it. Therefore, Owhorji and Moses (2018) management is a judicious blend of science as well as an art because it proves the principles and the way these principles are applied which is a matter of art. Science teaches to 'know' and art teaches to 'do'. The old saying that "Manager are Born" has been rejected in favour of "Managers are Made". It has been aptly remarked that management is the oldest of art and youngest of science.

The activities of the company are anchored on both the application of science and art as a management tool thus, one can conclude that science is the root and art is the fruit since the behavioral pattern of employees are both chronicled on scientific philosophies as well as a well-articulated application of intuitiveness in the day-to-day operations of the company in the pursuance of its immediate and strategic objectives.

Employees Performance

Employees' performance is seen as the degree to which firm's goal is being attained through employees' effort. Ochi (2016) noted employees' performance is evaluated on the basis of performance target and its attainment that firm's success can be effectively measured. Thus, employees' performance requires adoption of management control mechanism through which the actual employees' output is measured against initial objectives being set through job analysis.

Again, Sarmad *et al* (2018) noted that employees' performance is multidimensional which is being influenced by several internal and external variables. However, to effectively measure employees' performance Samad *et al* (2018) concludes that several score card such as efficiency, outputs, responsiveness and timeliness is adopted as the performance of firms. Specifically, employee efficiency is measured as efficiency distilled with average time for completion of tasks, cost of completing assigned tasks, number of assigned tasks as well as response rate of task by employee's timely information for completion of assigned tasks (Samad *et al* 2018).

Therefore, Performance Jiya (2016) argued that performance of business enterprise which largely depends on the employees refers to the degree of an output of firms' activities as it relates to their growth, volumes of sales or profitability Thus, it means that performance largely guarantees the survival of manufacturing firms and particularly West African Ceramics Limited Ajaokuta, Kogi state.

Research Methodology

Research Design and Method of Data Collection

This research is an ethnographic study, ethnographic study sought to investigate Behavioural school of management and how it enhances employee's performance. Therefore, ethnography involves a qualitative methodology which is valuable in studying the social interactions, belief system and behaviours of small groups and involves participation and observation over a period of time. Ethnographic studies have made great strides in illuminating various social and Behavioural practices of groups of persons and in this particular situation the employees of West African Ceramics Limited Ajaokuta, Kogi State.

To this end, this study adopted interview and participant observation as methods of data collection. Therefore, in order to adequately explore how employees' performance can be attained through application of the Behavioural School of thoughts, interview and participant observation was adopted. During the interview, the researcher introduced the subject of investigation and requested the participant(s) to respond by describing the extents of their workplace Behaviour through application of Behavioural school of management probing and how such influences their efficiency. Additionally, the researcher adopts narrative data analysis in analyzing the data collected. In the view of Breheny and Stephens (2015), people sometimes shape the reporting of experiences as stories and narrative analysis structures the accounts of the storytellers in ways that give meaning to the experiences of the storytellers. This method of analysis was focused on using the stories and experiences shared by people to answer research questions. This method gave the researcher the opportunity to elicit relevant information bordering on employee attitude as well as efficiency through the application of management thoughts and philosophy.

Discussions of Interview

This section centres on the qualitative analysis of interview conducted with management and other employees of West African Ceramics Limited, Ajaokuta, Kogi State and officials of the union in the company. Oyibo and Asawo (2020) noted that the essence of conducting interview is to obtain relevant data from respondents. Again, while analyzing this data reports of participant observation shall be used to consolidate the report.

The employees engaged on interview responded to several questions put forward before them. On the questions on whether they are satisfied with their jobs they responded that they are satisfied but there feel there are areas which require improvement in order to boost their level of satisfaction. Furthermore, on the question on whether workplace conflicts are effectively managed, they responded: most of the interviewee responded as: *workplace conflict is not adequately addressed to my satisfaction therefore, much needs to be done about that*. From my observation too, most of the issues leading to workplace conflict in the company are economic related matters so, much is still required if industrial harmony should be sustained.

Additionally, on the question on whether workplace policies are employees friendly, most of the employees responded that the policies are sometimes skewed towards favouring the management staff. From my observation too, the employees at the middle and lower level seems not to have been favoured in terms of policies relating to employees training, fringe benefits and retirement plan. This is not sustainable for survival of any firm hence such needs to be addressed immediately. Again, for the question on whether the respondents have access and timely information about their tasks, most of the respondents agreed that they have adequate access to information about their tasks and responsibilities considering the fact that there are stipulated job descriptions where their tasks are routinely stipulated. Though, from my observation, this kind of work arrangement is good but not sustainable as if such routine job schedule is prolonged for a very long time the employees would be bored and fatigue could come in. To this end, it is more sustainable if these tasks are periodically reviewed with the aim of ensuring that the employees are given more challenges tasks. Additionally, in other not to allow the respondents to be judge on their own matter by asking them to respond on matters relating to their performance (efficiency) most of the questions bordering on employee's efficiency at most management, middle and lower levels such as average time of completion of tasks, cost of completing tasks, number of tasks assigned as well as response time were masked. The essence of masking these structured interview question items was to enable the researcher obtain a

reliable response devoid of informant bias. Therefore, most of the interviewees were responding to the questions without necessarily knowing they were doing so. After the collation of their responses, the researcher consolidated their responses with personal observation and the findings shows that though the performance of these employees were not too adequate but it is not low however, there are room for significant improvement with the view to enabling the firm to meet the stiff competitiveness in the manufacturing sub-sector.

Conclusions

This study has been able to examined management postulations, thoughts and philosophy and how its application enhances performance in West African Ceramics Limited Ajaokuta, Kogi state. The study has been able to explore how the theoretical dimension of management specifically how Behaviouralism enhances employee efficiency. Therefore, this research concludes that employees' Behaviour could be exhibited through job satisfaction, effective management of workplace conflict, initiation and implementation of workplace policies, access and timely information to employees relating to their tasks. The study concludes that the Behavioural School of thoughts enhances employees' efficiency.

Recommendations

This study which is fundamentally centred on the practical application of the behavioural school of management thought in West African ceramics limited Ajaokuta, Kogi state is a practical based study as the study engaged all relevant players of the firm to enquire and obtain indepth reports of its application and how such propels the achievement of the company's core objective. From situation reports and findings the study revealed and concludes that behavioural school is an important aspect of management though and philosophy. This is because employees are important element of organization considering its pivotability and resourcefulness. Thus, it is pertinent to embrace employees to perpetually strive to improve their performance towards greater output. This study has also been able to present empirical evidence of how behavioural school greatly influences performance in West African ceramics limited Ajaokuta, Kogi state through improved customers satisfaction, customers' retention and profitability. It is hope that this management school of thought will be institutionalized towards continuous improvement to meet customers' satisfaction.

Contribution to Knowledge

To the best of the researchers' knowledge this is the first ever research that has been conducted on how Behavioural school of thoughts can be applied towards enhancing performance in this company West African Ceramics Limited, Ajaokuta, Kogi state. This study also provides an articulated insight on how the Behavioural factors can be implemented integrated effectively amidst the socio-economic and demographic burdens being experienced in Nigeria and Kogi state in particular. Finally, though, there are literature on Behavioural school of thoughts but there is dearth of literature on how this theory can be applied practically to enhance firm performance while even though there are very few studies on Behavioural school of thoughts literature is still lacking on the domestication of the application of this theory in the Nigerian business environment thus, this study has significantly contributed to knowledge.

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