

## EXAMINING FACTORS AFFECTING EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE:

### A CASE STUDY OF NIGERIAN PRIVATE SECTOR

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### ABSTRACT

The primary objective of this research paper is to examine the factors that affect employee performance. How employees behave in the workplace is an outward expression of their job satisfaction. According to a popular belief, “a happy workforce is a productive workforce”. A satisfied employee would foster a workplace culture, allowing the company to perform better. As a result, employee performance has become a popular research subject. The study's basic issue is to look at how certain variables affect work satisfaction and ultimately performance. It considers leadership, employee motivation, organizational culture and working environment to assess an employee's attitude, which leads to positive and effective employee performance. It also looks at why workers stay and leave the company, as well as the most satisfying occurrence of an employee's time at the company. The population of the study is employees in the Nigerian private sector. Data were obtained from three employee classes in the private sector, including Professionals, Managers, and Non-managers, through a field survey using a questionnaire and was analyzed using SPSS version 20.0. The hypotheses are developed based on previous research and a conceptual model of the study is proposed. The research is meant to contribute to the existing work to express the factors affecting employee performance in the Nigerian private sector.

**Keywords:** Employee Motivation, Employee Performance, Employee Satisfaction, Organizational Efficiency

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Employee performance has gotten a lot of recognition of late because it lets a company maintain a strategic advantage over its competitors in the same industry. Employee productivity has a huge impact on a company's performance. Employee performance is critical to meeting organizational targets and being prosperous (Edirisooriya, 2014). The study covers the factors affecting employee performance in the Nigerian private sector. Leadership, employee motivation, organization culture and working environment were used as independent variables to see how they affect employee performance, which was evaluated in terms of effectiveness, consistency, competitiveness, and

timeliness. For an organization to achieve a high degree of efficiency improvement, a fully satisfied labor force is an utter requirement. Worker satisfaction motivates them to put in more effort in their employment, and they work harder as a result. Individual employees' productive and effective results are nevertheless critical to the company's overall success. As a result, in order to maintain high organizational performance, every corporation puts a high emphasis on individual employee achievement. Employee performance is a key factor in deciding how well an individual performs (Edirisooriya, 2014).

The background of this phenomenon begins from the idea that employees play a significant role in achieving an organizational goal, so human resources are seen as a competitive tool in every organization. As a result, it's critical to pinpoint the factors that drive workers to achieve their objectives (Edirisooriya, 2014). Declining employee efficiency in Nigerian private tertiary institutions among others is quickly becoming a significant danger to the private sector's viability, and it must be resolved immediately. Performance is a term that is objective and can be defined as the ratio of output volume to input volume. In other words, it is a reflection of how effective production inputs like capital, resources, and labor are used in an enterprise to generate a given output. The study was carried out with the needs of Nigerian private sector organizations in mind. The performance of any employee regardless of their type of job or individual designation is essential in addition to the overall achievement of organizational objectives. Organizations must create a framework that provides a conclusive atmosphere for their workers when working through their current resources in order to improve employee efficiency (Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, Muhammad Rehan, Anum Fatima & Samina Nawab, 2017).

The number of Nigerian universities is growing and is becoming a pressing issue, particularly among academics. Nigerian universities are currently a major focus in terms of employee performance. Employee performance has recently received a lot of attention from the perspectives of transparency (Christopher Hood and David Heald, 2006), managerial accountability (Broadbent, J. and Laughlin, R., 2002), performance measurement (Ferreira, A. and Otley, D. , 2005), and managerial control (Anthony J. Berry, Jane Broadbent, David Otley, 2005).

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Dependent Variable**

#### ***2.1.1 Employee Performance***

Performance is often measured solely in terms of output or the attainment of measurable objectives. Regardless, people's performance is determined not only by what they achieve but also by how they achieve it. The definition of performance in the Oxford English Dictionary includes the phrase "carrying out": "the accomplishment, execution, working out of anything ordered or undertaken." High performance is achieved through appropriate behavior, particularly discretionary behavior, and the effective application of required knowledge, skills, and

competencies. It's also the positive relationship between activity and outcome. Performance is a multi-dimensional concept. On the most fundamental level (Walter C. Borman and S. M. Motowidlo, 1993), make a distinction between task and contextual performance. Task performance refers to an individual's ability to perform activities that contribute to the organization's technical core. This contribution can be either direct (as in factory workers) or indirect (as in service workers) (e.g., in the case of managers or staff personnel). Activities that support the organizational, social, and psychological environment in which organizational goals are pursued but do not contribute to the technical core are referred to as contextual performance. Contextual performance encompasses not only behaviors such as assisting coworkers or being a trustworthy member of the organization but also making recommendations for improving work procedures.

Employee performance has long time been a crucial topic in the concept of human resources. Organizational managers have always been concerned about employee job performance (Hamireza Rrezaei Kelidbari, Morad Rezaei Dizgah, Azim Yusefi, 2011). Similarly, employee performance is a key building of an organization, and therefore, the organization has to critically examine aspects that justify high performance for its success (Yaqoob, Qaisar Abbas and Sara, 2009). According to Lee, et al. (2011), job performance is defined as the total work performance of the workforce to perform the expected value and complete tasks within a timeframe in a study titled: "The effects on job marketing, job satisfaction, and service attitude" among high-tech workers.

Globalization has brought many changes and challenges to both the private and public sectors all over the world, and Nigerian private universities among others are no exception. Even though there are some vehement debates about the benefits and drawbacks of such changes, effective employee performance monitoring becomes a necessity. However, because employee performance in the Nigerian private sector is deteriorating, the creation of a policy that can deliver success and development to jointly address and deliberate for higher employee performance for their respective institutions is required. A list of the determinant factors that influence an employee's job performance can be found in the literature. According to some researchers and practitioners, certain factors have a positive or negative impact on employee performance, both individually and collectively. These are detailed below.

## **2.2 Independent Variables**

### **2.2.1 Leadership**

For the single word "leadership", many scholars have different definitions. Leadership is the ability of an executive to direct, guide, and influence the behavior and work of others in order to achieve specific objectives in a given situation. A manager's ability to instill confidence and zeal in his or her subordinates is referred to as leadership. Leadership is defined as the ability to influence a group's achievement of a common goal. Leaders must create a future vision and inspire members

of the organization to want to achieve it and improve performance (Iqbal N, Anwar S. & Haider N, 2015). Adair defines leadership as “the ability to persuade others to enthusiastically pursue defined objectives” (Adair John, 2003). It is the human factor that brings a group together, improves their performance, and guides them toward their goals. Armstrong (2006:299) in his book defined Leadership as the ability to persuade others to change the behavior of their own volition. Team leaders' job is to complete the task assigned to them with the help of the rest of the group. As a result, leaders and their followers are interdependent. Leaders have two primary responsibilities. They must first complete the task. Secondly, they must maintain effective relationships with themselves, the group, and the individuals who make up the group. These relationships must be effective in the sense that they are conducive to completing the task.

Transformational and transactional leadership have been found to have a strong link to employee performance among the various types of leadership (Avolio, B. J., Bass, B. M., & Jung, D. I., 1999). The transformational leadership style was first articulated by Burns (1978), and it was later developed as a leadership theory in organizations by Bass and Avolio (1990). According to Burns (1978), transformational leaders inspire their followers to exceed expectations by providing support. Transformational leadership, according to Eeden, Cilliers, and Deventer (2008), is concerned with the development and performance of followers as well as directive leadership. Transactional leadership has become increasingly important in recent decades, alongside transformational leadership. Transactional leadership is a subsection of transformational leadership, according to many researchers' works, both are linked to the success of the organization. Transactional leadership, according to Robbins (2005), is a type of leadership in which leaders use rewards and punishment to manage their followers. It is a type of managerial leadership in which the principal focus of the leader is on defining roles and task requirements (Dubrin, A. J., 2004).

This work established the vital connection between the leadership styles and their effects on employee performance. It is right to say an effective leadership style would create a conducive working environment that aids job satisfaction and eventually enhance the employees' performance. It is therefore paramount for every organization to review its leadership style regularly in order to maximize the organizational performance.

### **2.2.2 Employee Motivation**

Motivation is defined by Megginson et al. (1992:420) as "the process of inducing an individual or a group, each with distinct needs and personalities, to pursue not only the organization's objectives but also personal/group objectives." Motivation is crucial because even people with the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities will underperform if they are not motivated to put in the necessary time and effort (Milapo, 2001).

According to Jobber (1994), motivation is a key determining factor of job performance, and a low-motivated workforce is costly in terms of high staff turnover, increased expenses, low morale, and increased use of management time. As a result, management must understand what motivates their

employees to avoid misallocating resources and creating employee dissatisfaction. Motivation also has a positive effect on individual and group performance, which has an effect on organizational performance (Varma, 2017). According to Denton (1991), a motivated workforce will increase management and employee understanding, acceptance, commitment to implementation, understanding of objectives, and decision-making. Employee motivation can be achieved through a variety of methods, including monetary incentives, profit sharing, employee benefits, and non-monetary incentives. You can agree with me that positive employee motivation drives job satisfaction and the outcome is high employee performance and vice versa. When employees are positively motivated, it increases morale and satisfaction. A highly motivated employee is unlikely to leave the organization, the results are high performance, increase productivity and organizational success.

### **2.2.3 Organizational Culture**

Organizational culture is the set of key assumptions that all members of an organization share, which are often unstated. Organizational culture refers to a set of common, stable characteristics that define an organization's uniqueness and set it apart from others (Getachew, 2020).

According to Schein (2004), organizational culture is a set of shared fundamental assumptions that a group has learnt how to resolve external adaptation and internal integration problems and has proved to be enough for new members to be taught how to perceive these problems, think them and feel them correctly. Organizational culture is regarded as a cognitive phenomenon at its most fundamental level: the "collective programming of mind" (Hofstede, 1980) and "the fundamental assumptions and beliefs shared by members of an organization which operates unconsciously" (Schein, E.H., 2004). According to Detert (2000), even though organizational culture may reside in the collective minds of organizational members, it manifested itself in the organization in tangible ways, such as behavior. Employees' mindsets that differentiate them from one another, both inside and outside the organization, are referred to as organizational culture. This includes the employee's values, beliefs, and behaviors that differ from those of the other organization (Hofstede, 1980). Beliefs are preconceived notions about the reality that are formed and reinforced over time. Values are presumptions about ideals that are desirable and worthwhile. Organizational cultures, or the fundamental ideology that underpins a culture, include values as a component. Mohammad, Uddin, Huq, and Saad (2013) conducted another study on the impact of organizational culture on employee performance and productivity and found a positive correlation between a strong culture and improved performance. As a result of this research, organizational culture appears to have a positive impact on employee job performance.

### **2.2.4 Working Environment**

The working environment can be classified into two parts: physical and behavioral. The physical environment is made up of elements that pertain to the ability of office occupants to physically connect with their office environment. These have a connection to their workplace. The behavioral environment is made up of elements that link to how well office occupants connect with one

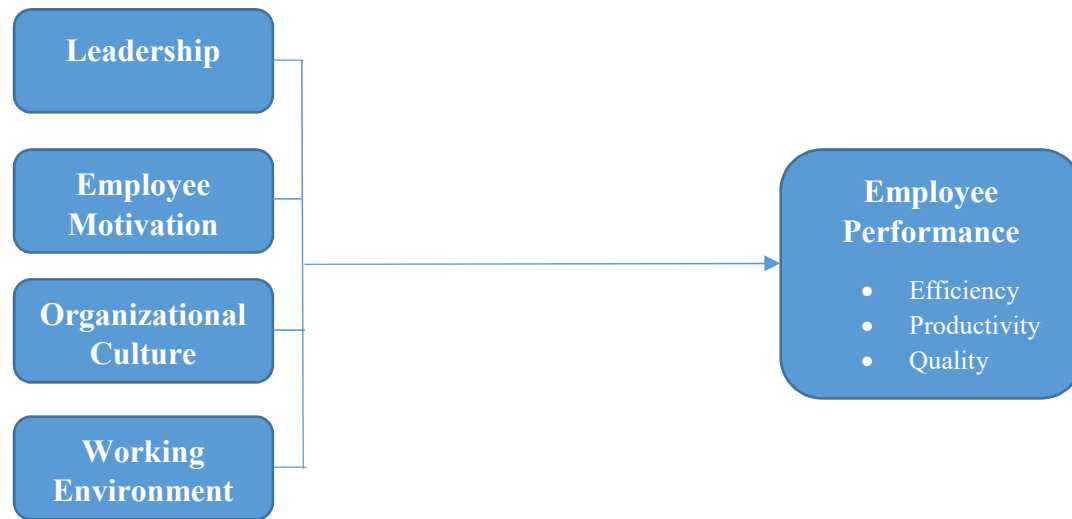
another, as well as the impact the office environment might have on an individual's behavior (Getachew, 2020). Many academic papers have concentrated on the intrinsic aspect of job satisfaction. According to the findings, there is a positive relationship between the work environment and intrinsic job satisfaction.

They also discussed the context dimension of job satisfaction, which includes both physical and social working conditions (Abdul Raziq & , Raheela Maulabakhsh, 2015). According to Spector (1997), most businesses overlook the working environment within their organization, which has a negative impact on employee performance. According to him, a good working environment includes employee safety, job security, good relationships with coworkers, recognition for good performance, motivation to perform well, and participation in the company's decision-making process. He went on to say that once employees realize how important they are to the company, they will feel a strong sense of commitment and ownership for their workplace.

Human resource executives must consider new strategies for attracting and retaining the best-fit talent for their organizations. Higher pay and benefits may appear to be the most effective way to attract employees. In contrast, the physical work environment can have a significant impact on a company's ability to recruit and retain talented employees. Some aspects of the workplace environment, among other things, can have a positive or negative impact on employee engagement, productivity, morale, and comfort levels. You will agree with me completely that if workplace conditions and environment could influence job satisfaction, the same will in no doubt affect the employee performance. In other to bring out the best in employees, they need to be happy doing what they are doing.

### **2.3 Conceptual Framework**

Among many factors that influence employee performance as reviewed in the literature, this research project is self-motivated and self-initiated in terms of leadership, employee motivation, organization's culture and working environment. The facts are drawn from reliable information sources such as books, journals, articles, government records, and previous research on the same topics. The researcher developed a Research Framework for analysis of the four independent variables (factors) significantly affecting employee performance, as illustrated below.



**Figure 1:** Proposed conceptual framework

## 2.4 Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are developed in order to examine the factors affecting employee performance derived from the literature findings:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Leadership has a significant positive effect on employee performance.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Motivation has a significant positive effect on employee performance.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** Organization's culture has a significant positive effect on employee performance.

**H<sub>4</sub>:** Working environment has a significant positive effect on employee performance.

## 3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research used a quantitative method of data collection, which consisted of a questionnaire that was administered to a variety of respondents. According to Bhatti and Sundram (2015), a quantitative study is a method of estimating statistics using mathematical techniques and measurement, with the results of the analysis representing numbers that better clarify the proposed solution to a specific research issue. A total number of 300 responses were received from the respondents, which included professionals, managers, and non-managers. The research employs (SPSS) for data analysis and reliability testing. Through circulating questionnaires to respondents, a probability sample design using randomized random sampling is used. Probability sampling, according to Greener (2008), is a method that uses random sorting to ensure that any single unit of the population has a chance of being selected. As a result, questions for measuring the variables were adopted from previous studies. The study used Koopman's (2014) employee performance

measurement with sixteen items including 'I managed to plan my work so that it was done on time' and 'I kept in mind the results that I had to achieve in my work'. The study also used Bass and Avolio's (1992) leadership measurement, with nine items including 'You are allowed to bring new ideas to the organization' and 'The organization is led according to its set vision'. The study also adopted Denison & Neale's (1997) organization culture measurement with ten items including 'Decisions are made at the levels where the right information is available' and 'Information is widely shared so that employees can get the information they need'. The study adopted McKinsey Quarterly's (2006) employee motivation measurement, with six items including 'I feel a sense of personal satisfaction when I do this job well' and 'My opinion of myself goes down when I do the job badly'. The study used the working environment measurement of Gobi (2012) and Chandran (2005), which contains ten items including 'I gain personal growth by learning, the management appreciates my suggestions and leadership'. The measurement was based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly disagree'.

#### **4.0 ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS**

According to the response rate, the study shows that staff between the ages of 30-34 make up the majority of the workforce (32.3%). This could be because management is looking for young people who will be able to provide efficient and effective service that will aid in the achievement of the organization's targeted vision and mission and on the other hand, (8.0%) of the workforce are aged below 24 years old. This could be the effect of the low employment rate of the young graduates. As a result of the age distribution, the organizations have staff with sound minds and young ages who are capable of performing their assigned tasks effectively and efficiently, thus improving the organization's performance.

#### **4.1 Reliability Test Result**

In this study, Cronbach's Alpha was used as a measurement tool to test and evaluate the reliability of the data measuring each variable. The degree to which items in a set or questionnaire are positively correlated to one another is measured by reliability. Nunnally (1978) proposed that research instruments should have a reliability of 0.70 or higher. A reliability value of less than 0.70 is considered weak, while a reliability value greater than 0.70 is considered high. Table 1 below shows the results of measuring the Cronbach's Alpha value for the variables.

**Table 1: Summary Reliability Test**

| Variables | Number of Items | Number of Items deleted | Cronbach's Alpha value |
|-----------|-----------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| REP       | 16              | none                    | 0.934                  |
| RL        | 9               | none                    | 0.823                  |
| REM       | 6               | none                    | 0.823                  |
| ROC       | 10              | none                    | 0.891                  |
| RWE       | 10              | none                    | 0.902                  |

**Source:** Own survey generated by SPSS version 20.0, June 2021

#### 4.2 Normality of the Data

The null hypothesis was tested using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests in SPSS version 20.0, with the assumption that the sample data was obtained from a normally distributed population. Both normality tests yielded p-values < 0.05, indicating that the data in the population was not normally distributed. As a result, the null hypothesis of normality is rejected. See Table 7 below.

**Tests of Normality**

|                      | Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup> |     |      | Shapiro-Wilk |     |      |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|-----|------|--------------|-----|------|
|                      | Statistic                       | df  | Sig. | Statistic    | df  | Sig. |
| Employee Performance | .136                            | 300 | .000 | .931         | 300 | .000 |
| Leadership           | .107                            | 300 | .000 | .964         | 300 | .000 |
| Employee Motivation  | .134                            | 300 | .000 | .931         | 300 | .000 |
| Organization Culture | .123                            | 300 | .000 | .941         | 300 | .000 |
| Working Environment  | .110                            | 300 | .000 | .940         | 300 | .000 |

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

**Source:** Own survey generated by SPSS version 20.0, June 2021

#### 4.3 Validity (Factor Analysis)

The researchers used factor analysis to figure out how the individual items or constructs contributed to the overall variance in the dataset. To determine whether the dataset was a good fit for factor analysis, the data was first tested using KMO and Bartlett's test. The criterion used was that KMO values that are greater than 0.7 are considered suitable for factor analysis, while KMO values less than 0.7 are not. The KMO results showed a value of 0.958, indicating that the factor analysis was a good fit. See Table 3 below.

### KMO and Bartlett's Test

|  |                    |           |
|--|--------------------|-----------|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. |                    | .958      |
|  | Approx. Chi-Square | 10807.571 |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity                    | df                 | 1275      |
|  | Sig.               | .000      |

a. Based on correlations

**Source:** Own survey generated by SPSS version 20.0, June 2021

The total variance explained by the constructs was determined using the Principal Axis Factoring (PAF) Extraction method based on Eigenvalues of 1.0. A total of 8 factors were extracted based on the findings, with a total variance explained of 56.828%. See Table 10 below.

## 5.0 HYPOTHESES TESTING (DATA ANALYSIS)

### 5.1 Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression was used to test the research hypotheses by determining how individual variables showed a statistically significant positive relationship with the dependent variable (employee performance), as opposed to Pearson correlation, which simply tells whether there is an association between the independent variable and the dependent variable. Model summary, ANOVA, and Coefficients were three different types of regression statistics that were obtained. The regression model explained 81.2% of the total variance (R Square = .812), with Adjusted R Square explaining 80.9% of the total variance, according to the model summary results. This is a strong model. See Table 4 below.

#### Model Summary

| Model | R                 | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Durbin-Watson |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| 1     | .901 <sup>a</sup> | .812     | .809              | .32576                     | 1.867         |

**Source:** Own survey generated by SPSS version 20.0 June, 2021

a. Predictors: (Constant), Working Environment, Leadership, Employee Motivation, Organization Culture

b. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

ANOVA results were also significant at .000 with  $F = 318.338$ . The ANOVA statistic was significant ( $p < 0.0005$ ), the value indicates that the model's prediction is strong. See Table 5 below.

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

| Model |            | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F       | Sig.              |
|-------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|---------|-------------------|
| 1     | Regression | 135.131        | 4   | 33.783      | 318.338 | .000 <sup>b</sup> |
|       | Residual   | 31.306         | 295 | .106        |         |                   |
|       | Total      | 166.438        | 299 |             |         |                   |

**Source:** Own survey generated by SPSS version 20.0, June 2021

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Working Environment, Leadership, Employee Motivation, Organization Culture.

Furthermore, the regression analysis' Standardized Beta Coefficients were used to test individual variable hypotheses. For instance, the results revealed that  $\beta$  (leadership with employee performance) = .150;  $p = .005$ ;  $\beta$  (employee motivation) = .391;  $p = .000$ ;  $\beta$  (organization culture) = .190;  $p = .022$ ;  $\beta$  (working environment) = .206;  $p = .007$ . See Table 6 below.

**Coefficients**

| Model |                      | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | t     | Sig. |
|-------|----------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|
|       |                      | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |       |      |
| 1     | (Constant)           | .160                        | .108       |                           | 1.482 | .140 |
|       | Leadership           | .171                        | .061       | .150                      | 2.800 | .005 |
|       | Employee Motivation  | .384                        | .071       | .391                      | 5.376 | .000 |
|       | Organization Culture | .196                        | .085       | .190                      | 2.301 | .022 |
|       | Working Environment  | .208                        | .077       | .206                      | 2.719 | .007 |
|       |                      |                             |            |                           |       |      |

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

**Source:** Own survey generated by SPSS version 20.0, June 2021

**6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Employee performance has been a popular subject among the scholars around the world because of its significant importance. In this important subject area, however, very little research has been done in the Nigerian context. This study adopted a quantitative approach to research the key factors affecting employee performance in the Nigerian private sector and data was collected among the three employee classes in the private sector, including Professionals, Managers, and Non-managers. The study focused on leadership, employee motivation, organizational culture and

working environment. Data were obtained from selected private companies' employees, including schools, hospitals, banks, insurance and many others. SPSS version 20.0 was used to analyze these data. The results showed that all the variables selected have significant and positive effects on employee performance in the private sector in Nigeria. This implies that people who are not satisfied with the conditions of their jobs are more likely to quit their job or perform lesser than expectations and vice versa. Management must play an active role, not only in determining and facilitating the physical environment of the workplace but also in altering the management style for its employees. Supervisors should reduce their proclivity to micromanage and instead demonstrate that they have faith in their team members' abilities and trust them to complete their tasks efficiently. If the supervisor recognizes his subordinates as professionals, there is no reason why they would not act in that same manner. Such an attitude fosters employee trust and loyalty, as well as better teamwork. They also develop a sense of belonging to the organization. The creation of a productive working environment is critical to increased profits for the corporation, organization and small business. Management leaders determine exactly how employee productivity can be maximized by means of two main areas of focus: personal motivation and the work environment infrastructure that influence employee performance.

### **6.1 Managerial Implications**

The results of the study will provide valuable evidence to improve HRM practices in the private sector in Nigeria. The current findings of this research will, for example, help the private sector such as health human resource departments, and bank human resource departments among others to implement strategies that will improve the performance of their staff. Based on the findings of this study, the Government and policymakers can also use HRM policies to enhance employee performance in the general public sector. In other to improve performance, management can consult with employees before making decisions to solicit their input. In other to correct this, management must encourage employees to try new methods and experiment with creative ideas, which will improve their performance. As most employees are not satisfied with the monetary benefits, the company's management needs to take this seriously and try to provide additional pay based on years of experience and to improve their physical environment. The management must investigate employees' complaints and complaints about observable phenomena influenced by emotions or personal prejudices.

### **6.2 Theoretical Implications**

The results of this study will help to strengthen the various theories and models used to explain employee performance. This includes, among others, the Expectancy Theory of Motivation and Herzberg et al.'s model for Job Satisfaction: Hygiene Factors and Motivation Factor.

### 6.3 Recommendations for Future Research

It is recommended that further research is carried out. Further research should consider expanding the current study to improve sampling, explore various variables of research and conduct the research in various private sector institutions so as to create parallel results that validate current findings. In order to examine the current research issue in detail, future researchers can also apply a mixed-mode methodology (quantitative and qualitative).

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