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Grievance Management and Employee Performance of Public Universities in Anambra State

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Abstract

This study examined grievance management and employee performance of selected public universities in Anambra state which is the focus of this study. This work was anchored on the Stakeholder Engagement Theory. The survey research design was adopted by the study. The population of the study consisted of all the non-academic staff of the State university (COOU) and Federal university (NAU) in Anambra State put at 9098, 5673 from NAU and 3425 from COOU. The sample size of the study is 383 which was arrived at by using the Taro Yamane formula. The primary source of data was used for data collection and the type was structured questionnaire which was validated using face and the content validity, while the reliability was ascertained using a split-half reliability technique. The data was analysed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and hypotheses was tested at a 5% (0.05) level of significance. Findings revealed that there is a statistically significant positive relationship existing between collective bargaining and employee morale in the selected universities in Anambra State (r = .918; p-value < 0.05) and that there is a statistically significant positive relationship existing between open door policy and employee commitment in the selected universities in Anambra State (r = .887; p-value < 0.05). Following this, it was concluded that indeed, grievance management has a statistically significant relationship with and employee performance of public universities in Anambra state. Among others, it was recommended that the school authority and the FG need to learn to obey agreements reached through a collective bargaining process and to

encourage more of agreements to be reached through collective bargaining as it will improve the moral of the employees in the selected universities in Anambra State.

Keywords: Grievance Management, Employee Performance, Collective bargaining, Employee Morale, Open Door Policy and Employee Commitment

INTRODUCTION

No organization is immune from issues of grievance, they occur in every workplace due to the presence of disagreement, dissatisfaction and unhappiness, and handling them properly is important for maintaining a harmonious and productive work environment (Gomathi, 2014). The way grievances are managed will determine how harmonious the working relationships in an organization will be, and these working relationships can make or mar an organization. Obiekwe and Eke (2019) state that the need to maintain a harmonious relationship in the workplace is very important as it has implications on employee morale and commitment, organizational effectiveness, employee retention and organizational productivity. This is because, employees play a very critical role in making sure the universities, such as the ones in Anambra State actualize its mandate of graduating students who are the present and future manpower of both the local and global economy.

These employees may be from different backgrounds, culture, different age, educational qualification and different race with different belief systems. When they come into the university system, they form different groups based on similarity of departments or job specification, hence, the formation of different groups like, Academic Staff Union of Nigeria Universities (ASUU) which is the umbrella body representing the Teaching staff of the universities, Non Academic Staff Union (NASU), and Senior Staff Association of Nigeria University (SSANU) which is the umbrella body representing the Non-teaching

staff of the universities. Majority of the junior staff belong to NASU, while the senior staff belong to SSANU. Though this work concentrated on Non Academic Staff Union (NASU).

The formation of groups in the university makes for unionism in the system, which is a pertinent part of the work system to help employees fight for their rights as a group rather than as individuals. Trade unions are essential tools in employer-employee relationships that maintain the balance of power, stop member abuse and victimization, and also work to improve living conditions for its members (Bakare, 2021). The primary source of power for the workforce is its unions and this ability can help organizations' employees find solutions to their difficulties. Adeniji and Adekunjo (2010) opine that they function as a pressure group, and their actions or inactivity may lead to confrontation with the employer. The products of union activities account for a large portion of pay increases in Nigeria as well as allowances and bonuses.

Universities are known to be a place where manpower for economic building is produced, and universities in Anambra State are no exception. Hence, harmonious working relationships between and among staff are important, this is also true for good relationships between workers and management or government. Grievance as it relates to universities could arise as a result of dissatisfaction and feeling of unfairness by employees. Any sort of conflict or unfairness encountered by employees at work is referred to as a grievance (Sharma, Chaturvedi & Limaye, 2021). It reflects discontent or dissatisfaction or a feeling of injustice experienced by employees at work (Melchiades, 2013). These grievances or dissatisfaction could arise as a result of a myriad of issues in an organization; it could be as a result of broken promises, salaries, working conditions as it is the case with many struggles of NASU, and work hours. When an employee believes the collective bargaining agreement has been broken, they can file a grievance (Sharma, Chaturvedi & Limaye, 2021).

Employee grievances concern the contract, work rule or regulation, policy or procedure, health and safety regulation, prior practice, unilaterally altering cultural norms, individual victimization, wage, and bonus (Gomathi, 2014). Obiekwe and Eke (2019) posit that grievances arise out of poor or wrong interpretation, administration or alleged violation of the general or specific terms of the collective agreement between management and labour, and unfulfilled expectations from the organization. Whatever the cause of grievance in an organization, the handling of it needs to be a top priority by the management and other people involved, this is because a poorly managed grievance could lead to a host of issues, including strike actions as being witnessed always in the public universities in Anambra State. This, therefore, brings forth the concept of grievance management.

Grievances management deals with all that is put in place to address grievances in the workplace. That is, the active handling of all grievances arising from work relationships. Gomathi (2014) opine that grievance management is all about how well grievances are addressed. The handling of grievances also called grievance management as suggested above is an essential tool in today's diverse work environment, as a result of the roles it plays in enhancing competitiveness, performance and commitment of employees. Monish and Dhanabhakyam, (2021) explain that currently, grievance management is considered a veritable tool in the management of talent and employee retention and workplace justice dynamics.

Employees are the bedrock of most organizations, especially service organizations like universities. This is because, the performance of such organizations is hinged on the exclusive performance of the employees, hence, handling grievances appropriately in universities like those in Anambra State could go a long way in enhancing the performance of workers in the institutions. Succinctly capturing this position, Ume and Agha (2020) point out that employees are the major valuable assets of an organization in which without them, it will be hard to realize its basic objectives, hence, the need to handle the grievance they encounter.

Over the years, the public universities which are the focus of this study have been bedeviled with incessant industrial actions arising from the non-implementation of agreements reached by the workers union and the government. Most notable is the agreement between the FG and ASUU in 2009 which has not been implemented in full and its renegotiation has also been stalling for a long time. There are also issues of agreement reached with the non-teaching staff and their unions (SSANU, NAAT and NASU) being reneged by the government also leading to grievance between the unions and government. However, there also exist grievances internally between management of the universities and members of the unions, which may have led and still lead to poor performance of the workers and the universities at large. The style of grievance management and the seeming lack of open door policy in the university system also appear to breed grievances in the institutions leading to poor morale and commitment of workers and increased intention to leave or switch from non-academic to academic staff. It is against this backdrop that this study was necessitated to examine grievance management in selected universities in Anambra State with a view to ascertain the role it plays in influencing the performance of staff in the universities.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to examine grievance management and employee performance of selected universities in Anambra State. Specifically, the study seeks to:

a) Determine the length of relationship that exists between Collective bargaining and Employee Morale in the selected universities in Anambra State.
b) Ascertain the extent of relationship that exists between Open Door Policy and Employee Commitment in the selected universities in Anambra State.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Grievance Management

Grievance management has become a top concern for many right-thinking executives and executives in our modern business world, as organisations that want to get the most out of each of their employees must be able to maintain a harmonious management-labour relationship that is critical to organisational sustainability, achievement, efficiency, and improvement (Ebeguki et al., 2019). Management within the context of grievance has to do with effective and efficient handling of grievance issues before they spiral out of control. It is a conscious effort to see that those employees who are genuinely aggrieved for one reason or the other get listened to and the problem fixed as quickly as possible.

Grievance management is the handling of employee complaints or dissatisfaction through a formal grievance handling system (Nakayenze, Galukande-Kiganda & Karyeija, 2021). So, whenever formality is brought into the handling of grievance, it becomes a managed grievance. It's a strategy devised by a company to address any real or perceived source of dissatisfaction or injustice that an employee may feel about his or her job, such as company management regulations and procedures as well as external issues (Reiss, 2012; Caroline & Vermijs, 2017).

Grievance management to a great extent is a part of personnel management as captured by Obiekwe and Eke (2019) who explicate that grievance management is an essential part of personnel management. They went further to explain that it is the management process of handling the grievance that occurred in a workplace more productively. The sole aim of managing grievances is to reduce the negative tendencies of unhandled grievances. This was the position of Salamon (2010) who state that with the management of grievance, the negative impact of grievance in the organization is reduced to the barest minimum and that it turns grievance into a win-win situation for the aggrieved parties.

Collective bargaining

Collective bargaining is a style of managing grievance, and just like the name implies, it deals with the collective need and presentation of same to the employees. That is, it is a style whereby the employees come together as a group to present a common front and negotiate as one. It helps the employee to negate the power of the employers over the employees when they (employees) negotiate independently. Poole and Warner (2001) opine that with collective bargaining, the undue advantage that employers have over employees is countered, and hence, helps employees to collectively negotiate or make their demands, and in so doing, force the employees to negotiate reasonably.

Collective bargaining is the institutional process by which union workers and their management or employers negotiate intending to determine the appropriate terms and conditions of workers' employment (Obiekwe & Eke, 2019). It is the process through which agreement between management and workers is reached with regards to wages, working hours and working conditions of employees at the organization (Poole & Warner, 2001; www.mywestford.com, 2016). The striking point in these definitions is that collective bargaining as it has to do with employers and employees, must be about conditions of service. It cannot be about anything outside of the workplace. And so, things like wages and salaries, scheduling and hours or frequencies of work predominate the collective bargaining process. Accentuating this point further, Obiekwe and Eke (2019) assert that it is a process of negotiation between employers and a group of employees aimed at agreements to regulate working salaries, working conditions, benefits, and other aspects of workers' compensation and rights.

Collective bargaining is most desirable to employees because it makes them present a common front to the employers and makes them appear stronger as against appearing weak if they are to negotiate as individuals. With collective bargaining, the interests of the

employees are commonly presented by representatives of a trade union to which the employees belong (Obiekwe & Eke, 2019).

Open Door Policy

The communication pattern embedded in an organization goes a long way in resolving grievances or prolonging them. Central in this communication pattern is access. Access to the company leaders, access to managers and leaders and access to those saddled with the responsibility of settling grievances. An open door policy is a system where access is not restricted, a situation where the door is open literarily for anyone or any group who has one work-related issue or the other to come and complain and get redress when and if possible.

Open door policy refers to an organization's communication policy in which top management encourages openness and transparency from the employees of the organization by granting them unlimited access to the top management offices for them to make their complaints or contribute ideas which they believe will help to move the organization forward (Obiekwe & Eke, 2019). Francis (2018) opines that an open door policy enables workers to approach the executives, owners or top managers and discuss issues affecting them. The issues that may be discussed could be issues such as job performance, co-worker conflicts, innovative ideas for business improvement and company policies. The policy encourages effective communication between the employee and the management. It also eliminates room for rumours, confusion and ambiguities when the employees directly interact with their superiors (Obiekwe & Eke, 2019). In addition, it makes for healthy interactions at the workplace and helps the workers to seek the assistance of their employers and also freely interact on issues bothering them as individuals and as groups.

With an open door policy, cooperation among or between employees and employers is assured because it helps in eliminating hearsays or having to rely on the grapevine for information. Juneja (2018) asserts that the policy fosters an environment of cooperation

and respect between the senior management team and employees because each of the groups will know where they stand on any issues, which is sacrosanct for improved working relationships and better performance.

Employee Performance

Organizations are dependent on the performance of employees to achieve their goals, this is even more so for service-rendering firms like institutions of higher learning. Employee performance deals with the way and manner employees discharge their duties in the workplace. However, the way they discharge their duty is dependent on certain things, one of which is the state of mind of the employees, and this state of mind is influenced by how happy or sad they are with the organization and its processes and procedures. Although there are many factors which can influence the work performance and productivity in organizations, grievance deals directly with workers and all concerning their working environment (Melchades, 2013).

When the grievances felt by employees are handled appropriately, it could give a fillip to better performance of employees in the workplace. But when the reverse is the case, this could be disastrous for the organization. This was succinctly captured by Akanji (2005) who posits that grievance handled professionally leads to positive performance, while grievance managed haphazardly heats up the work environment to bring about dislocation and polarization of the entire group with reduced productivity, low job performance and ultimately employee attrition. Obasan (2011) states the consequences of a poorly managed grievance are enormous, hence, management is duty bound to resolve grievances appropriately for the sake of increasing organizational performance. Obasan (2011) further posit that the outcome of a properly managed grievance is good communication, time management, good cooperation, increase corporate productivity and human capital retention.

When a good grievance management procedure is in place, the organization is more likely to experience high employee morale, commitment, the opportunity for reconciliation, and harmonious management-employee relations which is a vital necessity for improving organizational performance (Obiekwe & Eke, 2019). If grievances are ignored or handled incorrectly, Aboagye and Benyebaar (2012) suggest, they have a detrimental influence on motivation, morale, and management-labour relations, as well as a negative impact on the organization's efficiency. Furthermore, some firms have been unjust in their processing of grievances and have failed to consider how this has impacted employee morale, methods in addressing employee grievances, and how this has impacted organisational performance (Salau, Adeniji, & Oyewunmi, 2014). If the grievances are not resolved promptly, it may lead to frustration among employees (Sharma, Chaturvedi & Limaye, 2021).

Employee Morale

The performance of employees is critical to the survival of most organizations, especially service rendering firms, and their performance is contingent on many things, their morale, which is their state of mind and dispositions is a critical influencer of their performance. Employee morale on the other hand is contingent on so many things, and the way disputes are resolved is a key influencer of the morale of workers. Succinctly capturing the place of grievance management in the whole dynamics of influencing workers' morale, Obiekwe and Eke (2019) opine that unless the individual performing the job feels he is being fairly treated in the way his grievances are handled, his morale will be adversely affected, which will invariably affect the productivity of the organization, and hence, needs to be tackled with the seriousness it deserves.

Grievance management styles do not only affect the morale of the employees, but it also dovetails in affecting the productivity, effectiveness and efficiency of a firm. This was the position of Juneja (2018) who explicates that when grievance occurs and is not handled with the required seriousness, the productivity of such an organization will nosedive.

Similarly, Danku, Apeteley, Aboagye and Benyebaar (2015) posit that when grievances are left unhandled or improperly handled, they have a profound influence on motivation, morale, management-labour relationships and negatively affect the performance of the organization.

Organizations need employees with high work morale to be able to accomplish set goals, unfortunately, grievance mismanagement lowers it. Grievance lower employees' morale and efficiency, and when unattended to, result in frustration, dissatisfaction, low productivity, lack of interest in work and absenteeism (Juneja, 2018). However, when the reverse is the case, it influences the attitude and behaviour of employees and boosts their morale, thus ensuring they are committed to work and perform maximally (Ume & Agha, 2020).

Employee Commitment

One of the most studied concepts that influence the performance of employees is employee commitment. This was the submission of Adebayo (2006) when he averred that employee commitment has become one of the most popular work attitudes of interest to practitioners and researchers. This is a significant role it plays in influencing not just the performance of the employees but also that of the organization at large. This point was accentuated by Dixit and Bhat (2012) when they opined that it has been argued that organizations cannot be at their best until staff are committed to the organizational goals and objectives. Firms depend on committed employees to create and maintain competitive advantage and achieve superior performance (Akintayo, 2012). It plays a major role in determining the success or failure of organizational activities (Ume & Agha, 2020).

Effective grievance management could be a trigger for better-committed workers. It helps in removing dissatisfaction among the employees and ensures that after their grievance redressals, employees are more committed to the organization (Dhanabhakyam & Monish, 2022). In the management and behavioural science literature, employee commitment is a

key factor in the relationship between individuals and organizations. Many organisations identify and stress the significance of employee commitment as a vehicle for delivering a competitive edge over others by retaining key talent with the organisations (Brian & Christopher, 2011).

Conceptualization of the Relationship between the Variables.

Collective Bargaining and Employee Morale

The morale of the employees could be affected or influenced by many factors, one of such factors is how grievances and conflicts are handled in the organisation. Being high-handed and not taking the feelings and concerns of the employees into consideration while settling grievances could demoralise the workers, while the opposite approach could make the employees work with high morale. With the collective bargaining approach which gives everybody the opportunity for a fair hearing, where the employees are represented by their leaders, employees are assured of their concerns being heard, and so, boosts their morale.

Open Door Policy and Employee Commitment

Handling grievances in the workplace is a daunting task, however, open door policy helps the course of an organization and its management a great deal and this influences the commitment level of the workers to the organization. This is because it allows workers to express themselves directly to management without passing through bureaucratic bottlenecks. This was the position of Francis (2018) who avers that with the open door policy, employees can easily approach the management of their firms, owners or top executives to discuss issues as they affect them. This approach eliminates the chances of a grapevine method of communication and gossip. Obiekwe and Eke (2019) aver that it reduces rumor-mongering, confusion and ambiguities in the system, thereby making management and owners know what employees want and employees also knowing what

management and owners want from them, this builds confidence in the system and improves commitment

Theoretical Framework

This work is anchored on the Stakeholder Engagement Theory propounded by Freeman (1984). According to the Stakeholder Engagement Theory, managing the interactions between organisational managers, employees, and the general public that the organisation serves throughout the life-cycle of the firm is crucial to achieving organisational deliverables. That is, how effective the organization handles its stakeholders goes a long way in determining the long-time viability of the firm. When actions are taken jointly with the employees, such actions enjoy the support of the workers, and more often than not, thrive. Researchers and practitioners of the theory emphasize the "jointness" of interests upon which all corporate value creation depends.

According to Freeman (2009), taking stakeholder interests into account while making managerial decisions enables better consequences for all stakeholders since it recognises that stakeholder interests are joint. The other stakeholders will either stop supporting that stakeholder or attempt to establish another network of stakeholder value creation if that stakeholder pursues its interests at the expense of the others. As a result, involving stakeholders and stakeholder connections in organisational activities and decision-making can be used to define stakeholder involvement (Sachs & Kujala, 2021). According to Sachs and Kujala (2021), stakeholder engagement is comprised of the objectives, methods, and results of stakeholder partnerships. Stakeholder engagement is seen as a purposeful action made up of stakeholder interests and expectations when the goals of stakeholder relationships are taken into consideration (O'Riordan & Fairbrass, 2014).

The collaboration in decision making and consideration of the other organizational stakeholders marks the point of correlation between the theory and this study. When decisions on how to move the organization forward, work scheduling and work conditions

are made in consultation with other stakeholders, then there may be little or no room for grievances to arise, and neither will there be room for managing it. When the employees perceive that the organization is fair to them in terms of reward and benefit, responsibility assignment and promotions, as a result of appropriate consultation, grievances will seldomly arise, and its management will be uncalled for. However, even when grievances arise, the joint handling or management of them without neglecting the input of relevant stakeholders will lead to speedy resolution and avoidance of unnecessary rancour and avoidable misgivings among workers. There is therefore how the theory relates to this work.

Empirical Review

Noordin (2023) did a study focused on the conflict management styles of the principals of public and private sector schools. The study employed a survey; the population consisted of all the 'secondary school principals of Bangi Selangor Malaysia. To test the instrument and determine sample size through formula, a pilot study was conducted, and the sample size was 154. For six research and four demographic variables, a 5-point Likert scale was used to record the responses. The study made use of correlation matrix and multiple regression analysis and revealed that leadership should not suppress or resolve the conflict, but shall manage it in consultation with the supervisor and other employees. Since the principal's conflict management styles affect the member's behavior and eventually the organization's performance.

Molina, Butollo, Makó, Godino, Holtgrewe, Illsoe, Junte, Larsen, Illésy, Pap and Wotschack (2023) explored the role of collective bargaining and employee participation mechanisms in regulating the use by companies of AI and algorithms. This is done through a comparative analysis of institutional developments at EU level, as well as in four countries with different industrial relations models (Denmark, Germany, Hungary and Spain). The article showed that there are remarkable differences between countries in the

roles of social partners and in the combination of protective and participative mechanisms used to respond to the challenges of AI and algorithmic management. However, the analysis also served to highlight the limits of existing institutions and practices to cope with the complexity of challenges associated with AI and algorithmic management.

Dhanabhakyam and Monish (2022) carried out a study on the role of employee grievance management on job commitment and organizational justice in India. The study followed descriptive and empirical research methods. Both primary and secondary data were used for extracting the results of the study. 260 employees were considered for this study. Sample respondents worked in various IT companies at Info Park, Ernakulum and techno park, Trivandrum, Kerala. Stratified sampling technique was executed for choosing samples from the population. Various parametric tests and multivariate technics were used for data analysis. Result of independent sample t test showed that there is a significant difference in the opinion of IT employees on grievance management strategies. Result of correlation analysis proved that there is correlation between employee grievance management strategies and employee satisfaction. Among the three strategies grievance committee showed highest correlation with employee satisfaction. Result of multiple regression analysis revealed that employee grievance management strategies made 74.3% impact on job commitment. Among the predictor variables team development contributes more towards job commitment of selected IT employees

Igbinoba, Osibanjo and Salau (2022) examined the influence of grievance management on corporate performance of selected manufacturing firms in Nigeria. A survey design was employed with a sample of three (300) hundred respondents from selected top three quoted manufacturing firms on the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE). Questionnaire was designed as a research instrument to obtain required information for study and was further using regression analysis. The findings revealed that there is a significant influence of avoidance grievance, dominating grievance, compromise grievance, obliging grievance and integrating grievance management on organizational performance. Organizations should

encourage mutual relationship among employees, as well as provide conducive working conditions/ environment for employees, like organizational learning, effective communication among employees, which will enhance their productivity and organizational performance.

Monish and Dhanabhakyam (2022) did a study on demystifying employee grievance management and exploring the workplace justice and job commitment in India. The study was a descriptive study, using a population of 260 employees. Data for the study was collected using questionnaire and analyzed using correlation and regression analysis. The findings revealed that majority of the respondents are satisfied with the existing grievance management practices in selected IT companies. Also revealed from the findings was that grievance management is closely related with their job commitment, that there is a significant relationship between grievance management and workplace justice and that grievance management practices made a significant impact on job commitment and workplace justice.

Dhanabhakyam and Monish (2021) determined the impact of employee grievance identification strategies on job performance with special reference to Info Park and Techno Park, Kerala, India. The study followed descriptive and causal research method. Both primary and secondary data were used in the study. The primary data was collected through a well-structured questionnaire. Secondary data was collected from academic journals and websites. The sample size taken for the purpose of the study is 200 IT employees in Info Park and techno park, Kerala. Simple random sampling was used as sampling technique. Exploratory factor analysis, ANOVA, correlation and multiple regressions are used for data analysis. The factor analysis revealed that open door policy, step ladder policy, grip box system, and email reporting are considered as the major grievance management strategies in selected IT parks in Kerala. That employee grievance management techniques made a significant impact on job commitment, job attachment and job involvement.

Nakayenze, Galukande-Kiganda and Karyeija (2021) used the Second Kampala Institutional and Infrastructure Development Project (KIIDP 2) of the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), Uganda, as a case study to assess the impact of grievance management on the performance of World Bank-funded projects. The study used a mixed cross-sectional survey research approach and used questionnaires and interviews to gather data from 103 respondents in the sample. The performance of KIIDP 2 of KCCA, Uganda, was positively and significantly impacted by grievance management in the areas of identification, investigation, and resolution, according to the findings.

In Imenti North Sub-County, Meru County, Mukiira, Moguche, and Muema (2020) examined the connection between collective bargaining and the effectiveness of public health facilities. A correlational study design was used. Surveys were used to get the data. The use of descriptive and inferential analysis was made. The correlation analyses showed a substantial and favourable relationship between collective bargaining and public health facility performance (r=0.676**, P=0.000). A substantial and favourable association between collective bargaining and organisational performance was shown by regression analysis (=0.683, P=0.000). Regression findings showed that the calculated significance threshold, P 0.05, ruled out the null hypothesis and established a significant association between collective bargaining and organisational performance.

The impact of labour relations on employees' commitment at the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) was evaluated by Uduak and Cross in 2020. The research design for the study was survey-based. 2820 employees of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) Corporate Headquarters in Abuja make up the study's population. Taro Yamane was utilised to calculate the study's sample size of 349 and management staff size of 26. The respondents to this study were given a questionnaire as part of the data gathering process. Multiple regressions are employed as the statistical tools. The results showed that at NNPC, Abuja, employee commitment is positively and negligibly impacted by industrial relations. Other results were that salary had a positive but negligible influence

on employees' commitment at NNPC, Abuja, while collective bargaining has a positive but insignificant impact. Industrial harmony also had a good but large impact on employees' commitment at NNPC, Abuja.

Onyeizugbe, Aghara and Olohi (2018) determined the extent of relationship that exists between industrial harmony and employee performance in selected Food and Beverage Firms in Anambra state. The study employed correlation survey research design. The population of the study was 390 employees of five selected Food and Beverage Firms in Anambra State, Pearson product moment correlation was used to analyze the data collected. The findings revealed that there is a very strong significant positive relationship between joint consultation and employee engagement, and there is a very strong positive relationship between industrial democracy and employee performance.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a survey research design because of the nature of the study which collects relevant data from sampled respondents about grievance management and performance through a questionnaire. The area of this study is Anambra State, which is one of the five South-Eastern states in Nigeria, with predominantly Igbo people as indigence. The population of this study consists of all the non-academic staff of the State (COOU) and Federal (NAU) Universities in Anambra State which is 9098, 5673 from NAU and 3425 from COOU. The sample size of the study is 383 which was arrived at by using the Taro Yamane formula. For the purpose of this work, the primary source of data was used for it and the type of primary source to be deployed is structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed using the population proportion and calculation is given. The questionnaire was validated by validators using face and the content validity and was also tested for reliability using a split-half reliability technique with a coefficient of .902. The analysis was done using two methods, descriptive and inferential analysis. Under

descriptive statistics, mean, frequencies and ranks of the mean were deployed, while for inferential statistics, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used. Hypotheses were tested using a 5% (0.05) level of significance, signifying a 95% confidence level.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Data Analysis

Descriptive Statistics for Research Questions and Test of hypothesis

Research Question One

To What level does the relationship exist between Collective bargaining and Employee Morale in the selected universities in Anambra State?

Table 1: Distribution of responses for Collective bargaining and Employee Morale

S/N	Questionnaire Items	SA (5)	A (4)	UD (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean	Remark
	Collective Bargaining							
1	I prefer presenting my grievances as a group.	102	179	-	50	10	3.92	Accept
2	My organization allows us present issues as a group.	79	92	-	70	100	2.94	Reject
3	My institution frowns at forming unions.	10	87	21	111	112	2.33	Reject
4	I am allowed to join different unions in my institution.	121	130	-	90	-	3.83	Accept
5	We do not bargain as an individual but as groups.	87	100	-	92	62	3.17	Accept

	Employee Morale							
6	Group bargaining will give me more confidence in my firm.	90	132	12	75	32	3.52	Accept
7	I am more comfortable negotiating as a team.	208	84	19	30	-	4.38	Accept
8	My morale is higher when workers in my firm present a common front to the organization's management.	198	102	-	35	6	4.28	Accept
9	I like it when management allows us to bargain as a group.	200	100	-	20	21	4.28	Accept
10	I prefer negotiating as an individual because it makes my morale high.	-	56	-	112	173	1.82	Reject

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 shows the distribution of responses on collective bargaining and employee morale. The analysis here is based on mean and the acceptance threshold for the individual questionnaire item is 3. So, any questionnaire item with a mean of 3 and above should be accepted while anyone below should be rejected. For questions bothers on collective bargaining, a mean of 3.9 shows that the respondents accepted that they prefer presenting their grievances as a group. They however rejected their organization allows them present issues as a group as shown by a mean of 2.94. On a similar note, they also rejected that their institution frowns at forming unions as indicated by a mean of 2.33. A mean of 3.83 reveals that they rejected that they allowed to join different unions in their institution. They agreed that they do not bargain as an individual but as groups as shown by a mean of 3.17.

On questions used to measure employee morale, the respondents agreed with a mean of 3.52 that group bargaining will give them more confidence in their firm. Similarly, they agreed that they are more comfortable negotiating as a team as a mean of 4.38 ascertained from this is greater than the threshold of 3. Also, they agreed that their morale is higher

when workers in their firm present a common front to the organization's management with a mean of 4.28. A mean of 4.28 and 1.82 reveals that the respondents agreed that they like it when management allows them to bargain as a group and that they prefer negotiating as an individual because it makes their morale high respectively.

Hypotheses One

Ha_1: There is a significant relationship that exists between Collective bargaining and Employee Morale in the selected universities in Anambra State.

Table 2: Correlation Result for hypothesis one

		COLLBARG	EMPMOR
COLLBARG	Pearson Correlation	1	.918**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	341	341
EMPMOR	Pearson Correlation	.918**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	341	341

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 4.2 shows the correlation analysis result for hypothesis one which states that there is a significant relationship that exists between collective bargaining and employee morale in the selected universities in Anambra State. From the result, it can be seen that the correlation coefficient as represented by Pearson Correlation is .918 and the p-value as represented by Sig is .000. Following this, the alternate hypothesis is accepted, it is stated

that there is a statistically significant positive relationship existing between collective bargaining and employee morale in the selected universities in Anambra State.

Research Question Two

What is the extent of relationship that exists between Open Door Policy and Employee Commitment in the selected universities in Anambra State?

Table 4.3: Distribution of responses for Open Door Policy and Employee Commitment

S/N	Questionnaire Items	SA (5)	A (4)	UD (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean	Remark
	Open Door Policy							
1	My superiors are accessible in my institution.	67	100	5	70	99	2.90	Reject
2	It is not difficult to get to the management of my institution.	-	98	30	89	124	2.30	Reject
3	I am encouraged to bring up issues as it occurs.	10	67	20	100	144	2.12	Reject
4	I am not discouraged to present my challenges to my organization.	78	90	2	70	101	2.92	Reject
5	My management makes it difficult to access them.	122	89	4	126	-	3.61	Accept
	Employee Commitment							
6	It encourages me to put in more effort if I can easily access management.	81	154	-	68	38	3.50	Accept
7	I will be more committed to working in my organization with a little more access to the leaders in my institutions.	121	143	7	70	-	3.92	Accept

8	I will derive a lot of joy knowing the heads in my institution are approachable.	100	208	16	17	-	4.15	Accept
9	I feel committed to my firm as a result of the open-door policy in operation in my firm.	111	142	50	28	10	3.93	Accept
10	I will feel discouraged to work hard if management is not accessible.	121	118	62	40	-	3.94	Accept

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 4.3 reveals the distribution of responses for open door policy and employee commitment. The analysis is also based on the mean of the individual questionnaire items, with a benchmark of acceptance of 3. Starting with questions bothering on, a mean of 2.90 shows that the respondents rejected that their superiors are accessible in their institution. They also rejected that it is not difficult to get to the management of my institution with a mean of 2.30. Similarly, a mean of 2.12 indicates that they disagreed that they are encouraged to bring up issues as it occurs. In the same line of response, they rejected as shown with a mean of 2.92 that they are not discouraged to present my challenges to my organization. However, when they were asked if their management makes it difficult to access them, a mean of 3.61 shows that they were in the affirmative.

For questions used in measuring employee commitment, when the respondents were asked if it encourages them to put in more effort if they can easily access management, a mean of 3.50 shows that they agreed. They also agreed that they will be more committed to working in their organization with a little more access to the leaders in their institutions as shown with a mean of 3.92. similarly, a mean of 4.15 indicates that the respondents agreed that they will derive a lot of joy knowing the heads in their institution are approachable. In the same vein, a mean of 3.93 and 3.94 show that the employees affirmed that they feel

committed to their firm as a result of the open-door policy in operation in their firm and that they will feel discouraged to work hard if management is not accessible respectively.

Hypotheses Two

Ha_2: There is a significant relationship that exists between Open Door Policy and Employee Commitment in the selected universities in Anambra State.

Table 4: Correlation Result for hypothesis two

		ODP	EMPCOM
ODP	Pearson Correlation	1	.887**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	341	341
EMPCOM	Pearson Correlation	.887**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	341	341

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 4 shows the correlation analysis result for hypothesis two which states that there is a significant relationship that exists between Open Door Policy and Employee Commitment in the selected universities in Anambra State. From the result, it is seen that the correlation coefficient is .887 and the p-value is .000. Going by this, the alternate hypothesis is accepted, and it is stated that there is a statistically significant positive relationship existing between open door policy and employee commitment in the selected universities in Anambra State.

Conclusions

Grievances are inevitable in most organizations, and even more pronounced in service firms like universities. Given that people from different works of life, with different temperament, religion, attitude and perception come together to work for a predetermined goal, there is bound to be misunderstanding and grievances from time to time. However, what determines if the grievances will deteriorate and affect the performance of the employees and that of the organization is the way it is management, giving rise to grievance management. Hence, this study examined the relationship between grievance management and employee performance of public universities in Anambra state. Haven collected relevant data using questionnaire and tested hypothesis using the appropriate techniques, the study concludes that indeed, grievance management has a statistically significant relationship with and employee performance of public universities in Anambra state.

Recommendations

Drawing from the findings, the study recommends that:

a) the school authority and the FG need to learn to obey agreements reached through a collective bargaining process and to encourage more of agreements to be reached through collective bargaining as it will improve the moral of the employees in the selected universities in Anambra State.
b) the management of the institutions should maintain an open door policy for all employees, with a mechanism to checkmate excessive loitering around the offices of the management as knowing that access to management is easy will help build the commitment level of the employees and make them put in their best.

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