

Correlation between Annual Leave as a Tool for Motivation and Staff Productivity in Tertiary Institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated annual leave as a tool of motivation and staff productivity in tertiary institutions. To achieve the purpose of this study, one research question was posed, and one null hypothesis was formulated. Survey research design was adopted for the study. A sample of seven hundred and ninety-two (792) respondents was randomly selected from a population of eight thousand one hundred and twelve (8,112) administrative staff. Questionnaire was the main instrument used for data collection. The instrument was subjected to face validation. The reliability estimate of the instrument was established using the Cronbach-Alpha reliability method. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis and Multiple Regression were the statistical analysis techniques adopted in the study. The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The results of the findings revealed that realization of annual leave significantly relates to staff's productivity. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended, among others, that management of all educational zones should ensure that staff apply and observe their regular annual leave for increase in productivity and work-life balance.

Keywords: annual, leave, motivation, staff, productivity

Introduction

Meeting the productivity mandate involves impacting requisite skills, knowledge, and attitude, to enable workers to realize their potential and become disciplined. Despite effort by the government to maintain educational standard in higher institutions, the goal is yet to be achieved. It is obvious that when skills are acquired and applied appropriately, policy makers and other beneficiaries will have confidence in the outcome to solve problems. In line with Edoho and Ojong (2021), the expectation of every employer is to have a workforce of high performing individuals so as to meet their organizational goals. Pencavel (2015) is of the opinion that productivity could be attained using the following: leadership commitment, reward and positive reinforcement to drive success, investment on in-service training, and staff promotion. Motivation in the work context is defined as an individual's degree of willingness to exert high level of effort to reach organizational

goals (Robin & Becenzo, 2015). Business Dictionary (2012) defines workers' productivity as demands of high level of commitment which brings about high level of motivation among workers. Even though some levels of motivation in one's life can be a source of positive motivation to succeed, it can energize one psychologically and physically to learn new skills for positive productivity.

Due to financial challenges many workers convert leave into money in order to meet with every day challenges. Edoho (2020) stated that annual leave is a right of the employee and not a privilege. A rested mind and body boost productivity and creativity; this allows employees to approach tasks with better perspective and a fresh mindset. Giving an extra annual leave day on an employee's birthday or offering a half day for overtime worked highlights the importance of taking time off to refresh. Generally, annual leave has positive effect on the employee mindset as it affords one opportunity to rest and embark on medical check-up during this period. This in a way boosts office productivity by the mere fact that the employee now has more stamina to do his office task effectively. Besides, any employee returning from holidays will have a fresh outlook and positive attitude. Employees tend to work better after leave because they become less prone to accidents; they become more productive, and less likely to be stressed out. After annual leave, an employee feels recharged and motivated.

According to Ghosheh (2013), the annual leave programme provides eligible employees a combined pool of "annual leave" credits instead of separate vacation and sick leave credits. Annual leave covers the same kinds of absences that otherwise would be covered by vacation or sick leave. The author went further to say that the primary purpose of paid annual leave is to allow and encourage every employee to renew his physical and mental capabilities and to remain a fully productive employee. Employees are encouraged to request leave during each year in order to achieve this purpose. According to Babita (2010), annual leave can be taken as soon as it is accumulated; it does not have to be taken each year; however, the employer must not unreasonably refuse an employee's request to take annual leave as much as there is no maximum or minimum period of annual leave that can be taken. Asubel (2017) affirmed that most workers have the right to take a certain amount of paid holiday every year. This is known as statutory annual leave and usually amounts to a minimum of 5.6 weeks of time off per year. However, if one works more than five days a week, one will still only be entitled to 28 days' statutory leave pay (Azeem & Akhtar, 2014). Worker's productivity can only be possible when employees are satisfied and motivated; those employees who are happy and productive are a huge asset to any organization.

In the opinion of Dieleman and Harnmeijer (2016), annual leave allows employees to take paid time off from work for the purpose of having regular breaks, so that they can rest and re-energize. Employees who take regular holidays can be more motivated about their work and perform more effectively than those who do not. They are less prone to accidents and are less likely to suffer from stress because they have regular opportunity to rest; this means they might take less sickness absence. The importance of taking annual leave is often overlooked and underplayed in the workplace which results in employees feeling

guilty for requesting time off, or fearing the task will struggle without them. When the pace at which most people move every day is considered, allowing annual leave to workers should be a priority (Edoho, 2020).

A tertiary institution's ability to attract and retain employees with the expertise it requires depends largely on the "human" side of the day-to-day working experience. Depending on the job nature, the worker should be allowed the requisite number of suitable adjusted and spaced breaks in the work. However, for a minimum standard to be attained, at least to allow employees rejuvenate from a long period of work, some of the leaves, especially annual leave, sick leave, bereavement leave, leave of absence, among others, have been mandated by labour laws to cover all employees and by extension employers.

In spite of the importance of annual leave to employees and by extension to employers, Abraham (2016) commented that workers' organizations fail to embrace it fully but rather prefer to monetize it. Annual leave is simply the number of days employees of an institution is permitted to be away from their employment position within a year's time without consequences. This time off is paid by the institution and employees are allowed to request the time for any reasons they wish to be off work. It is also worthy of note that this holiday, most often, attracts some allowances as the bone of contention most times is on the number of allotted days for the annual leave and the entitled allowances.

Collewet and Jan (2017) outlined the following benefits of annual leave on workers' productivity:

1. **Reduced stress:** Workplace stress can lead to headaches, increased anxiety, high blood pressure, depression, increased drinking and reduced work performance and productivity.
2. **Extended life:** Taking annual leave may be one of the keys to live long.
3. **Improved mood:** Women who take holidays twice or more per year are less likely to become depressed, tense or tired.
4. **Better social life:** Women/men who took regular holidays more frequently are found to be more satisfied with their marriage and their work has no impact on socializing with family and friends.
5. **Reduced risk of heart disease:** Workload increases risk of heart disease in those who worked eleven (11) or more hours a day compared to those who work for seven (7) or eight (8) hours.
6. **Greater workplace productivity:** It appears that if taking annual leave can improve mood, extend life and reduce risk of heart disease, then workplace productivity is surely going to benefit as well.

Dike (2015) supports the assertion that the biggest benefit of annual leave is the positive effect it has on the employee mindset. An employee returning from holidays will have a fresh outlook and attitude and will be ready to perform to the best of their ability. In a related study to investigate the effect of annual leave on workers' productivity, Adediwura and Abraham (2012) used a population consisting of senior administrative staff in the Lagos State Public service. The study sample consisted of 600 workers randomly selected

for the study. The questionnaire used to elicit data consisted of four sections and was administered on the subjects. Using simple percentages, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation and Chi-square statistics to test the three hypotheses generated in the study, the obtained data were analyzed. The result showed that staff's annual leave significantly relate to workers' productivity.

Ocho (2012) conducted a study on influence of motivational variables on administrative effectiveness in tertiary institution in Cross Rivers State. In order to achieve this, three hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 alpha level. The design adopted for the study was the survey design. The sample for the study consisted of all administrative staff in educational zones in Cross River state. A sample of 400 staff was selected using stratified and simple random sampling techniques. The instrument used for this study was an adapted 15 items, 4-option rating scale questionnaire. The instrument was subjected to reliability measure using test-retest method which gave an index of 0.68 to 0.82. The data collected were subjected to statistical analysis using independent t-test. The results obtained amongst others, revealed that annual leave significantly influence administrative effectiveness.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the extent to which realization of annual leave as a tool for motivation relates with staff productivity of tertiary institutions in Cross River State.

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Investigate the extent to which annual leave as a tool for motivation relates to staff productivity in tertiary institutions in Cross River State.

Research questions

To guide the study, the following research question was posed:

1. How does annual leave as a tool for motivation relate to staff productivity in tertiary institutions in Cross River State?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was formulated to give direction to the study:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between annual leave as a tool for motivation and staff productivity in tertiary institutions in Cross River State.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was survey design. The choice of this design is occasioned by the fact that it involves the collection of data that describes an existing phenomenon accurately and it is possible to discover the relative incidence as well as distribution of variables (Isangedighi, 2012). The population of this study comprised of eight thousand, one hundred and twelve (8112) staff from the six tertiary institutions in Cross River State. These include Federal College of Education, Obudu; Cross River University of Technology, Calabar; School of Nursing and Midwifery, Itighidi; College

of Health Technology, Calabar; College of Education, Akamkpa; University of Calabar, Calabar .

The sample for this study is made up of eight hundred and eleven (811) staff from the six tertiary institutions in Cross River State which was randomly selected for the study; this was approximately 10% of the population. This study adopted multi-stage sampling approach which comprised stratified, simple random and purposive sampling techniques. Stratification was done on the basis of institutions and educational zones, namely: Ogoja, Ikom and Calabar educational zones. Stratified random sampling was necessary for this work because the population is too large for samples to be drawn at random; purposive sampling technique was used to ensure that only administrative staff of the six tertiary institutions in Cross River State were selected to constitute the sample for the study since the subset were in different faculties, department, and units. Simple random sampling technique was also adopted to select required number of administrative staff from each institution for the study. Approximately 10% of the total administrative staff were randomly selected for the study.

The instrument used for the study was a 46-item questionnaire titled “Correlation between Annual Leave as a Tool for Motivation and Staff Productivity Questionnaire” (CALTMSPQ). The questionnaire consisted of two parts. Part A elicited responses on personal data such as sex, age and marital status. Part B was designed to elicit information on motivational strategies and junior administrative workers’ productivity. It consisted 46 items designed to measure the sub variables namely: annual leave and workers’ productivity based on the 4-point modified Likert-type scale. The responses were Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. To ensure that the selected items for inclusion in the questionnaire were capable of eliciting relevant responses needed to measure the set objectives for the study, the researchers presented the designed questionnaire to two experts in Measurement and Evaluation in the Faculty of Education, University of Calabar for face and content validity before they were administered to the respondents. This was for them to check for appropriateness of items, content coverage, clarity of language, and suitability of items. All superfluous, double-barreled items were dropped and some were modified severally while other items were reworded.

The reliability of the instrument was done using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient. To determine the reliability of the instrument, a trial testing was done using 60 respondents drawn from the population who were not part of sample used for this study. The data generated from the instrument were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient to determine its internal consistency. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients ranged between 0.81 and 0.89. These values were considered high enough to justify the use of the instrument for the study. The null hypothesis tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis at .05 level of significance.

Presentation of results

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between annual leave as a tool for motivation and staff productivity in tertiary institutions in Cross River State.

The independent variable in this hypothesis is realization of annual leave while the dependent variable is staff productivity. To test this hypothesis, annual leave and staff productivity were correlated using Pearson product moment correlation analysis.

The result of the analysis as presented in table 1 revealed that the calculated r-value of 0.295 is significant at 0.05 level of significance with 790 degree of freedom due to mortality. With this result, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between realization of annual leave and administrative staff productivity was rejected. This result implied that annual leave has a significant positive relationship with administrative staff productivity. The positive r implied that the higher annual leave, the higher the administrative staff productivity tends to be. On the other hand, the lower the annual leave, the lower the staff productivity tends to be.

Table 1: Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between annual leave and junior administrative staff productivity (N=792)

Variables	$\sum x$	$\sum x^2$	$\sum y$	$\sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	r-cal
Annual leave	13,871	168,251			477,138	0.295*
Workers' productivity	24,625	442,072				

* Significant at 0.05, critical r= 0.062, df = 790.

Discussion of findings

The result of the hypothesis revealed that there is a significant relationship between annual leave and staff productivity. The finding of this hypothesis is in line with the view of Ghosheh (2013) who observed that annual leave programmes provide eligible employees a combined pool of "annual leave" credits instead of separate vacation and sick leave credits. Annual leave covers the same kind of absences that otherwise would be covered by vacation or sick leave. The author went further to say that the primary purpose of paid annual leave is to allow and encourage every employee to renew his physical and mental capabilities and to remain a fully productive employee. Employees are encouraged to request leave during each year in order to achieve this purpose. Annual leave can be taken as soon as it is accumulated. However, the employer must not unreasonably refuse an employee's request to take annual leave. Staff's productivity can only be possible when employees are satisfied and motivated as the case may be, because employees who are happy and productive are a huge asset to the system.

Adediwura and Abraham (2012) also revealed that leave policy motivate employee ability to deliver services efficiently and effectively since it is an important factor in increasing employee productivity. In the above research findings, it is recommended that

management should prioritize creating different work life balance incentives such as annual leave, reduction in workload that will improve employee performance. The result showed that staff's annual leave significantly relate to worker productivity. Employees who take regular holidays can be more motivated about their work and perform more effectively than those who do not. They are less prone to accidents and are less likely to suffer from stress because they have regular opportunity to rest; which means they might take less sickness absence.

Conclusion

The study revealed that realization of annual leave as a tool of motivation is significantly related to staff productivity of tertiary institutions in Cross River State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Annual leave in whatever form should not be ignored but should be accepted collectively for better employees' productivity in institutions.
2. Since staff welfare cannot be looked away, staff remuneration should serve as legitimate interest to enhance workers' commitment in tertiary institutions.
3. Management of tertiary institution should encourage workers to apply for leave, observe the days, to be mentally fit for the task ahead as workers retention and hospitality in the place of work is accountable for.

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