



EFFECT OF CHALLENGING WORK AND RESPONSIBILITY DIMENSIONS OF MOTIVATION ON EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE IN MTN, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated the link between challenging work and responsibility with employees' performance in MTN. A cross sectional survey research design was adopted to study a population of 72 employees and a sample size of 61 was determined using the formula of sample size (Yamane, 1967). The simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample. The data were collected using questionnaire with the help of research assistants. The data were analyzed using SPSS, whereby factor analysis was done to validate the measurement constructs and regression analysis was done to determine the predictor of employees' performance in MTN and to test the hypotheses formulated. The result of the study found a positive but insignificant effect between challenging work and employees' performance. Responsibility was found to be the best predictor of employees' performance in MTN which explained 23 % of the variance. The study recommended that management should encourage employees' performance through assigning jobs that are attainable and through delegation of authority which increases degree of effort and interest in achieving the objectives of the organization.

Keywords: Challenging Work, Responsibility, Employee Performance, MTN.

1. Introduction

Mobile Telecommunications Network (MTN) is one of the licensed Global System for Mobile Telecommunications (GSM) companies operating in all parts of Nigeria. The height of innovation, adaptation and motivation of employees has continued to determine the level of success or failure of most organizations. The nature of GSM services requires employees' to be highly motivated in order to remain committed. Due to the many challenges organizations face in the area of stiff competition, organizations now use challenging work and responsibility motivation to enhance employees' performance and remain afloat (ArunKumar, 2014; Sani, 2013; Zachary, 2014).

Employees' performance is a requirement for the attainment of the goals of every organization in this present day dynamic business environment. For modern organizations such as MTN to perform at desired levels, they need committed and loyal workforce that are willing to take up difficult tasks and be responsible towards attaining the defined goals of the organization. Employees' performance in both task and contextual measures enable organizations to deliver both quantity and desired quality products and services to customers (Zachary, 2014).

Recently, customers have been alleging unsatisfactory products and services by MTN (Adegoke, Babalola & Balogun, 2013; Samuel & Olatokun, 2014). This is despite huge investment over the years on staff training and the procurement of state of the art equipments to



improve performance (MTN, 2019). Many different factors affect employees' performance such as ability, resources and motivation (Rashid, Hafiz & Rab, 2013; Uzonna, 2013). Motivation requires that, the human labour both skilled and unskilled to be compensated both monetarily and non- monetarily in order to increase performance (Sajuyigbe, 2017).

Scholars have posited that, a clear understanding and appropriate application of non-monetary factors could lead to organizations' attaining the required levels of employees' performance (Uzonna, 2013). Herzberg (1959) in Koontz and Wehrich (1990) posit that motivators such as recognition, achievement, advancement, challenging work and responsibility could be responsible for employees' performance in organizations. Hence, researchers have been carrying out studies in order to examine the contributions of these factors to employees' performance.

Challenging work according to Okwudili (2015) could lead to innovation and new ideas on how employees' can create new and better and cost effective ways to perform their duties. Responsibility motivation to employees' may invariably results to fast solutions to difficult organizational problems by creating a sense of autonomy towards the attainment of organizational goals (Zachary, 2014).

Apart from the revenue being paid to government in the form of taxes by MTN according to (Central Bank of Nigeria [CBN], 2016), its operations has led to the growth of Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), generated employment for youths and rural dwellers, led to the creation of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), Greenfields and technological transfers (Danbatta, 2016). Therefore, it is evident that, MTN has been playing a significant role in the socio-economic development of Nigeria.

It is worrisome that, despite the huge expenditure on equipment, resources and training of employees', yet the desired performance outcome had not been achieved (Danbatta, 2016). This led the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) to sanction MTN with a fine of 1.034 trillion Naira (Odunsi, 2017). This poor performance led the operators to sack some of their employees' (MTN, 2019; Ojiabor, 2016). Part of the problem leading to this poor performance have manifested through lateness, turnover, absenteeism, lack of courteousness, accidents etc in the organization (Ubabukoh, 2017). Also, it has been observed that, the jobs of the employees' in the organization are not very challenging and there is inadequate authority which may have also contributed to the poor performance levels.

Coupled with these problems, previous research works on performance relationships in MTN in Nigeria are not many. The few studies such as Sajuyigbe (2017) Adeleke and Aminu (2012), Adegoke and Babalola (2011) and Tiamiyu and Majebi (2012) were on performance appraisal, quality of service analysis and evaluation of subscriber attitude to mobile number portability respectively and not on employees' performance. Furthermore, most previous studies on challenging work and responsibility in different types of organizations have revealed inconsistent findings. (Cheema, Shujaat & Alam, 2013; Hamdan, Akif & Mohammad, 2015; Tizazu, 2015; Zachary, 2014). Hence, this study is aimed at determining the effect of challenging work and responsibility dimensions of motivation on employees' performance in MTN, Nigeria.



2. Literature Review

Campbell (1990) defines performance as behaviour demonstrated or something done by the employees' for organizational performance. Employee job performance is defined as a role of the individual's performance on particular objectives that consist of defined standard job descriptions (Koontz & Wehrich, 1990). Some scholars have advocated for a heuristic approach to performance (Robbins, 2005; Uzonnz, 2013). Understanding the four dimensions of employees' performance-task, contextual, adaptive and counterproductive workplace behaviour is crucial in the application of performance measurement (Uzonna, 2013). This study aligns with with the measures of performance in Charbonnier (2012) to investigate the effect of challenging work and responsibility on employees' performance in MTN, Nigeria.

According to Koontz and Wehrich (1990), challenging work is the attempt to build into jobs a higher sense of challenge and achievement. This study sees challenging work as any task that stretches employee to move beyond one's comfort zone and learning new things on daily basis such as job variety, autonomy and developing new opportunities. This may lead to a feeling that the job itself is worth exerting more effort without need to any external incentive (Zachary, 2014). An important factor in challenging work or interesting work is through job enrichment. Koontz and Wehrich (1990) describe job enrichment as the attempt to build into jobs a sense of challenge and achievement. However, interesting work which is also viewed as what a person finds interesting is very subjective. Thus, before assigning employees' to tasks, managers should find out what interests each of their subordinates and try and make a match. Another way to make the job interesting is by diversity and framework breaking. (Arunkumar, 2014)

Hamdan, *et al.* (2015) view responsibility as waiving some administrative levels of powers and authorities for lower functional levels to help them in completing quests in order to providing services easily and rapidly for customers and beneficiaries. Gaudreau and Blanchard (2012) posit that responsibility is an employee feeling of (a) control over the job to be performed, (b) awareness of the context in which the work is performed, (c) accountability for personal work output, (d) shared responsibility for unit and organizational performance, and (e) equity in the rewards based on individual and collective performance. Employees' responsibility usually embedded in empowerment and involvement has widely been recognized as an essential contributor to organizational success with many authors observing a direct relationship between the level of employees' empowerment and employees' performance, employees' job satisfaction and employees' commitment (Hamdan, et al, 2015). This study aligns with the views of Gaudreau and Blanchard (2012), given that employees' responsibility entails efficient and effective use of organizational resources by ensuring quality output and striving to meet predefined goals as suggested by theories and empirical investigations (Senyuta, 2013).

A lot of theories have been propounded by scholars to explain the relationship between challenging work, responsibility and employees' performance in organizations. Such theories in Robbins (2005) include McClelland's (1965) Needs Theory of Motivation in which clearly, challenging work and responsibility are embedded in Need for achievement (n-Ach)- which is need to set and meet standard of excellence. This connotes the challenging work idea and Need for Power- (n-Power) which relates to control over one's environment, establishes the link with responsibility on goal attainment. Goal-setting theory developed by Edward Locke (1968) refers to a series of propositions designed to help explain and predict work behaviour. Goals direct



work behaviour and performance and lead to certain consequences. The theory argues that, the combination of goal difficulty and the extent of the person's commitment to achieving the goal regulate the level of efforts expended. That people who have difficult goal, will perform better than those with easier goals. Koontz and Wehrich (1990) posit that, the motivational effect of the outcome of performance is predicated on certain propositions that include challenging goals and participation in goal setting which is a form of responsibility. However, Herzberg (1959) Motivation-Hygiene Factor Theory of motivation concluded that lower order needs are potential dissatisfiers or hygiene factors and only the higher order needs are the satisfiers or motivators. Herzberg listed specific hygiene factors in an organization as things that include; company policy and administration, supervision, working conditions, interpersonal relations, salary, status, job security and personal life. He listed the following all related to the job content and called them satisfiers or motivators; such as recognition, achievement, advancement challenging work, responsibility. Clearly, these factors of challenging work and responsibility as postulated by Herzberg are unarguably related to this study of MTN, Nigeria as posited by the employees' as having effects on their performance, Hence, the choice of this theory as the theoretical framework for this current study. Moreover, empirical studies have also shown that challenging work and responsibility have effect on employees' performance in organizations.

ArunKumar (2014) conducted a study on the relationship between employee motivation, satisfaction and organizational commitment in Malaysia on new retail formats such as hypermarkets, large scale supermarkets, and convenience stores using a sample size of 118 employees. The study concluded that Challenging task was specifically responsible for overall motivation and satisfaction of employees'. However, the study didn't clearly explain how the sample size was determined.

Sani (2013) carried out a study on the assessment of the impact of non-monetary incentives on employees' performance in NCC. The tools of analysis employed were the descriptive analysis using scores, rank and mean of respondents. The study found that majority of the respondents agree that challenging work have greatly affected their performance at work. The study is limited to be generalized due to the fact, it is limited only to the NCC and the use of correlation or regression statistical would have provided a more robust finding.

Uzonna (2013) in a study on the impact of motivation on employees' performance, in credit West Bank in Cyprus examined the non-monetary motivational factors of employees' to determine their level of performance. The study found that majority of the respondents agree that, challenging work is one of the most important non-monetary variable that plays a major role in employees' performance. The study however did not mention the population of study. The sample size of 134 was not shown to have been determined using any known formula for the determination of sample size. Despite the importance of employees' challenging work motivation towards enhancing performance, Tizazu (2015) found a negative and insignificant effect between challenging work and performance of employees.

Hamdan *et al.* (2015) in a study on the impact of the delegation of authority on employees' performance at great Irbid municipality in Jordan examined the effects of responsibility on performance of employees. The study found a significant relationship between delegation of



authority and performance. However, the study could not determine exactly the total population of the study and the exclusion of lower level employees' in the study was not explicitly explained. Moreover, the study's purported choice of 200 as sample was not justified.

Alkhaliel and Hooi (2013) in a study on the relationships of non-monetary incentives, job satisfaction and employee job performance reviewed different literatures to show the positive relationship between non-monetary incentives on employees' performance. Most of the reviewed literatures were empirical studies conducted across industries. The important dimensions of non-monetary incentives such as employees' responsibility and challenging work were reviewed. However, the study was only a conceptual analysis as the study has not been undertaken in the expected field empirically.

Gaudreau and Blanchard (2012) was a study in a telecommunication company on effect of empowerment on employees' performance. The study used a sample of 226 people in order to collect data through the instrument of questionnaire. Spearman correlation method, Wilcoxon tests method, and multiple regressions, were used for data analysis. Findings showed that there is significant difference between rate of employees' performance before and after empowerment implementing. Also, the Spearman correlation test confirmed that, there is a significant effect between employees' responsibility motivation and performance. Diagnostics tests were not carried but the regression analysis was carried out. This may affect the outcome of the statistical result which may render the findings ungeneralizable. Despite the importance of employees' responsibility motivation towards enhancing performance, studies such as Cheema *et al.* (2013) found no significant relationship.

3. Methodology

This study adopted the cross-sectional survey research method which enabled the researchers to collect detailed and factual information from the respondents at a point time which can be analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire and was administered on the respondents by the researchers and one research assistant in Kaduna. The questionnaire was filled by the respondents at their convenience and retrieved. The population of the study is 72 employees which is the total staff strength of MTN in Kaduna state as sighted from account records by the researchers. The probability sampling method was used for precision while the sample size of 61 was determined using Yamane (1967) sampling size technique. The researchers deemed it appropriate to add a 10% margin as suggested by Israel (1992) in order to take care of wrongly or badly filled and administered questionnaire that may not be retrieved. The total number of questionnaire that was therefore administered to respondents was 71. Data for this study were obtained from primary source through questionnaire that was administered to the staff of MTN in Kaduna state. The study adapted the challenging work motivation survey by ArunKumar (2014), responsibility motivation by Hamdan *et al.* (2015) and performance items from Charbonnier (2012) and used the five – point Likert-scale to enable the respondents indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed on the items in the questionnaire. To ensure validity of the instrument, the study made use of results obtained from the factor analysis loadings with none of the items having a coefficient alpha of less than .70 based on the test of validation of instrument (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 2010). On reliability, this study conducted a pilot study to test the efficacy of the instrument on staff of MTN in Kano state. The results of the reliability test obtained showed



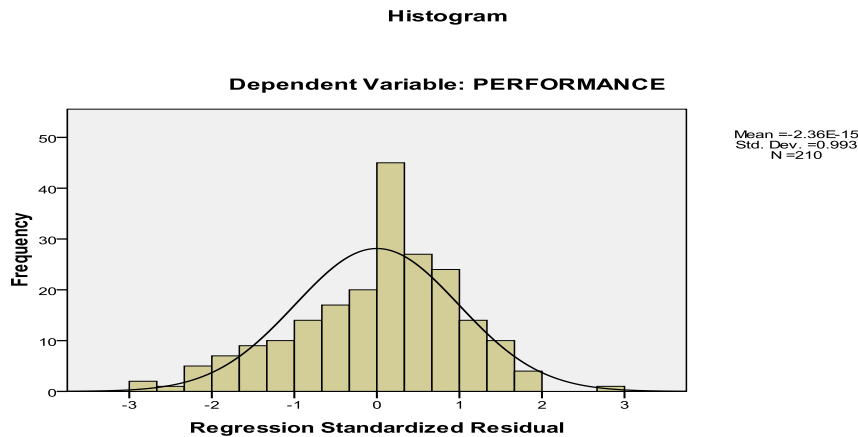
performance with reliability coefficient of 0.796, challenging work with 0.727 and responsibility with .727, all above the Cronbach alpha of .70 as suggested by (Sekeran, 2003). The data for this study was analyzed through the statistical methods of factor analysis and multiple regression (Hair, et al., 2010) and used the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 to process the data. The hypotheses were tested at 5% level of significance. The model for the study is expressed as:

$$PFM_i = a_o + \beta CHWi + \beta RSPi + \varepsilon_i$$

Where: PFM_i is perceptual score for performance by respondent i , a_o is the intercept or constant of regression equation, β is the coefficient of the independent variable. $CHWi$ is the perceptual score of challenging work by respondent i , $RSPi$ is the perceptual score of responsibility by respondent i , ε_i is the random error associated with the perception score of respondent i

4. Result

Some preliminary checks were conducted to ensure that the data were suitable before carrying out regression analysis (Hair, et al, 2010) such as normality and multicollinearity tests. Normality of the dataset was ascertained by the bell / curve shaped distribution as shown in figure 4.1



From figure 4.1: Histogram
Source: SPSS output, 2019.

Figure 4.1 depicts that the normality assumption is achieved since all the bars in the histogram are close to a normal curve. The Tolerance value and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) were examined to detect multicollinearity problem. Hair *et al.* (2010) suggested that multicollinearity is a concern if tolerance value is less than .10 and VIF value is higher than 10. Table 4.1 shows the VIF values and the tolerance values for the independent variables.



Table 1: Tolerance and VIF Values of the latent constructs

Variable	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
Challenging Work	.883	1.133
Responsibility	.640	1.561

Dependent Variable: Performance
Source: Field Survey, 2018

The result in Table 4.1 showed that multicollinearity does not exist among the independent variables because the tolerance values are higher than .10 and VIF values are less than 10 (Hair, *et al.*, 2010). The results indicated that the study does not have any multicollinearity problem. Hence, the multiple regression analysis was carried out with results as indicated in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Multiple Regression Result between Challenging Work and Responsibility on Employees' Performance in MTN, Nigeria.

Model	UnStandardized Coefficients B	Std Error	Standardized Beta	T	Sig.	Collinearity statistics Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	11.222	3.684		3.416	0.000		
Challenging	0.244	0.060	0.222	1.362	0.087	0.883	1.133
Responsibility	0.278	0.079	0.230	2.903	0.002	0.640	1.561
R	0.553						
R Square	0.305						
Adj R Square	0.298						
F-Statistics	14.67						
D W	1.843						

Source: Field work, 2019

Table 4.2 shows the R value of 55% which connotes a strong relationship between the variables in the model. Clearly, the model jointly explained 31% of the variance of employees' performance in MTN, Nigeria. Also, the significant F – test revealed that, the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables was linear and the model significantly predicted the dependent variable with F test result of 14.67 which is greater than the threshold of 4.0 and the Durbin Watson (DW) of 1.843 shows the absence of serial correlation.

Given these postulations, the first hypothesis of the study states that, there is no significant effect between challenging work and employees' performance in MTN, Nigeria. Table 4.2 shows that, the multiple regression analysis between challenging work and employees' performance is not significant, i.e. Beta = .222, p = .087 at .05 level. Therefore, the research hypothesis (Ho₁) is accepted. This means that, there is a positive but insignificant effect between challenging work and performance since the p-value is greater than .05. This is in line with the outcome of a study by Tizazu (2015) who concluded that, challenging work has no significant effect on workers performance in Ambo mineral water factory in Ethiopia.



The second hypothesis states that, there is no significant effect between responsibility and employees' performance in MTN, Nigeria. Table 4.2 shows that, the multiple regression analysis between responsibility and employees' performance is significant i.e. Beta = .230, $p = .002$. at .05 level. Therefore, the research hypothesis (H_{02}) is rejected. This means that, there is a positive and significant effect between responsibility and performance since the p-value is less than .05. This finding concurs with that of Zachary (2014) who concluded that, responsibility has significant effect on workers performance in Muranga water and sanitation company in Kenya.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

From the findings of this study, it is evident that challenging work and responsibility are important in the day-to-day performance of employees' in MTN, Nigeria. These findings constitute the basis for concluding that, challenging work is not an essential motivator as it does not enable employees' to be committed towards achieving goals and that responsibility motivates employees' towards putting in more efforts in carrying out tasks designed for achieving the objectives of the organization. Based on the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations if implemented can improve the performance of employees' in MTN, Nigeria. Firstly, in view of the fact that challenging work does not act as a motivator in this study, management of MTN, Nigeria should ensure that employees' are only assigned tasks that are attainable. Secondly, given that responsibility makes employees' feel a sense of achievement, therefore, management of MTN, Nigeria should delegate authority to employees' to enable them take decisions and compare the outcome of their decisions with expected level of organizational goal. It should however be noted that, this study was only on challenging work and responsibility motivation which constitutes a gap as there could be other factors that may be responsible for the low performance in the organization apart from motivation which subsequent studies should investigate. Also, the extension of this study to cover the dimensions of challenging work and responsibility in future research could reveal other important information that could help in improving employees' performance in organizations given the speed of globalization and technological advancement in the business environment.

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