

Employee Grievances and Performance of Noodle Firms in Anambra State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Research Objectives: The issue of employee grievance has eaten deep into the fabrics of every industrial establishment. The problem has also become the order of the day in both private and public establishments. This study examined the employee grievances and performance of noodle firms in Anambra state, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were to: determine the effect of work overload on organizational performance of noodle firms in Anambra state; examine the effect of toxic work environment on organizational performance of noodle firms in Anambra state, Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive survey design to assess employee grievances and organizational performance of noodle firms in Anambra state, Nigeria.

Methodology: Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from the respondents. The target population of this study was made of the staff working in the selected noodle firms in Anambra state (Tummy Foods Industrial Plc, Jolly Jolly Noodles and Zubix Noodles). The population of the study consists of three hundred and twenty-seven (327) active staff in the firm. Correlation analysis techniques were used to test the hypotheses of the study.

Findings: The study found out that there is a significant negative relationship between work overload and organizational performance of noodle firms in Anambra state; there is significant negative relationship between toxic work environment and organizational performance of noodle firms in Anambra state, Nigeria.

Recommendations: The study recommends that the management should encourage employees to maintain a healthy work-life balance, promote flexible working hours and time-off policies that enable employees to manage their workloads more effectively. The study encourages open communication among employees, creating a safe and supportive environment where employees feel comfortable raising concerns and seeking solutions.

Key words: *work overload, toxic work environment, employee grievances, organizational performance.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Organizations are made of individuals of different age groups, education backgrounds, religious beliefs, ethnicity, and social status, brought together by the need to further attainment of both group and individual goals (Naufer & Kumar, 2020). The work relationship between or amongst these parties may not always be harmonious and cordial as issues of imaginary or genuine feeling of disaffection, injustice, misapplication or ambiguity of policies and procedures often arise. The employees of any firm are not immune from the effects of the above conditions which have led to poor customer service and shabby work behaviors (Waktola, 2019; Al-Omari & Okasheh, 2017).

Workers' grievances are as old as industrial societies, but the issue of addressing workers' grievances in Africa and Nigeria has received particular attention recently. This is because a quick response that leads to a quick resolution of a complaint improves employee morale and productivity and can prevent costly legal action. (Nurse & Devonish, 2007). According to Opatha (2009), the grievance is any real or imagined feeling of personal injustice which an employee has concerning his employment relationship. Even if the grievances are imaginary or real, they must be reduced or solved by the management of the organization. If not, it may gradually increase and adversely affect the organization.

The issue of employee grievance has eaten deep into the fabrics of every industrial establishment. The problem has also become the order of the day in both private and public establishments. According to Kochan (2004), employee grievances in any organization indicate that employees are not happy with the way things are run in the organization. Therefore, the grievance management system is meant to help employees to make formal complaints about official acts or omissions where they feel aggrieved (Salamon, 2020).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Within the workplace, grievances are a common problem. According to Jules et al. (2021) employees are always facing challenges and issues that make the work environment uncomfortable, toxic, and unbearable. Devika et al. (2017), explicate it is integral to properly address employee grievances to maintain a harmonious workplace. Further, Onyebuchi and Uchechi (2019) assert that the maintenance of a harmonious relationship within the workplace is vital in improving employee morale which in turn enhances effectiveness and productivity. Aktar and Alam (2021) explain aggrieved employees tend to suffer from mental agony which then directly impacts productivity.

Employees' grievance has remained a daunting challenge to organizations. While this problem subsists in spite of different management approaches employed to mitigating it, scholars have equally theorized on different ways to remedy this organizational challenge. However available literature has shown that none of the existing studies has looked into the issue of how an unfair

handling of grievances of employees has caused employees to perform poorly. Many studies have looked only at the processes of managing employees' grievances and its effects on organizational survival without paying attention to how the poor management of these grievances results in poor performance. However, fewer of these studies, if any, have really attempted to explore managing employees' grievances and its effects on organizational performance. This research stands to fill that missing intellectual gap by assessing how the poor management of grievances impacts on performance.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to examine the employee grievances and organizational performance of noodle firms in Anambra state, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were as follow:

1. Determine the effect of work overload on organizational performance of noodle firms in Anambra state, Nigeria.
2. Examine the effect of a toxic work environment on organizational performance of noodle firms in Anambra state, Nigeria.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Grievance

Grievance is a sign of discontentment with one's job or relationship with colleagues and may even be exacerbated by lack of clarity in company rules or policies (Garima, 2017). It can be presented by an employee or group of employees either formally or informally with respect to work related issues that may directly affect employees' job work attitude. A grievance is specific, formal dissatisfaction expressed through an identified procedure (Gupta 2006). A prompt response that leads to quick resolution of a complaint or grievance may boost employee morale and productivity and can forestall costly legal action to both parties (Bichang'a & Numusonge, 2016).

Grievances might be unvoiced or explicitly stated, written or oral, justifiable, genuine or untrue, can be associated with the organizational work, or member of staff which may influence work performance or outcome. Grievances might involve employment contract issues, working environments, alteration of service conditions, biased approach, and failure to apply principle of natural justice, occupational norms and work-loads (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, & Wright, 2003; Garima, 2017). According to Locke (2009) grievance can be classified under three categories, which include management policies, work conditions, and individual factors. Grievance ensuing from management policies consists of rate of wages, leave rules, overtime, absence of career

planning, role conflicts, lack of respect for joint agreement and difference between worker's skills and job accountability.

Various grievances that emanate from working conditions include: inadequate safety and poor physical layouts, lack of tools and suitable machinery, poor self-control and impractical target. Grievances that arise from inter-personal features include: poor interactions. Between team members, autocratic leadership exercised by managers, poor relations with superior and disputes with associates and colleagues. Grievances can also be categorized into visible grievances and hidden grievances as a worker may have a perception of infringement of his or her rights, in which case, grievance may even exist in the mind of the individual employee (Locke, 2009). Grievance is a major part of organizational challenge. However not all grievances are bad. Through grievance handling, issues that affect employee performance and attitude to work can be identified and dealt with in the overall interest of the organization (Obiekwe & Uchechi, 2019).

2.1.2 Work Overload

Work-life balance was first used to describe the trend of individuals spending more time on work and less time on other aspects of their life (Khan, 2013). Work overload is a dispute that happens when the demand level exceeds the resources available to an individual if the person has too many tasks that need attention (Ninijhawan, Dhruv & Ajayi, 2015). Work overload is connected to the total time demands imposed by multiple roles on a person. Work overload occurs when given the limited time available, a person has too many work requirements. Shah (2014) in his study posited that most employees are engaged with too many tasks because of the competitive nature in securing a job, fear of the unknown, and accolades at the detriment of their wellbeing. Erbas, Osman and Tugay (2018) posited that when employees are taxed beyond their understanding, competence, talent and available working hours they tend to be less productive, job burnout, poor customer delivery, experience high family conflicts, emotional stress and exhaustion, and workplace accidents.

2.1.3 Toxic Work Environment

Harder (2017) defines a toxic work environment as one that has a detrimental influence on an organization's viability. A toxic office environment, according to Kivimaki (2018), is typified by narcissistic conduct, offensive and aggressive leadership, threatening behavior from managers and coworkers, harassment, bullying, and ostracism. Toxic workers do not recognize an ethical or professional obligation to the company for which they work or to their coworkers. Toxic workers define connections with coworkers based on coworkers they like and trust rather than organizational structure (Housman and Dylan, 2017).

According to National Occupational Safety and Health Administration research published in 2018, toxic working settings are a primary source of workplace violence, which includes "violent

acts, including physical attacks and threats of assault, aimed toward individuals at work or on duty." The research also emphasizes that even if no physical harm is done, verbal violence (threats, verbal abuse, hostility, harassment, and the like) can produce severe psychological trauma and stress and affect the workflow.

2.1.4 Employee Performance

Employee performance can be seen as the actual output or results that an individual has achieved. It is the extent to which an employee was able to perform when compared with other employees. According to Ali and Farooqi (2014), Performance is the total expectation of an organization from separate behavior samples of each person during a specific period of time. Employee performance is a set of behavior which a person shows concerning his job or, in another word, amount of efficiency gained due to the person's job type (Rashidpoor, 2000). Job performance is the same person's efficiency in his job according to his legal tasks and shows the amount of effort and success of that person (Dizgah, et.al., 2012). The individual performance led to group performance and the performance of all the groups translated to the organization's performance.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The study adopts Rahim & Bonoma (1979) grievance management theory. The theory was inspired by Thomas & Schmidt (1976) whose study focused on parties involved in the grievance settlement. For Thomas and Schmidt effective handling of grievance requires the aggrieved parties to be involved in grievance management. This is because people get involved in grievance management for their personal gains, stating that such involvement may either be to establish some self-assertiveness rather than cooperativeness; hence all parties must be involved to determine expressions of assertiveness or cooperativeness.

Deriving from this sense of assertiveness and cooperativeness, Rahim and Bonoma (1979) expanded the notion of assertiveness by demonstrating how such assertiveness which, in their own view, is termed "concern for self," is expressed through avoiding and dominating (low) and; how concern for others, on the other hand, is expressed through integrating and obliging (high), to determine parties readiness for compromise, the central concern of Rahim and Bonoma's theoretical model. Rahim and Bonoma's theoretical model can be summarized thus:

1. Avoiding Style: Low regard for self and low regard for others.
2. Dominating Style: High regard for self and low regard for others.
3. Obliging Style: Low regard for self and high regard for others
4. Integrating Style: High regard for self and high regard for others.
5. Compromising Style: Moderate regard for self and moderate regard for others

2.3 Empirical Literature

Silva and Malalage, (2021) identified the impact of employee grievances on employee performance. The population of the study was 600 operational level employees from 03 selected apparel companies in Panadura area. The study investigated the impact of workplace employee grievances on employee performance by analyzing the data collected through 200 operational level employees in selected apparel companies located in Panadura area. A paper-based structured questionnaire was administered to collect data. Miscommunication, overloaded work, aggressive supervisory behavior, and training gap in the workplace have shown significant association with employee performance based on the regression analysis. The study proved a negative relationship between the independent variables and employee performance.

Eromafuru, Akobundu, & Egbule, (2020) examine the impact of organisational grievance handling procedures on employees' contextual performance in money deposit banks. The target population of 250 employees of eight (8) money deposit bank branches spread across Nigeria was used and a sample size of 245 bank staff was derived through stratified random sampling. A cross-sectional research survey method was adopted and data collected by means of Likert scale was analyzed using descriptive statistics involving the mean, standard deviation, multiple regressions and inferential statistics. Dimensions (except stages) of organizational grievance handling procedures were found to significantly and positively impact on employees contextual performance. While it could be averred that grievance handling may not address all employees' workplace-related issues, a pragmatic approach to managing employees' discontentment will create a platform for employees to seek grievance-redress in a harmonious working setting. We further posit that banks should act promptly to establish effective and efficient grievance handling mechanisms, revolving around organizational justice; pursuing deliberate policies to abridge the length of time for grievance resolution, and putting policies in place effective organizational structure that encourages their employees to air their grievances.

Igoche, (2022) investigated how employee's needs arise in such an organization and the consequences that emerge when these needs are not satisfied. It is assumed that when employee's needs are not satisfied, grievances emerge and this situation in turn affects job satisfaction, production and service delivery therefore, this study falls under organisational behaviour. Research questions were formulated to guide the major activities of this project in terms of methodology. This study is descriptive and explanatory. Survey methods have been used to generate data for analysis. The major findings of this research reveals that the most significant source of employee's grievances in Nigeria includes non implementation of contract of employment and new standards of rules and regulations are set up without due consultation with the employees. Among others, the employees' salaries are inadequate.

Ukaidi, (2023) examined the influence of selected management strategies on employee grievance in Nigerian Ports Authority Calabar. The research adopted the survey research design. Data were

drawn from primary sources using questionnaires. The study found that mediation Strategy has significant positive effect on employees' grievance resolution in Nigerian Ports Authority, Calabar. Further findings revealed that grievance handling style has significant positive influence on employee's grievance commitment in Nigerian Ports Authority, Calabar. Also, it was found that communication and staff inclusive management has a significant positive effect in reducing employee's grievance in the Nigerian Ports Authority, Calabar. Based on the findings, it was recommended among other things that the management of Nigerian Ports Authority, Calabar should often adopt mediation strategy in resolving employees grievance and conflict in the organization since this strategy facilitates open communication between the aggrieved parties which leads to effective grievance resolution by enabling a neutral third party to help the disputing or aggrieved parties in negotiating a mutually acceptable agreement that could be generally accepted by the aggrieved parties.

Bankole and Amusan (2020) examined the effect on organisational results of staff grievance leadership. The article observed that efficient worker grievance leadership is crucial for a harmonious workplace partnership, strengthening staff allegiance and engagement, and improving general organisational efficiency and efficiency. In contrast, absence of or bad leadership of staff grievances in organisations results in adverse organisational results such as decreased efficiency, issue of absenteeism, disobedience of instructions, interdisciplinary conduct and decreased job performance. The target population of this study, which is finite (being defined), is the total number of Dangote Cement Plant in Ibese, Ogun State, Nigeria. The population comprises staff whose population is two hundred and sixty (260). The use of questionnaires was adopted to elicit information from the cross section of the selected population. The correlation coefficient value ranges from 0 – 1 and has an acceptable value of 0.88, which indicate a higher reliability of measurement instrument and a low error variance, implying that the instrument is reliable. While the analysis was done 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 organisational performance.

Nosike, Nosike, and Agagwuncha, (2023) determined the effect of employee grievance on job commitment in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State. The study adopted survey research design and data were generated through the questionnaires administered to the respondents. The population of the study comprised 2637 academic staff of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The data generated in response to the questions was analyzed and hypotheses were tested using Simple Regression via SPSS version 20 at 5% level of significance. The result revealed that employee dissatisfaction and perceived unfair practices have an effect on job commitment in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State and this effect was

statistically significant. The findings indicate that employee dissatisfaction, and perceived unfair practices has an effect on job commitment in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, and this effect was statistically significant.

Ujomudyke, Dike, Okeke and Eboh (2024) investigating the effect of government policies and performance of pharmaceutical firms in South-East, Nigeria The result of the hypotheses showed that Tax Policies has a significant positive effect on competitive advantage of Pharmaceutical industries in South-East, Nigeria. Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient values between tax policies and competitive advantage of Pharmaceutical industries revealed ($r = 0.769$, $p < 0.05$); Regulatory Policies has a significant positive effect on quality control of pharmaceutical industries in South-East, Nigeria. Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient values between regulatory policies and quality control shows ($r = .790$, at $p < 0.05$).

Akobi, Umeora, & Atueyi (2021). examined the effect of government expenditure on inflation rate in Nigeria within a period of 39 years spanning (1981-2019). Our findings indicate that government expenditure on education has a positive and insignificant effect on the inflation rate. It was also discovered that government expenditure on agriculture and government expenditure on education have positive but insignificant effects on the inflation rate, while government expenditure on health and government expenditure on telecommunications have positive and significant effects on inflation rate.

Okeke, Akpamgbo, Dike and Williams (2025) investigates the influence of workplace management on organizational productivity among aluminum manufacturing firms in Anambra State, Nigeria. The research focuses on the effects of resource management, employee training, and inventory planning on operational efficiency and normative commitment. Using a descriptive survey design, data were collected from a sample of 359 employees selected via stratified random sampling. Pearson correlation analysis revealed a moderate to strong positive relationship between resource management and operational efficiency ($r = 0.62$, $p = 0.0001$), indicating that effective resource allocation enhances productivity.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey design to assess the employee grievances and organization performance of noodle firms in Anambra state. The primary source of data was used in this study because of the variables that were used. Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from the respondents. The target population of this study was made of the staff working in the selected noodle firms in Anambra state (-Tummy Foods Industrial Plc, Jolly Jolly Noodles and Zubix Noodles). The population of the study consists of three hundred and

twenty-seven (327) active staff in the firm. Correlation analysis techniques were used to test the hypotheses of the study.

4. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

s/n	Options	No of Respondents	Percentage %
1	Questionnaire Distributed	327	100%
2	Questionnaire Returned/ Completed	317	96.9%
3	Questionnaire Completed	10	3.1%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.1 showed that a total number of three hundred and twenty-seven (327) copies of questionnaire were distributed to the respondents, three hundred and seventeen (317) copies which represented 95.9% were returned, ten (10) copies which represented 4.1% were not duly completed by the respondents,

H₀₁: Work overload has no significant effect on organization performance of noodle firms in Anambra state

Correlations

			OGP	WOL
Spearman's rho	OGP	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.141*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.012
		N	317	317
		Bootstrap ^c Bias	.000	-.002
		Std. Error	.000	.056
	WOL	BCa 95% Confidence Lower	.	-.238
		Interval Upper	.	-.045
		Correlation Coefficient	-.141*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	.
		N	317	317
	Bootstrap ^c	Bias	-.002	.000
		Std. Error	.056	.000

	BCa 95% Confidence	Lower	-.238	.
	Interval	Upper	-.045	.

*, Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

c. Unless otherwise noted, bootstrap results are based on 317 bootstrap samples

Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 OGP - WOL	-.44479	1.61900	.09093	-.62370	-.26589	-4.892	316	.000

Table 1a indicates the relationship between the independent variable work overload and the dependent variable organizational performance. At a 0.05 level of significance, 95% confidence level interval ranges between -.045 and -.26589 at the upper case, and also -.238 and -.62370 at the lower case, with a 2 tailed test of sample distribution showing the critical area in a distribution. The spearman correlation coefficient shows a value of -14% which shows a weak negative correlation coefficient between the dependent and independent variable.

$$\text{Model 1= OGP} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ WOL} + \mu$$

Table 1 indicates the difference in mean value (-.44479) and standard deviation (1.61900) for the extent of relationship that existed between the variables included in the group. The single group variables in model one of the hypotheses are represented by OGP & WOL (work overload and organizational performance).

However, the paired sample t-test showed that organizational performance decreased significantly when work overload is not adhered to. A t-test value of work overload is said to be significantly high when it is above or equal to 2 (t-value > 2), but when the t-value is less than 2 (t-value < 2), it is concluded that the perceived outcome within the paired sample has no significant relationship. In conclusion to this result, the t-value was obtained at -4.892 which is significantly high. The study therefore concluded that there is a significant negative relationship

between work overload and organizational performance of noodle firms in Anambra state, Nigeria.

Decision Rule: Accept the null hypothesis if the p-value is greater than 0.05, otherwise, reject.

Decision: We reject the null hypothesis, since the p-value is 0.000** which is less than the critical value 0.05, this study reveals that Work overload has a significant negative effect on organizational performance of noodle firms in Anambra state, Nigeria.

H0₂: Toxic work environment has no significant effect on organization performance of noodle firms in Anambra state, Nigeria.

Correlations

			OGP	TWE
Spearman's rho	OGP	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.173**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.002
		N	317	317
		Bootstrap ^c Bias	.000	.002
		Std. Error	.000	.052
		BCa 95% Confidence Interval	Lower	.073
			Upper	.285
	TWE	Correlation Coefficient	.173**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.
		N	317	317
		Bootstrap ^c Bias	.002	.000
		Std. Error	.052	.000
		BCa 95% Confidence Interval	Lower	.073
			Upper	.285

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

c. Unless otherwise noted, bootstrap results are based on 317 bootstrap samples

Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 OGP - TWE	-.2208 2	-1.50373	-.08446	-.05465	-.38699	-2.615	316	.009

Table 1a indicates the relationship between the independent variable Toxic work environment and the dependent variable organizational performance. At a 0.05 level of significance, 95% confidence level interval ranges between .285 and .38699 at the upper case, and also .073 and .05465 at the lower case, with a 2 tailed test of sample distribution showing the critical area in a distribution. The spearman correlation coefficient shows a value of .173% which shows a high correlation coefficient between the dependent and independent variable.

$$\text{Model 1} = \text{ORG} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{TWE} + \mu$$

Table 1 indicates the difference in mean value (-.22082) and standard deviation (-1.50373) for the extent of relationship that existed between the variables included in the group. The single group variables in model one of the hypotheses are represented by ORG & TWE (organizational performance and Toxic work environment).

However, the paired sample t-test showed that organization performance decreased significantly when Toxic work environment is adhered to. A t-test value of Toxic work environment is said to be significantly high when it is above or equal to 2 (t-value > 2), but when the t-value is less than 2 (t-value < 2), it is concluded that the perceived outcome within the paired sample has significant effect. In conclusion to this result, the t-value was obtained at -2.615 which is negatively high. The study therefore concluded that there is a significant negative relationship between Toxic work environment and the organization performance of noodle firms in Anambra state, Nigeria.

Decision Rule: Accept the null hypothesis if the p-value is greater than 0.05, otherwise, reject.

Decision: We reject the null hypothesis, since the p-value is 0.000** which is less than the critical value 0.05, this study reveals that Toxic work environment has a significant negative effect on the organization performance of noodle firms in Anambra state, Nigeria.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Grievances can lower employee morale, leading to reduced productivity, increased absenteeism, reducing recruitment and training costs and higher turnover rates in any organisation. Unaddressed grievances can lead to negative publicity, tarnishing the organization's reputation and making it more difficult to attract top talent and maintain customer loyalty. Unresolved grievances can also lead to expensive legal battles and increased costs associated with recruiting, training, and retaining new employees. Organizations with effective grievance management systems tend to have higher employee morale, which translates to higher productivity and better customer service. Organizations that handle employee grievances with sensitivity and fairness tend to have a positive reputation, which can help attract and retain top talent. The study recommends that the management should encourage employees to maintain a healthy work-life balance, promoting flexible working hours and time-off policies that enable employees to manage their workloads more effectively. The study encourages open communication among employees, creating a safe and supportive environment where employees feel comfortable raising concerns and seeking solutions.

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