LATENESS AND ABSENTEEISM IN PUBLIC SERVICES: EVALUATION OF MANAGEMENT ATTITUDE TOWARDS EMPLOYEES DEDICATION TO WORK.

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Abstract
Lateness and absenteeism remains one of the challenges of Nigeria public services. This to a large extent has been attributed to the ineffectiveness and inefficiencies in organizations. It is vital that public officers and employees be accountable to the people through serving them with utmost responsibility and patriotism. However, there seems to be problems on the part of the employees as well as the management staff who are supposed to be responsible for the good conduct of employees. This paper provides an evaluations and explanations to why employees may decide to be late or decide not to show for work.

Keywords: Lateness, Absenteeism and Motivation.

Background to the study
Lateness has been literally defined as a situation where an individual arrives after the proper, scheduled or usual time (Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary, 5th ed., 1995). Lateness has also been conceptualized as people not showing up on time (Lauby, 2009). Lateness has been viewed as "tardiness", which refers to being slow to act or slow to respond, therefore not meeting up with proper or usual timing (Breeze, 2010). It is obvious therefore that, lateness could be seen as a system of network breakdown (Peretomode, 1991)

Absenteeism is an employee's intentional or habitual absence from work. Absenteeism is also broadly defined as being absent from a workstation. Absenteeism has been attributed to attitude toward work and the work environment (Cascio, 1999). Absenteeism may include taking time off to consult a doctor during working hours for reasons related one's health wellness, being absent for part of a day because of an illness or injury; or as a result of disability. Lateness and absenteeism are considered major problem that hinder productivity and both has been attributed to how passionate people are about their current goals (Alexander, 2004)

Causes of Absenteeism
Various reasons have been attributed to why people are absent in their place of work. While some are seen as legitimate, several others are not. The followings are some of the reasons:

Bullying and harassment – Workers absent from work when they are bullied or harassed by coworkers or bosses.

Stress – Too much stress, heavy workloads, stressful meetings and most importantly lack of appreciation in place of work can cause employees to avoid going into work may lead to absenteeism.

Depression – National Institute of Mental Health identified depression as the leading cause of absenteeism in the United States. As such depression is a major factor why workers are absent in place of work.

Commitment – Employees who are not committed to their jobs are more likely to miss work simply because they have no motivation to go.

Illness – Injuries, illness and medical appointments are the most commonly reported reasons for missing work (though not always the actual reason). Not surprisingly, each year during the cold and flu season, there is a dramatic spike in absenteeism rates for both full-time and part-time employees.

Injuries – Accidents can occur on the job or outside of work, resulting in absences. In addition to acute injuries, chronic injuries such as back and neck problems are a common cause of absenteeism.

Job hunting – Employees may call in sick to attend a job interview, visit with a headhunter or work on their resume.

Partial shifts – Arriving late, leaving early and taking longer breaks than allowed are considered forms of absenteeism and can affect productivity and workplace morale.

How to reduce absenteeism in organization
Absenteeism is a general problem that is basically difficult to bring to an end, this is because there are legitimate and poor excuses for missing work. More so; it can be challenging for employers to effectively monitor, control and reduce absenteeism. When an employee claimed that he or she is sick, unless a company requires a written excuse from a doctor, it can be difficult to determine if an employee is actually sick.

It is as a result of the various excuses of sickness that organizations have moved toward a mandatory paid sick leave policy, where each employee receives a specified number of days each year to use when sick. However, this has not deter some from being absent from place of work.

It is as a result of the above that scholars suggest steps ways to tackle absenteeism in place of work. It is a form of record which organization will used to appraise their staff.

Step 1
Meticulously record:
 All types of absenteeism of each employee each year,
Duration of each person's absenteeism,
Reasons for absenteeism.

Step 2
Follow-up each case of absenteeism:
 Pay visits to sick employees, when necessary, such as those who have excessive sick leave records,
Write letters recording absenteeism which are handed to the relevant employees and proof of receipt is obtained,
Conduct interviews with returning employees.

Absence from workstations without permission

It has also been suggested that employees should be disciplined for poor timekeeping as this constitutes being absent from work stations which impacts on an organization's running costs and work ethics. The following are examples of poor timekeeping: arriving late for duty on a regular basis, leaving work early, taking extended tea, lunch breaks, or toilet breaks, attending to private business during working hours; this could include sending and/or reading personal emails, surfing internet for non-work related matters, or any other activity that is of a private business nature.

Causes of Lateness

The habit of waking up late

Lateness may be attributed to individual act of sleeping late and waking up late. Some individuals are of the act of sleeping late as result of different activities which takes their time yet waking up late at the detriment of resuming to work.

Engagement in untimely domestic activities

Domestic activities are necessary but doing them at a wrong timing is what cause lateness to work. Activities like these inevitably cause lateness to workplace, either voluntarily or involuntarily.

Family background

Lateness has been attributed to what can be copied from family members. For instance, the child that sees the father always going late to work could also either voluntarily or involuntarily learn the habit, thus learn the habit of late coming. This is supported by Peretomode (2001) and Egbule (2004), when they elaborated the concept of NATURE-NURTURE as it affects an individual's habits.

Cultural background

Obviously African society generally and Nigeria specifically did not frown at the act of late coming. Infact, lateness we leave in a society where the culture does not frown at, or rather say anything about punctuality as ethics in a work environment, thus to most individuals, punctuality is not really a serious matter, compared with how punctuality is being perceived in Western cultures and developed countries (Breeze et al., 2010). 60 Int. J. Sci. Technol. Educ. Res

Lack of effective and efficient punctuality policy

Obviously, individuals could come late to work, if they perceive that there are no consequences to it. Workers tend to come late to work when he or she is sure there will be no consequences for coming late to work. Individuals are likely to be more punctual, if they perceive obvious "rule of law" in terms of punctuality (Clackmannanshire Council Online, 2010).

Effects of Lateness to School

Scholars have identified different implication of late coming to the place of work. Some are of the view that it brings about low productivity in organization; some scholars have attributed effects of late coming to the organizational ineffectiveness and inefficiencies. The following are some of the scholars viewed:

Lateness disorganizes and causes distraction to the individual and the whole system

Lateness has been identified as one of the factors that may disorganize and as well disorganized individual worker and invariably the organization as a whole. When a worker is not focus in his or her duty as a result of late coming hardly can he or she perform well in place of work. As such, he or she can not contribute positively to the development of an organization (Allen & Hamilton, 2001:2).

Lateness inhibits the process of achieving the goals of the organization

Organization has human as well as material component; this is to enable easy achievement of the goals and objectives of establishing the organization. Therefore, if the employers' goal is to make for the organization some money and the individual's contribution to the organization could be N20 per hour. If he or she comes 30 min late every day, thus N10 is lost every day as a result of lateness. Ali (2007) was of the viewed that"… showing up 10 min late could add up to lots of lost revenue for the company and the individual

How to reduce lateness in organization

1. There should be a functional punctuality policy; this is one of the major responsibilities of the management staff. Punctuality policies to help watch staff lackluster attitude towards time. because basically whatever happens in the system would be credited to the management staff.

2. Staff should be sensitized and made aware of the effects of lateness to them and the entire organization, and also the benefits of punctuality to them first and then to the entire organization.

3. There should also be motivation and reinforcement for punctuality. For instance, awarding prizes for punctuality could go a long way in enhancing punctuality.

4. Government on its part should improve transportation and other economic activities in the country. This has being the major reason why some workers come to work late.

Assessment of Management Attitude

Management of people at work is an integral part of the management process. It is important to understand the critical importance of people in the organization and that the human element and the organization are synonymous. Several factors have been identified to why workers are late as well as absent in their places of work. However, there are some important variable to generally evaluate as regards the management attitude towards workers.

1.   Motivation

Motivation is a basic psychological process. A recent data-based comprehensive analysis concluded that competitiveness problems appear to be largely motivational in nature (Mine, Ebrahimi, and Wachtel, 1995). Along with perception, personality, attitudes, and learning, motivation is a very important element of behaviour. Nevertheless, motivation is not the only explanation of behaviour. It interacts with and acts in conjunction with other cognitive processes. Motivating is the management process of influencing behaviour based on the knowledge of what make people tick (Luthans, 1998). Luthans stressed that motivation arouses, energizes, directs, and sustains behaviour and performance. That is to say that motivation plays the role of driving force. It is the process of stimulating people to action and to achieve a desired task.

Luthan (1998) argued that motivation should not be thought of as the only explanation of behaviour, since it interacts with and acts in conjunction with other mediating processes and with the environment. Luthan stress that, like the other cognitive process, motivation cannot be seen. All that can be seen is behaviour, and this should not be equated with causes of behaviour. While recognizing the central role of motivation, Evans (1998) states that many recent theories of organizational behaviour find it important for the field to re-emphasize behaviour. Definitions of motivation abound. One thing these definitions have in common is the inclusion of words such as "desire", "want", "wishes","aim","goals", "needs", and" incentives". Luthan (1998) defines motivation as, "a process that starts with a physiological deficiency or need that activates a behaviour or a drive that is aimed at a goal incentive". Therefore, the key to understanding the process of motivation lies in the meaning of, and relationship among, needs, drives, and incentives. Relative to this, Minner, Ebrahimi, and Watchel, (1995) state that in a system sense, motivation consists of these three interacting and interdependent elements, i.e., needs, drives, and incentives.

Managers and management researchers have long believe that organizational goals are not attainable without the enduring commitment of members of the organizations. Motivation is a human psychological characteristic that contributes to a person's degree of commitment (Stoke, 1999). It includes the factors that cause, channel, and sustain human behaviour in a particular committed direction. Stoke, in Adeyemo (1999) goes on to say that there are basic assumptions of motivation practices by managers which must be understood. First, that motivation is commonly assumed to be a good thing. One cannot feel very good about oneself if one is not motivated. Second, motivation is one of several factors that go into a person's performance (e.g., as a librarian). Factors such as ability, resources, and conditions under which one performs are also important. Third, managers and researchers alike assume that motivation is in short supply and in need of periodic replenishment.

Fourth, motivation is a tool with which managers can use in organizations. If managers know what drives the people working for them, they can tailor job assignments and rewards to what makes these people "tick." Motivation can also be conceived of as whatever it takes to encourage workers to perform by fulfilling or appealing to their needs. To Olajide (2000), "it is goal-directed, and therefore cannot be outside the goals of any organization whether public, private, or non-profit".

The following has been identified as the Strategies of Motivating Workers: Salary, Wages and Conditions of Service; Money; Staff Training; Information Availability and Communication:

The above shows the importance of motivation. It shows that to a large extent we can link worker late coming and absenteeism to the motivation given to them in their place of work.

2.   Job Satisfaction

Locke and Lathan (1976) give a comprehensive definition of job satisfaction as pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience. Job satisfaction is a result of employee's perception of how well their job provides those things that are viewed as important. According to (Mitchell and Lasan, 1987), it is generally recognized in the organizational behaviour field that job satisfaction is the most important and frequently studied attitude. While Luthan (1998) posited that there are three important dimensions to job satisfaction:

a.   Job satisfaction is an emotional response to a job situation. As such it cannot be seen, it can only be inferred.

b.   Job satisfaction is often determined by how well outcome meet or exceed expectations. For instance, if organization participants feel that they are working much harder than others in the department but are receiving fewer rewards they will probably have a negative attitudes towards the work, the boss and or coworkers. On the other hand, if they feel they are being treated very well and are being paid equitably, they are likely to have positive attitudes towards the job.

c.   Job satisfaction represents several related attitudes which are most important characteristics of a job about which people have effective response. These to Luthans are: the work itself, pay, promotion opportunities, supervision and coworkers.

Job satisfaction is so important in that its absence often leads to lethargy and reduced organizational commitment

(Levinson, 1997, Moser, 1997). Lack of job satisfaction is a predictor of quitting a job (Alexander, Litchtenstein and Hellmann, 1997; Jamal, 1997). Sometimes workers may quit from public to the private sector and vice versa. At the other times the movement is from one profession to another that is considered a greener pasture. This later is common in countries grappling with dwindling economy and its concomitant such as poor conditions of service and late payment of salaries (Nwagwu, 1997). In such countries, people tend to migrate to better and consistently paying jobs (Fafunwa, 1971). Explaining its nature some researcher (e.g. Armentor, Forsyth, 1995, Flanegan, Johnson and Berret, 1996; Kadushin, and Kulys, 1995) tend to agree that job satisfaction is essentially controlled by factors described in Adeyemo's (2000) perspectives as external to the worker. From this viewpoint satisfaction

on a job might be motivated by the nature of the job, its pervasive social climate and extent to which workers peculiar needs are met. Working conditions that are similar to local and international standard (Osagbemi, 2000), and extent to which they resemble work conditions of other professions in the locality. Other inclusions are the availability of power and status, pay satisfaction, promotion opportunities, and task clarity (Bolarin, 1993; Gemenxhenandez, Max, Kosier, Paradiso and Robinson, 1997).

Other researchers (e.g. MacDonald, 1996; O'Toole, 1980) argue in favour of the control of job satisfaction by factors intrinsic to the workers. Their arguments are based on the idea that workers deliberately decide to find satisfaction in their jobs and perceive them as worthwhile.

3.   Organizational Commitment

A wide variety of definitions and measure of organizational commitment exist. Beckeri, Randal, and Riegel (1995) defined the term in a three dimensions:

1.   a strong desire to remain a member of a particular organization;
2.   a willingness to exert high levels of efforts on behalf of the organization;
3.   a define belief in and acceptability of the values and goals of the organization.

To Northcraft and Neale (1996), commitment is an attitude reflecting an employee's loyalty to the organization, and an ongoing process through which organization members express their concern for the organization and its continued success and wellbeing.

Organizational commitment is determined by a number of factor, including personal factors (e.g., age, tenure in the organization, disposition, internal or external control attributions); organizational factors (job design and the leadership style of one's supervisor); non-organizational factors (availability of alternatives). All these things affect subsequent commitment (Nortcraft and Neale, 1996).

Mowday, Porter, and Steer (1982) see commitment as attachment and loyalty. These authors describe three components of commitment:

a.   an identification with the goals and values of the organization;
b.   a desire to belong to the organization; and
c.   a willingness to display effort on behalf of the organization.

A similar definition of commitment emphasizes the importance of behaviour in creating it. Salancik (1977) conceives commitment as a state of being in which an individual becomes bound by his actions and it is these actions that sustain his activities and involvement. From this definition, it can be inferred that three features of behaviour are important in binding individuals to act: visibility of acts, the extent to which the outcomes are irrevocable; and the degree to which the person undertakes the action voluntarily. To Salancik therefore, commitment can be increased and harnessed to obtain support for the organizational ends and interests through such things as participation in decision-making.

Based on the multidimensional nature of organizational commitment, there is growing support for a three-component model proposed by Meyer and Allen (1991). All three components have implications for the continuing participation of the individual in the organization. The three components are: Affective Commitment: Psychological attachment to organization. Continuance Commitment: Costs associated with leaving the organization. Normative Commitment: Perceived obligation to remain with the organization.

Guest (1991) concludes that high organizational commitment is associated with lower turnover and absence, but there is no clear link to performance. It is probably wise not to expect too much from commitment as a means of making a direct and immediate impact on performance. It is not the same as motivation. Commitment is a broader concept and tends to withstand transitory aspects of an employee's job. It is possible to be dissatisfied with a particular feature of a job while retaining a reasonably high level of commitment to the organization as a whole. When creating a commitment strategy, Amstrong, 1999 asserts that "it is difficult to deny that it is desirable for management to have defined strategic goals and values. And it is equally desirable from management point of view for employees to behave in a way that support those strategies and values." Creating commitment includes communication, education, training programmes, and initiatives to increase involvement and ownership and the development of performance and reward management systems.

Studies on commitment have provided strong evidence that affective and normative commitments are positively related and continuance commitment is negatively connected with organizational outcomes such as performance and citizenship behaviour (Hackett, Bycio, and Handsdoff, 1994; Shore and Wayne, 1993). Based on this finding, it is important for library employers to identify librarians' commitment pattern and map out strategies for enhancing those that are relevant to organizational goals. Researchers (e.g. Mayer and Allen, 1997) have found that age was positively correlated with affective and normative commitment, but not to continuance commitment. Meyer and Allen (1991), in an exploratory and confirmatory analysis of factors that can significantly predict job satisfaction and organizational commitment among blue collar workers, reported that promotion, satisfaction, job characteristics, extrinsic and intrinsic exchange, as well as extrinsic and intrinsic rewards, were related to commitment.

Research Questions
The following research questions were developed to guide the study.
1.   Why do workers come late to work?
2.   Why do workers absent from work?
3.   What is the role of management staff in workers lateness and absenteeism?

Methodology
The study used a descriptive survey design. A descriptive survey, according to Ezeani (1998), helps to collect detailed and factual information that describes an existing phenomenon.
The target populations of the study were workers of Katsina state board of Onland Revenue. Overall Total 220

There were 210 participants. Of these, 52 (24.8%) were females; while 158 (75.2%) were males. Their age ranges from23-56 years, with a mean age of 39.5 years. The academic qualifications of the participants are: WAEC; OND; NCE; B.Sc; B.Ed & M.Sc, MLS, MA, PhD.

Instrument

A modified questionnaire was used for the collection of data on the study. The questionnaire was basically designed to accomplish the objectives of the study. The first section collected information relevant to socio biography of the respondents. Questions such as age, sex, experience, professional status, marital status, position, and so on where asked. The second section contained the items, and was divided into three parts.

a.   Why do workers come late to work?
b.   Why do workers absent from work?
c.   What is the role of management staff in workers lateness and absenteeism?

Procedure

The researcher administered the instrument to the staff of Katsina Inland Revenue after the approval of their management. Following the instructions on the instrument, the questionnaires were filled and returned.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, Correlation, and Multiple classification methods were employed to analyze the collected data.

Results

1.   Why do workers come late to work?
2.   Why do workers absent from work?
3.   What is the role of management staff in workers lateness and absenteeism?

The results of the analysis on the study are presented as follows:

Research Question   1: Why do workers come late to work?

Table 1: Showing why workers come late to work

	Senior staff		Junior staff	
Factors	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Financial	11	15.9	57	37.7
Promotion	10	14.5	24	15.9
Job security	10	14.5	40	26.5
Increase responsibility	24	34.8	19	12.6
Opportunity for personal growth	14	20.3	11	7.3
Total	**69**	**100%**	**151**	**100%**

The table shows that financial incentives are major factors that determine workers' lateness in place of work. The responses indicate that 37.7% has the highest response.

Research Question 2: Why do workers absent from work?
Table 2: Showing why workers absent from work

Factors	Senior staff		Junior staff	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Financial	11	15.9	57	37.7
Promotion	10	14.5	24	15.9
Job security	10	14.5	40	26.5
Increase responsibility	24	34.8	19	12.6
Opportunity for personal growth	14	20.3	11	7.3
Total	69	100%	151	100%

Table two also indicates the same result as the above. It shows that to largely financial incentives are the major determinants of workers absenteeism in places of work.

Research Question 3: What is the role of management staff in workers lateness and absenteeism?

Table 3: showing roles of management staff in lateness and absenteeism of workers

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	40	18.2
No	180	81.8
Total	220	100%

Table 3 shows the response of the respondent that management staff has a great role to play in th workers and absenteeism. In a bid to evaluate the management attitude towards workers punctuality and absenteeism; it shows that only 18.2% respondents were of the view that management has been performing their role as regards supervising and management of workers punctuality and absenteeism.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that there is a relationship between motivation, job satisfaction, commitment and why workers come late to work. This is consistent with (Brown and Shepherd, 1997) who reported that motivation improves workers' performance and job satisfaction. The result also agrees with Chess (1994), reported that certain motivational factors contribute to the prediction of job satisfaction. The data indicate that there are relationship between motivational incentives and workers lateness to work, similarly to Naseer's proposition (2009) that workers' who are satisfied are half as likely to be late in any month as those who are not. The data shows that motivational incentives are very influential in improving workers' dedication and punctuality at place of work. Motivational incentives such as financial incentives or reward, job security, promotion, increased responsibility, and opportunity for personal growth motivate workers to efficiently and effectively conform to time in their place of work.

The data indicates that management attitudes toward time are poor and lack-luster. As such, staff takes advantage of that to satisfy their own personal commitment. Aljaradat and Jadallah (2011) proposition were also consistent with this study when they stated that "overlooking the employees' lateness to work makes workers to have freedom and personal commitment". The study also shows that the organization assigned people with the responsibility of supervising workers' punctuality. However, they are not effectively and efficiently performing their functions. The data also shows that issue of punctuality was not a basic priority on the part of the management since it somehow does not touch the main objectives

of the organization. May be this explain why there are no any incentives specifically meant for those properly managing their work time. It also explains to some extent reason why calling on staff to discuss issue of punctuality is not a priority. The study also found that annual or monthly incentives for those conforming to organization's time which may also serve as motivation for others who are not properly managing their time are not provided. The data shows that although there are organization's measures to be taken on workers who are not conforming to organization's time but practical implementation of those measures are lacking.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study may therefore be concluded as follows, that lateness in organization is a result of inadequate motivational incentives given to workers. That although, there are motivational incentives for workers, the problem of workers poor management of time is the inadequacy of the incentives given by the organization. Workers are also taking advantages of management attitude towards time to poorly manage work time. Also, importantly, the act of poor time management is affecting organizational goal. And based on the findings of this study, the following suggestions are offered:

1. Motivational incentives should be improved by the management, especially in terms of the financial incentives, promotion and opportunity for personal growth.
2. When promotion and other motivational incentives are given to workers, punctual should include one of the criteria's.
4. Workers pay package should be commensurate with their dedication to work and also their punctuality in place of work. This will to a large extent improve the dedication on the part of those who are already doing so and as well encourage those were not. This would have an invariable impact both organizational and national development.
5. It is also important that those who are given the responsibility of supervising workers' punctuality to be informed on the implication of their not performing their duty.
6. Monthly or annual awards should be given to workers who are punctual and who are habitually coming to work.
7. Some kind of measure (i.e. time registration) should be introduced in other to track down the record of staff whose attitude towards time is poor.
8. There is need for proper implementation of the system of sanction employed by the organization.
9. There should be a kind of incentives for those conforming to work's time.
10. It is also important, if possible for the organization to have staff's bus purposely meant for conveying staffs. This might save the organization from staff's excuses of different kinds.
11. There should be a kind of sensitizing program on the implication of lateness and absenteeism.

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