

Industrial relations management practice in manufacturing firms' performance in South South Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated industrial relations management practice and manufacturing firms' performance in South South Nigeria. Specifically, the study evaluated the effect of Employer, employee relations, Labour relations, group relations, and public relations on Manufacturing Firms Performance in South South Nigeria. To achieve the objectives of the study, four research questions were raised and four hypotheses were formulated. Related literature was reviewed in respect to the subject matter. The study adopted a descriptive survey design with a population of 385 employees from four selected manufacturing firms in South South Nigeria. The sample size was 191 which was derived from the total population. Questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The research questions were answered using simple percentage and mean. The hypotheses were tested using multiple regressions in SPSS 25 at a significant level of 0.05. The findings of the study revealed as follows: there are significant relationships between employer, employee relations; Labour relations; Group relations and public relations on manufacturing firms' performance. It was concluded that Industrial Relation Management Practice ensures employees happiness, productivity, enhance employee recognition, policy development and interpretation. Increase employee morale, motivation and establish work environment that cultivates positive attitude in the employees. It ensures employees are paid for their work and employers receive qualitative work. It helps management to make proper decisions and act as determinant of production and labour costs. It was recommended among others that manufacturing firms should maintain the practices of employer, employee relations to ensure employees happiness, productivity, and establish work environment that cultivates positive attitude in the employees.

Keywords: Industrial Relations Management; Practice; Employer – Employees Relations; Labour Relations; Group Relations; Public Relations; Organisational Performance

1. Introduction

Industrial Relations arises from the relationships between employees or labour unions, organization management and employers' associations, government and institutions. (1) The State/Government, "which is a regulator and peacemaker, sets the legal framework within which other actors conduct or relate with each other in industrial relations practice," is one of the three primary parties in industrial relations, according to Frank & Jeffry (2020). (2) Labor/Trade Unions: "they speak for workers' interests." Both economic and noneconomic issues, such as power, sharing in the workplace and in society at large, are of great importance to trade unions. The unions like the other actors have great responsibilities for good industrial relations and to ensure that the mass power in their hand is channeled to a constructive end". (3) Employers, Employers' Associations, "by which the employers are represented by their industrial employers' associations". Employers' associations negotiate on behalf of their members, offer administrative and advisory support when needed, and defend their members from overbearing demands from influential unions. In industrial relations, the role of the unions and employers frequently dictates how things turn out (Ademola, 2021).

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Industrial relations management is an organisation's strategic scheme designed to help, administer and coordinate business functions. The goal is to help organisations manage their workforce in the most efficient and effective manner, in order to achieve set objectives. For this reason, organizations need industrial relations management practice to succeed and achieve organizational goal. Industrial relations management practice includes labour relation, employer, employee relation, group relation and public relation among others (Ugo & Awulikam, 2020), which is the focus of this study. Industrial relations arise due to interactions between different persons/parties. These parties according to Sholokwu & Olori, (2016) are: supervisors, workers trade unions, employers' associations. Interactive process takes place between, supervisors and industrial workers, supervisors and group/team members, management and trade union leaders, employers' federations and workers' unions.

According to Worlu, Osibanjo Ogunnaike Salau, and Igbinoba (2016), the term "employee, employer relationship" encompasses a wide range of topics, including collective bargaining, negotiations, employment laws, and more contemporary challenges like work, life balance, equal opportunities, and managing diversity. It includes the procedures or programs designed to guarantee that workers are content and productive. Akinbode, Sokefun, Ogunrinade and Ebeloku (2023) reveal, "labour relation is more than a static interpretation of contract between an employee and an employer. Employee role in organization has grown over time"; thus, labor relations become a way to live, to self-development and to obtain recognition. Employers realize that to keep motivated and committed people in an organization, it needs more than a salary. Nunung, Raden, Mohammad and Erna (2017) report, "Group relation is a relationship between groups and their formation takes different dimensions in relation to the interplay of several factors in their environment. When a good dynamic exists within a group to work toward a common goal, each individual member will perform effectively and achieve goals set by the group". Nwanmuoh, Chi, Ogbuka, Ifediora, Charles and Godwin (2023) say, "Public relation is a vital part of any business' communications and reputation, building strategy. This is about relationships and reputation which involve gaining trust among publics an organisation tries to reach".

Industrial relations system of a firm is influenced by different factors. According to Mirza (2022), these are: "institutional factors, economic factors, social factors, technological factors, psychological factors, political factors, enterprise, related factors and global factors", which determine the texture of industrial relations in any setting. In fact, they act, interact, and reinforce one another in the course of developing industrial relations. Understanding industrial relations is important for human resources professionals and managers, as it allows positive workplace development relationships. Knowing how to manage these relations effectively can provide companies with methods that foster productivity and success (Abushawish, 2020; Nwankwo, Nkechi & Adanso, 2023).

1.1. Problem statement

Industrial relations are of great importance in industrial life. These relations have great bearing on the economic, social and political spheres of a firm. In an organisation, if relations between labour and management are cordial, there will be industrial peace and interests of both parties will be safeguarded. Organizations with strained labor relations, however, deal with a lot of issues. Such organizations' environments are constantly tense with industrial discontent that might result in lockouts or strikes.

Poor industrial relations can affect major parties such as: (1) effect on workers: "include loss of wages, physical injury or death on account of violence during labour unrest, excesses by employers, economic losses, bitterness in relations, adverse effect on career". (2) Effect on employers / industrialists: "include less production, less profit, bad effect on organisation, bad effect on human relations, damage to machines and equipment, adverse effect on development of companies and burden of fixed expenses". (3) Effect on government: "include loss of revenue, lack of order in society, blame by different parties". Other effects include, (a) effect on consumers such as rise in prices, scarcity of goods and bad effect on quality of goods. (b) Adverse effect on international trade such as fall in exports and rise in imports, hindrance in economic development of the country and uncertainty in economy.

Thus, the reasons for this study to evaluate Industrial Relations Management Practice and Manufacturing Firms Performance in South South Nigeria.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

The general objectives of this study are to evaluate industrial relations management practice and manufacturing firms' performance in South South Nigeria.

1.2.1. The specific objectives are to

- Evaluate the effect of employer, employee relation on manufacturing firms' performance in South South Nigeria.
- Assess the effect of labour relation on manufacturing firms' performance in South South Nigeria.
- Determine the effect of group relation on manufacturing firms' performance in South South Nigeria.
- Examine the effect of public relation on manufacturing firms' performance in South South Nigeria.

1.3. Research Questions

- What is the effect of employer, employee relation on manufacturing firms' performance in South South Nigeria?
- What is the effect of labour relation on manufacturing firms' performance in South South Nigeria?
- What is the effect of group relation on manufacturing firms' performance in South South Nigeria?
- What is the effect of public relation on manufacturing firms' performance in South South Nigeria?

1.4. Hypothesis

- **H₀₁:** There is no significant relationship between employer, employee relation and manufacturing firms in South South Nigeria.
- **H₀₂:** There is no significant relationship between labour relation and manufacturing firms' performance in South South Nigeria.
- **H₀₃:** There is no significant relationship between group relation and manufacturing firms' performance in South South Nigeria.
- **H₀:** There is no significant relationship between public relation and manufacturing firms' performance in South South Nigeria.

1.5. Significance of the study

This study is significant as it contributes to the growing body of knowledge on industrial relations management practice and manufacturing firms' performance. To organizations, the study will enable better work culture, forecasting future human needs, improved customer satisfaction rates, productivity boost, selecting and utilizing motivational tools, and setting efficient employees to achieve specific goals. The study will also be significant to individual employee; it would help to achieve their personal goals, job satisfaction, self-development and create environment for continuous learning. To managements, this study will help to make business decisions that enhance processes, products and services, and result in superior performance and profits. The study will enable top management to understand the importance of industrial relations management practice and implement it.

1.6. Scope

The study is concerned with manufacturing firms that are situated in the Southern Nigeria. This study covers four selected four (4) selected manufacturing firms in southern part of Nigeria. namely, Brightway Glove Port Harcourt, Life Flour Mill Sapele, Glosa Roofing Benin City, and Senalux Paint Yenagoa. The variables considered in this study include: labour relations, employers, employee's relations, public relations and manufacturing firm performance. The study specifically focuses on four key components; employer, employee relations, labour relations, group relations and public relations. It will assess how these practices influence the efficiency of services rendered within the manufacturing sector. The study does not cover firms outside the manufacturing industry or those located outside South South, Nigeria.

2. Review of related literature

The conceptual framework of this study comprises the identification and clarifications of the key variables which are industrial relations, organizational performance and industrial relations management. The conceptualization approach provides a structured framework to examine the extent to which the industrial relations components influence the organizational performance of manufacturing firms in South South Nigeria.

2.1. Industrial Relation

Industrial Relation is one of the problems that can jeopardize firms' success. The term "Industrial Relations (IR)" is also known as a "labour Management Relations" or "labour relations". The term „Industrial Relations" comprises of two terms (Emuchay, 2018): (1). Industry, refers to "Any productive activity in which an individual or a group of individuals is are engaged". (2.) Relations, it means "the relationships that exist within the industry between the employer and his workmen". Adagbabiri .and Okolie (2017) the term industrial relations refers to "the whole field of relationship that

exists because of necessary collaboration in employment process of modern industry". Industrial relations are nothing but "Employment Relationship" in an industrial setting. According to Osah et al. (2017), industrial relations include all "the laws, rules, regulation, agreements award of court, customs, traditions, as well as policy framework laid by the government".

Instead of adopting industrial relations techniques solely to conduct disciplinary actions and advocate for employees, Spector (2018) contended that competition compelled industrial relations to play a strategic role as a business partner. Industrial relations managers use their knowledge to help business managers resolve employee complaints, conflicts, and legal issues as well as to advise line managers on how to enhance employee performance and behavior. Thus, Industrial Relation involves the study of conditions of work, mainly the level of wages, security of employment, social conflict, and cultural interactions legal aspects of disputes under laws etc. International Labour Organization (ILO) in Fatile and Adekanbi (2017) reveals, "Industrial relations deal with either the relationship between the state and employers and workers organizations or the relation between the occupational organizations themselves". According to Spector (2018), "Industrial relation is a relationship between management and employees or among employees and their organization that characterizes and grows out of employment". According to Kormene, Seth and Ojiabo (2017), "Industrial relations is concerned with the systems and procedures used by unions and employers to determine the reward for effort and other conditions of employment, to protect the interests of the employed and their employers and to regulate the ways in which employers treat their employees". Thus, Industrial relations refer the relationship that exists between the employer and employees in the day to day working of an organization (Solanke, 2022).

2.2. Industrial Relation Management

Employees cannot work together without positive relationships with their colleagues and leadership team. Effective teams are created when relationships are managed well, fostering mutual respect, cooperation, openness to new ideas, and smooth operation. According to Raimi and Adias (2018), companies must first see their workers as contributors and stakeholders in order to preserve good employee relations. By adopting this viewpoint, executives and management are encouraged to ask for and value employee input, as well as to take the employee experience into account when making company choices. Industrial relations management involves (Adejuwon, 2020): (1) Managing relationships with unions & ensuring that the Company's treatment of employees is consistent with its core business values and objectives. (2) Handling complaints, managing grievance procedures, and facilitating counseling in conjunction with other stakeholders. (3) Investigating and resolving complex or critical industrial relations issues in a timely and effective manner. (4) Collating and analyzing employee feedback across all levels on a regular basis and revising people programs and policies to generate more positive outcomes. (5) Participating in and/or leading projects focused on continuous improvement.

The major parties in industrial relations according to Armstrong (2019) include: employer, employees and state/government that plays significant roles in successful management of industrial relation. Industrial relations management practice involves: employer, employee relations, labour relations, group relations and public relations among. The bargaining power of the employers is weakened in comparison to that of trade unions, though they have high bargaining power when compared to that of employees. So, they form into associations to equate their bargaining power with trade union, and these associations protect the employer by putting pressure on government and trade union. Workers play a crucial role in industrial relation. Worker as a whole includes his working age, educational background, Social and family background, psychological traits, Talents, Skills, Culture, Attitude towards others work. Worker's form into their associations called "Trade Unions" to get their problems solved. The trade unions work for workers economic interest through collective bargaining by bringing the pressure on the management through economic and political strategies. Government plays a balancing role in industrial relations. Government has its influence on industrial relations through industrial relations policy, Labour policy, Labour law implementation, Acting as a mediator in the process of conciliation and adjudication. Government regulates the behaviour of both the employer association and workers organizations (Solanke, 2022; Uzoh 2017).

2.3. Manufacturing Firm

A manufacturing business is defined as a business that uses components, additional parts, or raw materials to make a finished good (Devon & Aaron, 2023). The product is then either sold directly to other industries, consumers, or to a store that consumers shop at to obtain an item. Many of the products that consumers buy and utilize are the result of manufacturing. They undergo the process of design and assembly before arriving in stores for purchase. According to Devon and Aaron (2023), manufacturing is defined as the conversion of raw materials into finished commodities through the use of tools, labor, and machinery. Raw materials include items such as wood, stone, and ore. They become finished goods including lumber, pillars, or steel for construction. In this study, four manufacturing firm were used selected from the South South region of Nigeria namely: (1) Brightway Glove located at 3 High Tension Road, Ekorokoro

Community, Aletto, Eleme, Port Harcourt, Rivers State Nigeria (2) Life Flour Mill Sapele, Delta State (3) Glosa Roofing Benin City, Edo State and (4) Senalux Paint of 6, Banusha, Kpansia, Yenagoa, Bayelsa, Nigeria.

2.4. Organizational Performance

Organizational performance is defined as how well a firm executes her duties and responsibilities. In order to identify areas that require improvement and to promote continued success in areas that are meeting or surpassing expectations, many businesses evaluate the performance of their employees on an annual or quarterly basis (Vatan, Ardali & Shahin, 2022). This allows them to assess the overall performance of the organization. Performance is a critical factor in organizational success, helping to also improve overall productivity, profitability, and employee morale. By assessing organizational performance regularly, companies can identify areas that need improvement, provide support and training to employees, and ensure that everyone is working towards the same goals (Vatan et al., 2022).

2.5. Theoretical Framework

The Pluralist Theory of industrial relations was propounded by Dunlop (1958) who says, “The workplace conflict is inevitable”. Dunlop’s theory basically states, “the industrial relations system is really a social subsystem, and its actions are dependent on three factors: technology, the economy, and the distribution of political power”. He further states, “the industrial system is comprised of three distinct parts: management organisations, workers, and government agencies”. The theory operates in the basis that business operation are complex social structures that are made of various interest groups. Out of these interest groups, the management and the employee are two. From the nature of the factory system, the management and the employees will always have different values and objectives in mind. As a result, there will be different points of authority in the organization that will always be prone to conflict over the organization tasks and allocation of rewards. When the inevitability of the conflict is identified and accepted, the believers of this perspective regard conflict as healthy organizational activity. This is because, through conflict, the employees are sharing their grievances and bringing to the surface instead of keeping it within. Also, when conflicts arise, the management are given a stir to look for a new way of handling the issue ensuring the best results possible.

3. Empirical Review

Nanmu (2023) investigated how the Independent National Electoral Commission in Nigeria's human resources management performance was impacted by public relations planning. A survey designed questionnaire was issued to senior and junior staff members in order to gather data. The personnel were chosen at random from a sampling frame after being stratified. The analysis makes use of the Z test and multiple linear regressions. The findings show that the performance and practice of human resources management are impacted by public relations planning. The mean assessments of senior and junior employees regarding the tactics for credible performance in human resource management appear to differ significantly, according to the Z critical value. A significant difference between the mean ratings of junior and senior staff about the efficacy of public relations planning techniques in the performance of human resource management is confirmed by the Z, calculated value being bigger than the Z, critical value. Effective public relations planning should be ensured by the government through the hiring or deployment of qualified individuals, the evaluation of electoral programs, and staff development initiatives. The Independent National Electoral Commission should get sufficient funds from the government in order to increase public confidence in the information that is shared with the public. To reduce corruption, high profile employees should be hired free from bias, prejudice, and unethical behavior. These policy ramifications enable the government's human resource management and the Independent National election Commission to reduce voter turnout, fraud, corruption, and election violence.

Nwankwo et al. (2023) investigated how Nigerian public sector production was impacted by industrial relations methods. The study specifically aimed to ascertain the impact of career development practices on organizational market share in the Nigerian public sector and investigate the impact of work life balance practices on organizational overall quality. Using descriptive survey methods was the research design. 503 employees of the Port Harcourt Electricity Distribution Company (PHED) in River State, Nigeria, made up the sample size of 399 responders. The mean score and standard deviation were used to answer the study's research questions. One regression analysis was used to examine the hypotheses. According to the empirical findings, work life balance practices have a positive and significant impact on organizational total quality in the Nigerian public sector (t – statistics (6.446) > P – value (0.000), and career development practices have a positive and significant impact on organizational market share (t – statistics (8.887) > P – value (0.000). According to the study's findings, Nigeria's public sector's productivity is positively and significantly impacted by industrial relations practices. According to the report, the public sector management in Nigeria should build relationships based on a concern for justice and equity, which calls for sharing adequate information on developments and changes. Worker’s ought to get honest and equitable treatment.

According to Onyeiugbe et al. (2018), there is a relationship between industrial harmony and employee performance in a few chosen food and beverage companies in Anambra state. The study specifically aims to determine the relationship between employee engagement and joint consultation in a few chosen food and beverage companies in Anambra state, as well as the relationship between industrial democracy and employee loyalty in a few chosen food and beverage companies in Anambra state. The research design used in the study was a correlation survey. 390 workers from five carefully chosen food and beverage companies in Anambra State made up the study's population, and the data was analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation. The results showed that industrial democracy and employee performance have a very strong positive link, and that joint consultation and employee engagement have a very strong substantial positive relationship. The study came to the conclusion that employee performance in a few chosen food and beverage companies in Anambra State is greatly influenced by industrial harmony. It suggested that management of the companies under focus should allow unions to express their opinions and make every effort to match the needs of the workers with those of the company. Additionally, management of the companies under focus should foster a sense of community by letting workers participate in decision making on issues that affect them.

3.1. Gap

The findings of the various researchers from the empirical study have shown that most of the researchers discussed industrial relations management practice, but not have discussed industrial relations management practice in manufacturing firms in South South, Nigeria. Here lies the knowledge gap. This study examined critically, the effects of industrial relations management practices such as employer, employee relations, labour relations, group relations and public relations on manufacturing firms' performance in the South South, Nigeria.

4. Research Method

4.1. Research Design

This study employed a descriptive survey design to investigate the relationship between industrial relations management practice and manufacturing firms' performance among manufacturing firms in South South, Nigeria. The design facilitated the collection of quantitative data, providing insights into the existing conditions and dynamics between variables, specifically employee – employee relations, labour relations, group relations and public relations.

4.2. Population of the Study

The target population for this study was 385 employees from four selected manufacturing firms in South South Nigeria. Four selected manufacturing firms were used for the study because the population of all the manufacturing firms in the South South Nigeria is too large to reach and scattered. So, to be able to confidently, manageably and effectively generalize the results of this study, four randomly selected firms were used namely: Brightway Glove Port Harcourt (145), Life Flour Mill Sapele (59), Glosa Roofing Benin City (96), and Senalux Paint Yenagoa (85) The sample size was 191 which was derived from the total population using Krejcie & Morgan (1970).

4.3. Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Out of the 191 copies of questionnaire distributed, 180 copies were retrieved which showed 94% retrieval rate. The data collected from the administration of the questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The research questions were answered using simple percentage and mean. The hypotheses were tested using multiple regressions in SPSS 25 at a significant level of 0.05.

4.4. Model Specification

- The model of multiple regressions is:
- $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \dots + \beta_nX_n$
- Specific Model:
- $MP = \beta_0 + \beta_1ER + \beta_2LR + \beta_3GR + \beta_4PR$
- $MP = \text{Manufacturing Firm's Performance} \Rightarrow \text{Dependent Variable}$
- $ER = \text{Employer, Employee Relations}$
- $LR = \text{Labour Relations}$
- $GR = \text{Group Relations}$
- $PR = \text{Public Relations}$
- $\beta_0 = \text{The value of MP when all the independent variables are equal to zero.}$

- $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$ = The estimated regression coefficients. Each regression coefficient represents the change in MP relative to a one unit change in the respective independent variables.

5. Results

5.1. Response to questions

5.1.1. Research Question 1

What is the effect of employer, employee relations on Manufacturing Firms Performance in South South Nigeria?

Table 1 Percentage and Mean Responses of Respondents to item 1,4

S/N	Statement/Items	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1	Ensure employees happiness and productivity	78 (43%)	58 (32%)	34 (19%)	10 (6%)	3.13	29.46	Accepted
2	Offer assistance in a variety of ways including employee recognition, policy development and interpretation, and all types of problem solving and dispute resolution	88 (49%)	78 (43%)	0 (0%)	14 (8%)	3.33	44.44	Accepted
3	Increase in employee morale and motivation	76 (42%)	68 (38%)	20 (11%)	16 (9%)	3.13	31.39	Accepted
4	Ensure that there is a conducive environment and conditions that cultivate positive attitude in the employees	70 (39%)	90 (50%)	16 (9%)	4 (2%)	3.26	41.52	Accepted
Grand Total						3.21	36.70	Accepted

Field survey (2024)

Table 1 shows the means response of the respondents to items 1 – 4 as 3.13, 3.33, 3.13 and 3.26 respectively; with a grand mean and standard deviation of 3.21+36.70. This implies that, employer, employee relations ensure employees happiness and productivity; offer assistance in a variety of ways including employee recognition, policy development and interpretation; increase in employee morale and motivation; and establish work environment that cultivates positive attitude in the employees.

5.2. Research Question 2

What is the effect of labour relations on Manufacturing Firms Performance in South South Nigeria?

Table 2 Percentage and Mean Responses of Respondents to items 5,8

S/N	Statement/Items	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1	Ensure employees are paid for their work	84 (47%)	70 (39%)	2 (1%)	24 (13%)	3.19	38.45	Accepted
2	Ensure employers receive qualitative work	68 (38%)	54 (30%)	38 (21%)	20 (11%)	2.94	20.69	Accepted
3	Helps management to make proper decisions	70 (39%)	72 (40%)	18 (10%)	20 (11%)	3.07	30.04	Accepted
4	Determinant of production and labor costs	86 (48%)	80 (44%)	4 (2%)	10 (6%)	3.34	44.02	Accepted
Grand Total						3.14	33.30	Accepted

Field survey (2024)

Table 2 shows the means response of the respondents to items 5 – 8 as 3.19, 2.94, 3.07 and 3.34 respectively; with a grand mean and standard deviation of 3.14+36.33.30. This implies that, labour relations ensure employees are paid for their work; ensure employers receive qualitative work; helps management to make proper decisions and determinant of production and labor costs.

5.3. Research Question Three

What is the effect of group relations on Manufacturing Firms Performance in South South Nigeria?

Table 3 Percentage and Mean Responses of Respondents to item 9,12

S/N	Statement/Items	SA	A	D	SD	X	SD	Remark
1	Increased productivity	72 (40%)	58 (32%)	10 (6%)	40 (22%)	2.90	26.76	Accepted
2	Improved decision making	65 (36%)	75 (42%)	20 (11%)	20 (11%)	3.03	29.15	Accepted
3	Increased innovation	98 (54%)	50 (28%)	14 (8%)	18 (10%)	3.27	38.83	Accepted
4	Improved morale	70 (39%)	82 (46%)	15 (8%)	13 (7%)	3.16	36.14	Accepted
Grand Total						3.09	32.72	Accepted

Field survey (2024)

Table 3 shows the means response of the respondents to items 9 – 12 as: 2.90, 3.03, 3.27 and 3.16 respectively; with a grand mean and standard deviation of 3.09+32.72. This implies that, group relations increased productivity, improved decision, making, increased innovation and improve moral.

5.4. Research Question Four

What is the effect of Public Relations on Manufacturing Firms Performance in South, South Nigeria?

Table 4 Percentage and Mean Responses of Respondents to item 9,12

S/N	Statement/Items	SA	A	D	SD	X	SD	Remark
1	Increasing brand credibility	60 (33%)	96 (53%)	20 (11%)	4 (2%)	3.18	41.36	Accepted
2	Increasing sales and leads	90 (50%)	60 (33%)	14 (8%)	16 (9%)	3.24	36.75	Accepted
3	Positive brand image	80 (44%)	66 (37%)	16 (9%)	18 (10%)	3.16	32.84	Accepted
4	Cost, effectiveness	88 (49%)	65 (36%)	15 (8%)	12 (7%)	3.27	37.59	Accepted
Grand Total						3.21	37.14	Accepted

Field survey (2024)

Table 4 shows the means response of the respondents to items 13 – 16 as: 3.18, 3.24, 3.16 and 3.27 respectively; with a grand mean and standard deviation of 3.21+37.14. This implies that, public relations, increasing brand credibility, increasing sales and leads, positive brand image and cost, effectiveness.

5.5. Test of Hypotheses

- The hypotheses are tested using multiple regressions in SPSS 25.
- $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \dots + \beta_n X_n$
- $MP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 ER + \beta_2 LR + \beta_3 GR + \beta_4 PR$
- MP = Manufacturing Firm's Performance → Dependent Variable
- ER = Employer, Employee Relations
- LR = Labour Relations
- GR = Group Relations
- PR = Public Relations

5.6. Output of multiple regression analysis in SPSS 25

Table 5 Variables Entered/Removed a

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	PR, LR, ER, GRB	.	Enter
a. Dependent Variable: MP			
b. All requested variables entered.			

Table 6 Model Summary B

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin Watson
1	0.960 ^a	0.921	0.919	0.09942	0.253
a. Predictors: (Constant), PR, LR, ER, GR					
b. Dependent Variable: MP					

The R value of 0.960 in the Model Summary Table (Table 9) represents the Pearson correlation. This implies that, there is a strong and positive correlation across the variables since the value of r (0.960) tends to 1.

The R Square (r^2) value of 0.921 (Table 9) is known as the coefficient of determination. It shows the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variables. This implies that 92% of the variation in Manufacturing Firms' Performance can be explained by employer, employee relations, labour relations, group relations and public relations.

Table 7 Summary for Analysis of Variance

Model		Sum of Squares	D f	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	20.114	4	5.028	508.750	0.000b
	Residual	1.730	175	0.010		
	Total	21.843	179			
a. Dependent Variable: MP						
b. Predictors: (Constant), PR, LR, ER, GR						

The value of Sig (0.00) in Table 10 indicates that, the independent variables (ER, LR, GR and PR) combined has a statistically significant association with the dependent variable (MP).

Table 7 Coefficients ^A

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	0.574	0.152		3.786	0.000		
	ER	0.119	0.070	0.153	1.700	0.011	0.056	17.907
	LR	0.104	0.068	0.139	1.528	0.021	0.055	18.254
	GR	0.324	0.115	0.313	2.828	0.004	0.037	27.043
	PR	0.815	0.060	0.655	13.492	0.000	0.192	5.204
a. Dependent Variable: MP								

5.7. Hypothesis 1

5.7.1. There is no significant relationship between employer, employee relations and manufacturing firms' performance in South, South, Nigeria

The Sig. value (0.011) of Employer, Employee Relations (ER) in Table 7, indicates that, there is a significant association of employer, employee relations and manufacturing firms' performance in South, South Nigeria since the Sig. value (0.011) is lesser than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states, "There is no significant relationship between employer, employee relations and manufacturing firms' performance in South, South, Nigeria", is rejected. This implies that, there is a significant relationship between employer, employee relations and manufacturing firms' performance in South, South, Nigeria

For every additional effort to improve Employer, Employee Relations (ER), Manufacturing Firms' Performance is expected to increase by coefficient of 0.119 (Table 7) assuming other independent variables remain constant.

5.8. Hypothesis 2

5.8.1. There is no significant relationship between labour relations and manufacturing firms' performance in South, South, Nigeria

The Sig. value (0.021) of Labour Relations in Table 7, indicates that, there is a significant association of labour relations and manufacturing firms' performance in South, South Nigeria since the Sig. value (0.021) is lesser than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states, "There is no significant relationship between labour relations and manufacturing firms' performance in South, South, Nigeria", is rejected. This implies that, there is a significant relationship between labour relations and manufacturing firms' performance in South, South, Nigeria

For every additional effort to improve Labour Relations (LR), Manufacturing Firms' Performance is expected to increase by coefficient of 0.104 (Table 7) assuming other independent variables remain constant.

5.9. Hypothesis 3

5.9.1. There is no significant relationship between group relations and manufacturing firms' performance in South, South, Nigeria

The Sig. value (0.004) of Group Relations (GR) in Table 7, indicates that, there is a significant association of group relations and manufacturing firms' performance in South, South Nigeria since the Sig. value (0.004) is lesser than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states, "There is no significant relationship between group relations and manufacturing firms' performance in South, South, Nigeria", is rejected. This implies that, there is a significant relationship between group relations and manufacturing firms' performance in South, South, Nigeria

For every additional effort to improve Group Relations (GR), Manufacturing Firms' Performance is expected to increase by coefficient of 0.324 (Table 7) assuming other independent variables remain constant.

5.10. Hypothesis 4

5.10.1. There is no significant relationship between public relations and manufacturing firms' performance in South, South, Nigeria

The Sig. value (0.000) of Public Relations (PR) in Table 7, indicates that, there is a significant association between public relations and manufacturing firms' performance in South, South Nigeria since the Sig. value (0.000) is lesser than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states, "There is no significant relationship between public relations and manufacturing firms' performance in South, South, Nigeria", is rejected. This implies that, there is a significant relationship between public relations and manufacturing firms' performance in South, South, Nigeria

For every additional effort to improve Public Relations (PR), Manufacturing Firms' Performance is expected to increase by coefficient of 0.815 (Table 7) assuming other independent variables remain constant.

The coefficient for the intercept (Table 7) means the expected Manufacturing Firm Performance (MP) when ER, LR, GR and PR are not improved (at 0 states) is 0.574

- The estimated regression equation for the model base on the analysis can be written as:
- $MP = \beta_0 + \beta_1ER + \beta_2LR + \beta_3GR + \beta_4PR$
- Therefore,
- $MP = 0.574 + 119ER + 104LR + 324GR + 815PR$

6. Findings

The findings of the test of hypothesis 1 and the answer to research question 1 (Table 1) reveals, "There is a significant relationship between employer, employee relations and manufacturing firms' performance in South, South Nigeria". Employer, employee relations ensure employees happiness, productivity, offer assistance in a variety of ways including employee recognition, policy development and interpretation. Increase employee morale, motivation and establish work environment that cultivates positive attitude in the employees. This finding supports some scholars such as Frank and Jeffrey (2020) and Ahmad and Shahzad (2021), who reveals, "Employer, employee relationship enable employees are happy and are productive, enhance employee recognition, policy development and interpretation, and all types of problem solving and dispute resolution".

The findings of the test of hypothesis 2 and the answer to research question 2 (Table 2) reveals, "There is a significant relationship between labour relations and manufacturing firms' performance in South, South Nigeria". labour relations ensure employees are paid for their work and employers receive qualitative work. It helps management to make proper decisions, determinant of production and labor costs. This finding supports Akinbode et al. (2023) who ascertain, "The aim of labor relations is that employees must be paid for their work, and the employers must receive qualitative work".

The findings of the test of hypothesis 3 and the answer to research question 3 (Table 3) reveals, "There is a significant relationship between group relations and manufacturing firms' performance in South, South Nigeria". Group relations increased productivity, improved decision, making, increased innovation and improve moral. This finding supports the findings of Adeleke (2015); Williamson (2016); Arugu and Wosu (2020), who are of the view that group relations can have a significant impact on an organization, that it can increased productivity, improved decision, making, increased innovation and improved morale

The findings of the test of hypothesis 4 and the answer to research question 4 (Table 4) reveals, "There is a significant relationship between public relations and manufacturing firms' performance in South, South Nigeria". Public relations increase brand credibility, increase sales, leads, enhances positive brand image and cost, effectiveness. This finding supports findings of Cacciatore and Meng (2022); Nguru and Ibrahim (2018) who are of the view that there are vantages of a well, thought, out public relations strategy, these include increasing brand credibility, increasing sales and leads, positive brand image and cost, effectiveness.

7. Conclusion

Industrial relations management is a strategic scheme that administers and coordinates business functions related to employee relations, significantly impacting manufacturing firms' performance. It ensures employee happiness, productivity, and motivation through recognition, policy development, and fair compensation. Effective industrial

relations management leads to increased productivity, improved decision-making, innovation, morale, brand credibility, sales, and cost-effectiveness, ultimately enhancing a company's positive brand image.

Recommendation

- Manufacturing firms should maintain the practices of employer, employee relations to ensure employees are happy, productive, and establish work environment that cultivates positive attitude in the employees.
- Management of manufacturing firms should sustain the practices of labor relations to ensure employees are paid for their work and employers receive qualitative work.
- Management should maintain the practices of group relations to increased productivity, improved decision, making, increased innovation and improve moral.
- Manufacturing firms should maintain the practices of public relations to increase brand credibility, increase sales, leads, enhances positive brand image and cost, effectiveness.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

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