



Evaluation into the impact of employee behaviour on productivity at a manufacturing company

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to assess the influence of negative employee behaviour on an organisation's productivity at a South African manufacturing company. This was achieved through using a qualitative research methodology approach with the objective of uncovering recommendations for management to consider the best ways to manage human resources for increased productivity purposes. The findings of the current situation at the company showed low motivation from management, poor remuneration standards, compromised employee health and safety, and low employee recognition due to the absence of promotion and employee appraisal. There is also a continuous lack of commitment to performing allocated tasks, absenteeism, and production of low quality work. The factors that were seen to be influencing employee behaviour were dissatisfaction with the job, lack of recognition by management for good performance, poor working environment, and lack of incentives. The findings showed that employee behaviour is a powerful tool and there is a direct relationship between employee behaviour and productivity. Recommendations were made to management to motivate employees through staff development programmes and by giving them due recognition for outstanding performance. Management should provide work-life balance programmes considering that employees have family issues to attend to and create an enabling workplace environment.

Keywords: employee behaviour; workplace productivity; working environment.

1. INTRODUCTION

Human resources (HR) divisions should be well managed to enable organisations to compete effectively. The ways in which employees behave are believed to have significant impacts on the performance of a business. The management team of organisations has the responsibility of influencing attitudes and behaviours of employees in order to build a culture of commitment within the organisation. Business management should build strong

organisational cultures that provide ways by which they can encourage attitudes and behaviours that are aligned with the organisation's strategies.

1.1 Background of the study

The survival of any organisation hinges on its human capital that in turn play a pivotal role in the achievement of availability, effectiveness, and efficiency of the plant machinery. According to Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, and Wright (2015:3), human resources are the most important assets of any organisation. When employees' attitudes and behaviour is positive the results of their efforts translate to higher productivity and a common purpose towards management's vision and mission. The current situation at this company gives a reflection of non-conformance and misalignment of the vision and mission of management and the *modus operandi* of shop-floor employees. Employees are a source of competitive advantage for any organisation. The commitment of competent employees is paramount to the success of the organisation. Management at this manufacturing company embarked on a turnaround strategy to increase productivity through the investment in high tech super-fast plant machinery. However, this dream has not been realised due to negative behaviours of employees that impacted on productivity. It is against this background that the researcher saw it fit to examine the risks associated with the organisational focus on turnaround strategy, while management turns a blind eye to how employee behaviour impacts productivity. The significance of this study, therefore is to bring to the fore the behavioural factors of the human capital that attribute to reduced productivity and make a separable configuration of deliverables and dispositional methodologies that can help the company steer its vision and mission.

1.2 Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to assess the impact of negative employee behaviour on an organisation's productivity. This was achieved through the review of secondary data from research on similar topics as well as the collection and analysis of primary data using qualitative techniques. The study aims to come up with recommendations to management on the best ways to manage human resources for increased productivity.

1.3 Research questions

This study sought to answer the following questions to fulfil the objectives:

- What is the current situation at the company with regard to employee behaviour?
- What are the factors that lead to negative employee behaviour?
- What is the impact of employee behaviour on the productivity at the company?
- What recommendations can be made on the management of employee behaviour to gain increased productivity?

1.4 Significance of the study

This study will be of great benefit to the management of the manufacturing company. The findings of the study will also highlight various factors that affect the behaviour of employees at work so that management can devise ways of dealing with these factors to obtain the best behaviour in employees that leads to high productivity in the organisation. The findings and the recommendations will not benefit the company alone, but the majority of business managers who have failed to realise the role played by a well-managed workforce in the productivity of an organisation. The

study will also assist the public sector and non-profit organisations to realise that service delivery can only be achieved when there is a motivated pool of employees and managers. The findings of this research can be used as a body of knowledge for reference or a benchmark by future scholars in the manufacturing industry.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many businesses have embarked on changes in their ways of conducting operations so that they can favourably position themselves for effective operations in this dynamic environment. The dynamic environment in which businesses are operating gives immense pressure on management to deliver business performance that is outstanding in a consistent and quick manner (Akoto, 2013:4). In a bid to attain their goals and objectives, companies craft strategies that enable them to compete in markets that are characterised by stiff competition as well as to enhance their performance. However, only a handful of firms consider human capital as being the most important asset that can empower them to success (Dobre, 2013:54). It is imperative for organisations, regardless of their size and market, to endeavour to retain the best employees, taking note of their crucial roles and influence on the effectiveness of the organisation. The failure to manage human capital leads to a decline in organisational performance (Dobre, 2013:54). According to Akoto (2013:5), the motivation and performance of employees acts as important tools for organisational success in the long run. Many researchers have viewed the role played by human behaviour as an essential performance factor because of its quick reaction towards any form of change. Akoto (2013:5) asserts that behaviour that is toxic spoils individuals' and co-workers' performances. There is therefore a great need to gain an understanding of how humans behave at work and then manage that behaviour accordingly.

2.1 Organisational productivity

Defining organisational productivity is a major concern in literature. There are different definitions which were provided by various authors. According to Youshan and Hassan (2015:195), some definitions are based on a firm's ability to satisfy its stakeholders, whilst other definitions attempt to measure productivity based on internal and external context. Other definitions attempt to use a time factor for defining organisational productivity. According to Ferreira and du Plessis (2010:3), organisational productivity refers to the period of time spent by the organisation to produce products or services expected by its customers.

2.2 Productivity as an efficiency model

Under this model, productivity is defined using the following equation:

$$\text{Organisational productivity} = \frac{\text{output}}{\text{input}}$$

Alman (2013:4) explains that the efficiency model measures how much of the resources were used during the processing of products and services. The main focus is on the change in quantity of outputs in relation to inputs used. The efficiency model of productivity asking "how much" was used to come up with the outputs. For instance if employees are efficient, they are able to produce large quantities of outputs with less resources.

2.3 Productivity as a sustainability model

In this case productivity is not only measured within the business context, but also includes the outside environment. For instance, for a business to be regarded as productive, it should be accountable for the cultural, health and safety

needs of society. Organisational productivity has to satisfy the environmental needs (such as reduction of waste), society and the economy. Organisations might be making profits, but if they neglect the environmental well-being, they cannot be regarded as productive within communities.

2.4 Employee behaviour

According to Raza, Anjum and Zia (2014:389), human behaviour is “a capacity of mental, physical, emotional, and social activities experienced during the different stages of human life and influenced by culture, society, values, morals, ethics, and genetics”. Human behaviour varies according to situations and organisms. Porathe (2009:53) asserts that it is important to obtain knowledge and understanding of behaviour as it creates a strong impact on performance.

2.5 Relationship between employee behaviour and organisational productivity

Businesses in all sectors are faced with rapid change. Therefore, in order to be successful in the global village, organisations have to ensure that efforts are put towards motivating employees to positively participate in organisational activities that lead to organisational productivity. According to Welbourne (2015:17), employee behaviour has direct and indirect implications on the productivity of any organisation. If all employees possess positive behaviours, they will be committed and focused on their tasks, thereby minimising chances of making mistakes.

2.6 Factors that affect employee behaviour

Employee behaviour at the workplace is influenced by external and internal factors. This paper serves to explore some of these factors and examine the effects they have on organisational productivity. This will help the company to evaluate if such factors exist within its organisation and how to develop strategies to overcome them.

2.6.1 External factors

External factors refer to the factors outside the organisation and they are not easy to control. These include factors such as family background, employee expectations, health, values and beliefs.

2.6.2 Family background

According to Mathur and Gupta (2012:48), people who grew up under a lot of parental care, love and concern, possess good behaviour in terms of respect and interaction with others wherever they go. Since they grew up in a protected environment, in return, they offer the same to their friends and colleagues at work. However, those who come from broken families from their childhood are believed to be insecure and less jovial which results in poor decision making skills as they do not have self-confidence. In this context, family background is a very important issue when inducting a candidate into the company. That is why some companies grill candidates in order to try and have an understanding of their background and they can discriminate them on this parameter. However, Mabindisa (2014:23) argues that discriminating potential candidates due to their backgrounds is not accepted as per human rights act.

2.6.3 Values and beliefs

Cultural diversity in terms of values and beliefs has increased due to globalisation. Values and beliefs differ from place to place and these differences have an influence on employee behaviour. Different values and beliefs result in

different opinions towards work. When a culturally diverse workforce is put together to accomplish a mutual goal through teamwork and collaboration, employees will behave differently and this can hinder them from achieving organisational objectives.

2.6.4 Social networking

Ferreira and Plessis (2010:1) argue that the blame for negative employee behaviour is not on organisations only. The popular social networking sites such as Facebook, have had major effects on employee behaviour. Some employees neglect to perform their daily responsibilities by spending too much time on social media. To some extent, social networking plays an important role to employees' behaviour by allowing them to connect with other people across the globe and share important ideas that enable them to work effectively. By social networking, employees increase their skills and knowledge, which result in increased organisational productivity. Organisations should develop correct attitudes in employees who use social networks for the benefit of the organisation.

2.6.5 Expectations

Employees have different expectations at workplaces. These personal expectations contribute towards employee behaviour. People look for employment in order to fulfil their different needs, such as financial and career development. Therefore, their behaviour is influenced by achieving these needs. For instance, some employees just work to get their monthly salaries without paying much detail to their work, whilst others work hard to gain an in-depth knowledge of their work so as to intensify their work experience. In this context, employees who work to satisfy financial needs do not positively behave as compared to those who would want to gain knowledge and experience (Alman, 2014:52).

2.6.6 Health

There is a direct relationship between an employee's output and his or her mental and physical health. Employees with good health execute their duties with positive energy, zeal and joy. Weak and sick employees do not perform according to expected standards and they do not meet targets in time. According to Mabindisa (2013:90), most of the CEOs of big companies value their physical and mental health in order to carry all the organisational loads without affecting the quality of the outputs.

2.7 Internal factors

Internal factors include all factors within the organisation such as leadership style, organisational culture, organisational commitment, job responsibilities, communication and workplace relationships.

2.7.1 Leadership style

According to Li and Zheng (2014:448), innovative behaviours of employees also depend on effective stimulation from the external environment, especially the organisation's leadership. Ali, Elmi, and Mohammed (2013:199) define leadership as "the process of influencing the activities of an organised group towards goal setting and goal accomplishment". This is unlike traditional leadership perspectives that see leadership as encouraging compliance, respect, and cooperation. This perception depicts the leader as exercising power over followers to gain cooperation. It also portrays the leader's role as that of goal formulation and ensuring the efficient accomplishment of such goals. The focus of transactional leaders is on the completion of tasks, compliance, and reliance on organisational rewards

and punishments to influence the performance of employees. The difference between transformational and transactional leadership models thus lies in the process that leaders use to motivate subordinates, and the types of goals set. According to Ali et al. (2013:200), an organisation's success is dependent on the ability of the leader to optimise human resources. A good leader must understand the importance of employees in the attainment of organisational goals and that the motivation of these employees is vital in attaining these goals. There is need for people in the organisation to be inspired so that they invest themselves in the mission of the organisation. They also need to be stimulated in order to be effective.

2.7.2 Organisational culture

According to Nwugwo (2010:1), an organisation's culture has a great contribution in shaping groups' and individuals' behaviours in organisations. Werner (2010:31) defines organisational culture as "a system of shared assumptions or meaning held by members that distinguishes one organisation from others". McNeal (2010:68) asserts that an organisation's success and sustainability can only be realised by enhancing the employees' performance and by the development of teams' and individuals' capabilities. It is the culture of an organisation that helps to influence employees' behaviour towards high or low performance.

2.7.3 Organisational structure

According to Mester et al. (2007:86), the level of job satisfaction and the effective performance of every employee is dependent upon an appropriate structure of the organisation. Werner (2010:38) asserts that the structure of an organisation enables effective performance of important activities and the support of employees' efforts. It is set basically for the promotion of cooperation and facilitation of the exercise of executive leadership.

2.7.4 Motivation

Motivation as defined by Ibrahim and Brobbey (2015:1218) is an internal process that drives a person to move toward a goal. Motivation is not an attribute that can be directly observed. According to Irefin and Mechanic (2015:69), motivation can stem from enjoying one's work and/or from desiring to attain certain goals, such as gaining promotion or earning more money. It can also stem from the sense of satisfaction that is derived from the completion of something or the achievement of a successful result after a challenging assignment or solved problem. Ibrahim and Brobbey (2015:1219) assert that organisations should fill the gap between an employee's ability and his willingness by motivating the employee so that he or she can produce results according to his abilities. The improvement of employee efficiency through motivation leads to improvements in overall productivity, reduction in costs, and increased efficiency of the organisation (Omondi, 2014:8).

2.7.5 Career development

Various researchers have commented on how companies with positively behaved employees give their workforce opportunities to develop their skills, acquire knowledge and reach their potential. Failure to promote skills development leads to poor organisational performance. Most of the employees tend to invest their energy in organisations that invest in their career development. Skills development programs should be put in place and the organisation has to encourage the employees to further their academic and technical skills. Absorbing new technology, raising productivity, improving the quality and competitiveness of exports, all depend on the skills of the

workforce. Lack of education promotes ineffectiveness of the organisation. Therefore, organisations should support their employees in completing appropriate educational courses that enable them to work effectively.

2.8 Employee behaviour theoretical basis

There are different theoretical perspectives which were put forward to help derive a better understanding on the concept of employee behaviour. Approaches are discussed under this section

2.8.1 The behavioural management theory

The behavioural management theory is also referred to as the human relations movement as it seeks to address the human aspect of work. Youshan and Hassan (2015:12) describe the behavioural management theory as “a board of management thought based on the belief that use psychological techniques in motivating employees which works better than rules and regulations proposed by classical school of management”. It is the belief of behavioural theorists that a better understanding of the behaviour of humans at the workplace such as conflict, group dynamics, motivation, and expectations, lead to enhanced productivity (Smit, Cronje, Brevis, & Vrba, 2009:255). The contributors to this school regarded employees as resources, individuals, and assets that need to be worked with and developed, and not as machines, as they were perceived in the past.

2.8.2 Reinforcement theory

According to Du Toit, Erasmus and Strydom (2010:310), reinforcement theory assumes that employees’ behaviour that have positive consequences can be repeated and behaviours which lead to negative consequences cannot be repeated. Reinforcement focuses on the consequences of employees’ actions. Although the theory does not focus on the causes of an individual’s behaviour, it provides strong tools that can be used to control employees’ behaviour. According to the reinforcement theory, managers can adopt the following methods to control employee behaviour.

Positive reinforcement: By adopting this method, managers offer a positive response when an employee shows a positive and expected behaviour. For instance, praising employees who come in early for work increases the chances of influencing other employees to come early. Therefore, positive reinforcement is a way of stimulating occurrence of behaviour. Under positive reinforcement, managers can offer rewards to good performing employees in order to encourage them (Mabindisa, 2013:25).

Negative reinforcement: Under negative reinforcement, employees are rewarded by subtracting all the undesirable consequences. In this regard, both negative and positive reinforcement can be adopted in order to increase the desirable or required behaviour (Alman, 2014:15).

Punishment: This seeks to reduce the probability of repeating unexpected behaviour. Punishment means to apply undesirable consequences as a result of showing undesirable behaviour. For example, an employee can be suspended for breaking the company’s rules (Mabindisa, 2013:25).

Extinction: Extinction is the absence of reinforcements. Extinction implies reducing the probability of unwanted behaviour by removing rewards. For example, if the employees are no longer getting admiration and praises for their work, it simply means their behaviours are no longer generating any fruitfulness. Therefore, they have to improve their behaviour (Alman, 2014:15).

2.9 Theoretical limitations

According to Alman (2014:89), although theories assist manager in studying employees' behaviour, employees differ in the extent in which they feel that a need has been sufficiently satisfied. Some people are resistant to change by nature therefore, motivational techniques might not apply to all employees within the organisation. It is also not easy to measure employees' behaviour within a big organisation.

2.10 Ways to improve employee behaviour

Organisations should be consistently checking their workforce to see the level of engagement they show to the organisation. This section of the study is going to provide theoretical recommendations on how organisations can improve employee engagement.

2.10.1 Keeping employees informed

Organisation's crucial information should be shared with employees in order for them to feel included. The Robert Half Company (2013:4) in their report on employee behaviour said that if organisations fail to share the company's information with their employees, either intentionally or unintentionally, then employees will come up with their own conclusions. For instance, whenever necessary, management team should give their followers information on the organisation's financial performance and explain all the long and short-term goals so that the employees know exactly what is expected of them.

2.10.2 Employee involvement in decision-making

Decision-making should be done by all employees within an organisation and approved by top management. The organisation should actively seek feedback from all team members. The organisational culture has to accommodate an open-door policy so that it will be easy for employees to approach their superiors and suggest ideas that enhance the organisational performance. Some members of the organisation may not feel comfortable to open up their thoughts. It will be advisable that the management reaches out to such people and encourage them to share their ideas and make sure that they are heard (Robert Half Company, 2013:7).

2.10.3 Offering rewards on creativity

Employees should feel that it is safe and encouraging to bring new ideas and put them into action. It is very encouraging to get rewards on coming up with innovative ideas that help the organisation cut its operational cost and increase productivity. If organisations fail to recognise creativity and innovation, employees will sit on their ideas or use them elsewhere, where they can get a reward. For instance Vodacom, the big network provider company in South Africa, failed to recognise the creative idea which its former employee had put forward regarding the "please call function". The Vodacom former employee was on the media suing the company for not recognising his efforts he had made (Welbourne, 2015:16). Such incidents demolish the reputation of an organisation and result in negative employee behaviour. The employees will end up working in order to get a pay cheque only.

2.10.4 Integrity

It is believed that integrity is the main driver to employee behaviour. Employees should have a belief that their organisation lives its values, and that espoused behavioural norms are adhered to, resulting in trust and a sense of

integrity. If there is a gap between the companies' stated values and the reality of the company's behaviour, it can lead to distrust and negative employee behaviour. However, if the employees see the two aligning, it promotes trust and consequently employee engagement.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Creswell (2014:12) states that research design is an overall plan for a study. It provides the overall framework of how data is collected. A sound research design seeks to deliver results that are judged as credible. It is the research design that provides the answers to the set research questions for the study as it outlines how the data was collected from the intended participants (Babbie & Mouton, 2012:208). Kothari (2008:198) advances three types of research design, which are explanatory, descriptive, and exploratory.

3.1 Exploratory research design

Exploratory research mainly aims at identifying the boundaries of the surroundings in which the opportunities, problems, or situations under study are likely to reside (Trochim, 2006:180). It further seeks to identify the main variables or factors that might be present and be relevant to the study. It is aimed at finding new ideas within a phenomenon through an interactive approach with the affected elements (Zikmund, 2013:234). The instrument that is normally used in this type of research design is an interview schedule with open-ended questions in order to gain a full understanding of the phenomenon (Somekh & Lewin, 2011:201). This type of a research design is usually employed when and where the researcher is not so sure about the exact nature of the phenomenon in question (Collins & Hussey, 2013:287). Exploratory research design requires time to undertake as if not given enough time the results are likely to be wrong thereby compromising the goals of the study. Exploratory research design can be undertaken using different vehicles and they include review of related literature, conducting in-depth face-to-face interviews, and focus group interviews (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2010:189). The researcher in this case relied most on the quality of the responses from the participants. The flexible nature of exploratory research design as well as its adaptability to the environment makes it a good option when undertaking a qualitative research study (Brink, Walt, & Rensburg, 2012:212). This study used the exploratory research design using interviews to conduct an assessment on the impact of employee behaviour on the productivity of the company. This design was most appropriate as it provided a means to use open-ended questions that assist in gaining deeper insights about the topic being studied. This study employed a qualitative approach since there was need to gain an in-depth understanding of the impact of employee behaviour on organisational productivity.

3.2 Target population

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016:232) a target population is the whole group of objects or individuals to which the researcher wants to generalise the conclusions. A population refers to all the elements or cases in which the study has interest in and it is where the sample is obtained based on availability and accessibility factors. In this study the target population is made up of forty-eight shift workers as well as ten members from the administration staff at the company.

3.3 Sampling

Sampling is defined by Blanche, Durrheim, and Painter (2008:49) as the process of selecting research participants from an entire population. Decisions that are involved in sampling include which people, events, settings, social processes, and/or behaviours to observe. Blanche et al. (2006:49) cite two types of sampling, which are probability and non-probability sampling. In this study, the non-probability purposive sampling technique was used to select a sample of ten participants from the company. The sample comprised of two employees from each of the four shifts and two from the administration staff.

3.4 Pilot study

A pilot study helps the researcher to establish the challenges, mistakes or unforeseen eventualities that can then be unearthed and be addressed, corrected and mitigated (Saunders et al., 2016:622). A pilot study can also help to detect misleading or unclear questions and have them rectified. This study conducted a pilot test using a sample of two participants who were selected from the target population. The participants for the pilot study consisted of one shift employee and one administration employee. These participants were not part of the sample of 10 who participated in the study. The study also analysed responses from the pilot study and make the necessary adjustments to the research instrument.

3.5 Trustworthiness of the study

Trustworthiness of the study refers to the study's credibility in the sense that the results obtained from the study undertaken can be used in a given scenario of almost the same nature as the study was based on and still resolve the problem (Babbie & Mouton, 2012:502). In this study, the results obtained are trustworthy as there was interactions between the researcher and the selected participants at the company. The participants were comprised of shift employees as well as the administration staff thereby making it representative of all the members at the organisation. Their views pertaining to the impact of employee behaviour on productivity were noted and considered for the purposes of providing an answer to the research question.

3.6 Limitations of the study

Limitations of the study are the elements or factors that act as a hindrance to the total success of the study. As a result the limitations in this case are directly linked to the methodology used in this study (Maguire, 2012:290). The sample size was limited to ten participants and as a result it shows that the sample size could not fully represent the entire population as the number of employees in the Gauteng Province is under-represented.

3.7 Elimination of bias

Bias in research implies directing a study towards a set conclusion which then leads the researcher to direct the participants towards his/her own set conclusion (Pellissier, 2007:190). The results obtained are influenced by the actions of the researcher where the participants are asked leading questions and as a result they cannot give their own open views but rather follow the impaired structure (O'Leary, 2013:212). In this study, it was ensured that bias was absent due to the open-ended interview questions where the interviewer could leave the interviewees to express their views without any other influence. Bias compromises the results of the study thereby making it unworthy pursuing as the contributions are result oriented.

3.8 Ethical considerations

In research, it is important to ensure that ethical considerations are taken into account to respect of other people's rights to privacy in terms of disclosure of personal information and views (Bryman & Bell, 2011:120). The following issues were addressed to ensure that the study adheres to the required ethical standards:

3.8.1 Ensuring that participants have given informed consent

According to Blanche et al. (2006:72), researchers are required to ensure that potential participants are provided with detailed, clear, and factual information with regards to the study. The methods of the study, the risks involved, as well as the benefits that accrued from study, were also clearly outlined to the participants. This study ensured that participants are well informed about their involvement in the study by writing a letter requesting them to voluntarily participate in the study. The letter gave details of the risks and benefits of the study as well as provided the option to withdraw from the study with no consequences.

3.8.2 Ensuring confidentiality and anonymity

The researcher is required to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of research participants. This means that participants should not be identifiable in research outputs (Babbie & Mouton, 2012:320). This study ensured the anonymity of participants by omitting participants' names from the research report and instead make use pseudonyms. Confidentiality was ensured by making use of a private physical location as well as keeping information safe to avoid unauthorised access. Passwords were also used on computers to protect the confidentiality of clients.

3.8.3 Ensuring no harm comes to participants

According to Bryman and Bell (2011:121), every researcher should ensure that no harm occurs to participants as a result of participating in the study. Harm can be in the form of physical harm, harm to career prospects or future employment, and stress. This study ensured that participants were not harmed in any way by conducting interviews in a safe environment as well as avoiding asking questions that would lead to emotional harm.

3.8.4 Ensuring that permission is obtained

According to Saunders et al. (2016:194), it is important for the researcher to obtain permission from the organisation from which primary data is to be obtained. Permission to conduct the study was granted

4. RESULTS

The results shows that 40% of the participants were floor workers and they are well vested and directly in production activities. They are the ones who need much needed motivation to ensure that there is maximum productivity within the organisation. They are referred to as the engine of the organisation that need adequate power and lubrication to ensure that it works effectively and efficiently. In this study it is the behaviour of the floor workers that matters most in ensuring the success of the study and their views are highly appreciated. Some 40% of the participants highlighted that there are in the position of supervisors within the organisation. Being supervisors shows that they have considerable experience within the organisation, therefore they are well vested with the ways of ensuring that maximum productivity is attained. Supervisors have at least four years within the organisation and with some extending to over 10 years. This makes their contribution very effective due to their experience within the organisation

and they went through the floor worker position which gave them the feel on how motivation works at the workplace. In this study 20% of the participants were holding managerial posts and all of them depicted that they have more than 10 years within the organisation. This shows that they have considerable experience within the organisation and they are aware of the impact of employee behaviour on productivity. The study shows that most of the important positions within the organisation were represented, that is, from the lowest post level to the highest. Participants holding different positions have different views on any given scenario and as a result if all of their views are put together then the study will be effective and complete. 20% of the participants of this study are within the human resources department. Human resources department is the one that influences employee behaviour as one of its activities is to ensure there are adequate human resources and they are highly motivated for them to maximise productivity. The other 20% resides in the finance department which has the sole responsibility of ensuring there is proper funds usage as well as its sourcing. 60% of the participants highlighted that they are within the production department which is the engine of the organisation. Success or failure of the organisation comes from the way in which this department is managed together with its employees. It is evident from the data obtained that all the relevant and necessary departments were included in this study, particularly those that have direct influence on productivity. Human resources department is there to motivate employees as well as dealing with employee issues within their working environment to ensure that they are safe and productive. None of the participants had less than a year with the organisation thereby making the study easy as it entails that all of them had at least a year with the organisation. 30% of the participants are within the range of 1 to 3 years with the organisation and they are well vested with the impact of employee behaviour at the company. 40% of the participants depicted that they are within the range of 4 to 10 years in duration with the organisation. The remaining 30% have above 10 years' experience with the organisation. It is evident that the majority of the participants have more than 4 years of experience with the organisation thus making their contribution effective as they are well vested with the operations of the company.

4.1 Presentation and discussion of qualitative data

This section presents the results that were obtained from face-to-face interviews that were undertaken at the premises of the company. This was meant to obtain first-hand data from the people who are directly involved in the production process as they know what it takes to be an employee and they really understand the impact of their behaviour as employees on productivity. Results from primary research done are further supported by the views of other earlier authorities who researched and wrote about the same or related topic for support and comparison purposes. Most of the participants concurred concerning the fact that different types of behaviour witnessed at the company are: negative attitudes towards work, being absent from work, coming late to work, and doing personal work during working hours where organisational production should be at its peak. These different types of behaviours from the employee side negatively affect productivity at the organisation as shown by failure to meet targets, and failure to deliver as agreed to customers. This in turn negatively impacts organisational reputation thereby leading to loss of customers, thus giving momentum to rivals. Most of the participants contributed that work culture is another factor that influences negative employee behaviour at the company as employees rarely feel comfortable to be with the organisation due to the way they are treated. Employees need to feel comfortable at the workplace for them to stay positive in all the activities as the company's employees are exposed to harassment and bullying from management.

4.2 Role played by management in shaping employee behaviour

The majority of the participants agreed that the company's leadership has not much to influence the realisation of positive behaviour in employees. The leadership makes all decisions that affect employees and employees are only told what to do. The leadership does not provide an environment where employees are free to make suggestions on improvements. Managers that praise and recognise their employees are more likely to motivate employees to attempt for higher achievements. Participant D said that, *"The leadership tries its best to offer coaching and counselling to employees, however, most of the employees prefer salary increments which the organisation cannot afford."* On a positive note Participant F depicted that: *"The leadership at the company is motivating the employees by including them in decision making process. By so doing the employees feels to be part and parcel of the organisation as they are honoured through a sense of recognition that the management have installed in them."*

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A total of eight participants in this study viewed that the employees were showing signs of dissatisfaction as shown by lack of commitment to performing allocated tasks, absenteeism, and production of low quality work. This entails that employees are behaving in an unacceptable manner that is negatively affecting the business operations. The eight participants added that production has totally been affected by such behaviour due to reasons associated with low motivation from management, poor remuneration standards, compromised employee health and safety, low employee recognition due to absence of promotion and employee appraisal. One participant highlighted that the survival of any organisation is hinged on its human capital that in turn play a pivotal role in the achievement of availability, effectiveness, and efficiency of the plant machinery. Another participant underlined that an employee's attitude and behaviour is positive for the results of his/her efforts to translate into high productivity and achievement of common purpose towards management's vision and mission. The current situation at the company gives a reflection of non-conformance and misalignment of the vision and mission of management and the *modus operandi* of the shop-floor employees. One participant highlighted that the current situation at the company is unfavourable as the management has embarked on a turnaround strategy to increase productivity through the investment in high tech super-fast plant machinery, however, this dream has not been realised due to the negative behaviour by employees that has impacted on the productivity. Two participants were in agreement concerning employee behaviour being currently not easy to control at the company as different employees have their own perceptions towards the organisational operations. This is as a result of the presence of poor lines of communication where sometimes information fails to reach the exact destination to which it was intended and it is sometimes distorted along the way thereby receiving wrong feedback. This also has been a source of conflict within the organisation as shown by non-conformance in most of the organisational activities which in turn negatively affects productivity. Most of the employees do not work to be rewarded but rather to ensure that the company exceeds its budgeted production. The one participant vowed that employees are there to ensure that the organisation reaches its capacity in terms of production.

5.1 Factors influencing employee behaviour at the company

Eight participants identified that the factors influencing negative employee behaviour include dissatisfaction with the job, lack of recognition by management for good performance, poor working environment, lack of incentives for good performance, just being told what to do without employees own input. These factors were echoed by the other two

participants in the study who cited poor remuneration, failure by management to honour employee obligations, poor working conditions, and poor leadership-employee relationship as contributory factors that influence negative employee behaviour. One participant stressed that the major influence on the negative employee behaviour at the company is on the leadership style that is currently in use. There is an autocratic leadership style at the company where the boss is always right and behaves arrogantly. Employees expect their views to be listened to and respected with reference to organisational work. Employees are the ones who perform tasks and know exactly what to do in order to maximise productivity. On the contrary, the management assumes they know everything and tend to dictate thereby making employees behave negatively from what is expected of them. As a result, productivity is highly affected thereby resulting in a loss of clients due to failure to meet with the delivery agreements. Eight participants were in agreement that the company's leadership does not influence the realisation of positive behaviour in employees. The participants highlighted that leadership makes all decisions that affect employees and not involving employees. The leadership does not provide an environment where employees are free to make suggestions on organisational improvements. However, one of the participants contributed that the leadership tries its best to offer coaching and counselling to employees as a way of influencing their conduct at workplace. The one participant was of the opinion that most of the employees are always after salary increments, which the organisation cannot afford. The other participant was of the view that the leadership at the company is motivating the employees by including them in decision-making processes. By so doing the participant feels part of the organisation as he is honoured and empowered through a sense of recognition that the management has instilled in him.

5.2 Influence of employee behaviour on productivity at the company

Nine participants were in agreement that employee behaviour determines whether employees are in a good state with the organisation or not. Therefore, if employees are displaying a negative behaviour towards the organisation, they do not focus on their tasks and result in poor performance. One participant contributed that there is a positive influence of employee behaviour on productivity since the employees at the company are motivated to work hard to achieve the overall organisational throughput. The eight participants echoed that employees display positive behaviour towards their work and their organisation, they work hard for the success of the organisation. The eight participants stated that the higher employees are motivated, the more they get engaged at the organisation resulting in increased production. The eight participants concurred that there is a direct relationship between the behaviour of employees and productivity at the company. The positive behaviour from employees means that productivity increases as well and vice versa. This statement highlighted by the majority of the participants calls for attention by management to ensure maximum motivation of employees to contribute positively to organisation performance.

5.3 Influence of employee behaviour on productivity at the company

It was found that employee behaviour determines whether employees are positively contributing to the organisation's productivity or not. Therefore, if employees are displaying a negative behaviour towards the organisation, they do not focus on tasks at hand and result in high levels of performance failure. The literature that was reviewed shows that employee behaviour is a powerful tool for performance as positive attitudes towards one's job stem from positive behaviour. However, the results from the primary study revealed a total different view altogether. The majority of the participants echoed that there is negative behaviour currently prevailing at the company that influences poor performance. The relationship that exists between employee behaviour and productivity at the organisation was also

noted as very poor. This clearly shows that employees are the major resource that drives productivity and the way they behave affects productivity. When employees display positive behaviour towards their work and their organisation, they work hard for the success of the organisation. If all employees possess a positive behaviour, they will be committed and focused on their tasks thereby minimising chances of making mistakes.

5.4 Recommendations

Management should motivate employees by sharing crucial information to them to feel included and empowered to make decisions pertaining to their work. When organisations fail to share the company's information with their employees, either intentionally or unintentionally, the employees always come up with their own negative conclusions about that practice and that breeds negative behaviour. Top management should share the vision and information of the organisation's financial performance and all the long and short-term goals so that the employees know exactly what is expected of them and where the organisation is heading. The employees should be empowered to make crucial decisions that should be approved by the top management. Management should actively seek feedback from all team members. The organisational culture has to accommodate an open-door policy so that it will be easy for employees to approach their superiors and suggest ideas that enhance the organisational performance. It will be advisable that management reaches out to such people and encourage them to open their ideas and make sure that they are heard. There is need to ensure that there is integrity within the organisation as it is the main driver to employee behaviour. Employees should have a belief that their organisation lives its values, and that espoused behavioural norms are adhered to, resulting in trust and a sense of integrity. If there is a gap between the companies stated values and the reality of the company's behaviour, it can lead to distrust and negative employee behaviour. However, if the employees see the two aligning, it promotes trust and consequently employee engagement. Management should give due recognition for outstanding performance, provide work-life balance and consider that the employees have family issues to attend to and also create a favourable environment at the workplace. Management should improve their relationship with the employees and treat them as scarce resources with due respect.

5.5 Areas of further study

It is suggested to carry out further studies in other companies in different sectors to assess alternate views that can be applied across government and other corporate sectors.

5.6 Conclusion

The aim of this study was based on the assessment of the influence of negative employee behaviour on an organisation's productivity. This was achieved through a review of secondary data from research through engagement of related literature on similar topics, as well as the collection and analysis of primary data using qualitative research methodology. The study aimed to come up with recommendations to the company's management on the best ways to manage human resources for increased productivity purposes. In order to gain access to the data for the primary research, the study used face-to-face interviews over the selected sample size of ten participants from various distinctive departments at the company. Interpretation of primary results was done in conjunction with the facts and findings from existing information. The findings of the current situation at the company revealed low motivation from the management, poor remuneration standards, compromised employee health and safety, low employee recognition due to absence of promotion and employee appraisal. There is also a continuous lack of commitment to performing

allocated tasks, absenteeism, and production of low quality work. The factors that were seen to be influencing employee behaviour were dissatisfaction with the job, lack of recognition by management for good performance, poor working environment, lack of incentives for good performance, and just being told what to do without their input. The findings showed that employee behaviour is a powerful tool for performance as positive attitudes towards one's job stem from positive behaviour and there is a direct relationship between employee behaviour and productivity. Recommendations were made to management to motivate employees by giving them due recognition for outstanding performance, provide work-life balance considering that the employees have family issues to attend to and create an enabling workplace environment.

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