

Employee Relations and Job Satisfaction: A Study of Selected Hotel Businesses in Nasarawa State, Nigeria

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Abstract: Effective employee relations are essential to achieving higher levels of productivity and keeping employees motivated. This study examined the effect of employee relations on job satisfaction in some selected hotels in Nasarawa State. The study adopted the survey research design method and used a sample size of 187 staff and managers drawn from a population of 350. Data for the study was obtained using structured questionnaire in 5 point likert scale. The study found that employee welfare has significant effect on job satisfaction. Also conflict resolution mechanism has significant effect on job satisfaction while employee participation has no significant effect on job satisfaction. The study concludes that employee welfare and having in place conflict resolution mechanism are critical factors in job satisfaction and recommends that hotels in Keffi should ensure adequate and timely rewards in terms of salaries, allowances and other incentive are given to their staff and management of the hotels should also ensure at all times that conflict resolution mechanisms are not compromised.

Keywords: Employee Welfare, Conflict Resolution Mechanism, Employee participation and Job Satisfaction

Introduction

Organizational performance is greatly influenced by the nature of relationship between employees and employer, hence it is essential for managers to build and sustain good relationship with their employees. Effective employee relationship is important to the workplace whether at the time of recruitment, during an employees' tenure or at the time of separation (Rose, 2008). Armstrong (2005) observed that employee relations is to manage the relationship between employer and employees with the main objective of achieving the optimum level of productivity in terms of goods and services,

employee motivation taking preventive measures to resolve problems that adversely affect the working environment. Good employer-employee relations are essential to the organization because it inspires employees to work better and produce more results. According to Samwel (2018), despite the fact that in today's competitive business environment, employee relations is one of the pillars and crucial functions of human resource management which leads to effective employee performance and organizational performance.

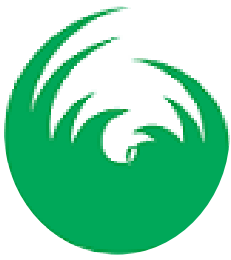
Work is about letting people know they are important, their hard work and efforts matter, and

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they are doing a good job. And this kind of recognition can sometimes be more important than money (Kuson, 2005). In the words of Branson (1998), “more than any element, fun is the secret of Virgin’s success. I am aware that the idea of business being fun and creative goes right against the grain of convention, and it’s certainly not how they teach it at some of those business schools, where business means hard grind and lots of discounted cash flows and net present values. For us, our employees matter most; it just seems common sense to me that, if you start off with a happy, well-motivated workforce, you are much more likely to have happy customers. And in due course the resulting profits will make your shareholders happy.” Employee relations are concerned with relationships between policies and practices of the organization and its staff and the behavior of work groups (Mullins, 2010).

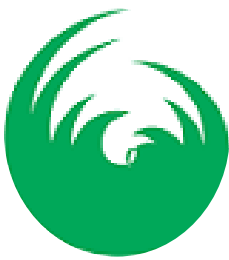
Job satisfaction is essentially tied to employee relations. Job satisfaction is a psychological aspect. It is an expression of feeling about the job. Job satisfaction is an attitude. It is a permanent impression formed about the job. Employees interact with people and other resources while working on the job. In the process, they experience positive or negative feelings about the job context and content According to Boyle (2006) job satisfaction is achieved when there is a great working relationship between labour and management. Organizations can have competent, qualified and motivated employees but if there is no peace and harmony at the

workplace, their performance will be in danger. The relationship between the employer and the employee is very crucial, therefore employers need to pay attention to this relationship if they want their businesses to grow and succeed (Bhattacharya, 2008). There are organizational and individual factors that affect job satisfaction.

The organizational factors include wages, nature of work, working conditions, job content, and opportunities for promotion, work groups and leadership styles while the individual factors include personality, age, education and gender difference among others. In spite of the current competitive business environment, employee relations as one of the pillars and crucial functions of human resource management that lead to job satisfaction, hotels in keffi Nasarawa state seem

to throw employee relations behind them by not giving it special attention and priority. This has resulted in unnecessary disputes in these organizations which in turn affect their performance. Poor relations between the employer and employees among organizations operating in the global and local markets have become a challenge (Kaliski, 2007).

The major objective of this study is to examine the effect of employee relations on job satisfaction in some selected hotels in Keffi, Nasarawa State while the specific objectives include i To examine how



employee welfare affect job satisfaction in some selected hotels in Keffi, Nasarawa State

ii To determine whether grievance resolution mechanism affects job satisfaction in some selected hotels in Keffi, Nasarawa State

iii To examine whether employee participation affects job satisfaction in some selected hotels in Keffi, Nasarawa State Research

Hypotheses Ho1 Employee welfare does not have any significant effect on job satisfaction in some selected hotels in Keffi, Nasarawa State

Ho2 Grievance resolution mechanism does not have any significant effect on job satisfaction in some selected hotels in Keffi, Nasarawa State

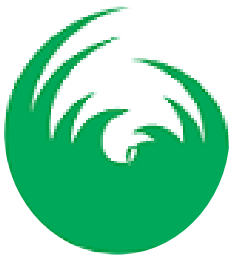
Ho3 Employee participation does not have any significant effect on job satisfaction in some selected hotels in Keffi, Nasarawa State.

Concept of Employee Relations

The management and co-ordination of human activities has become the cornerstone for achieving organizational survival. This achievement facilitates the protection of employees' interest and their welfare for the purpose of avoiding conflict relations between the employer and the employee (Mike, 2008). Employee relations focuses on the management of the relationship between the employees and the employers in order to heighten their commitment (Gennard & Judge, 2002), passion,

performance (Hameed, 2009), loyalty, productivity (Mike, 2008) and motivation (Crandall & Perrew, 2005). Employee relation largely focuses on the prevention of conflict issues and solving problems in the workplace (Cooper & Payne, 2008). Torrington and Hall (1998) observed that the relationship between employees and management is a framework of organizational justice consisting of organizational culture and management styles as well as rules and procedural sequence for grievance and conflict management.

Gennard and Judge (2002) stated that employee relations is a study of the rules, regulations and agreements by which employees are managed both as individuals and as a collective group. Lewis et al (2003) explained that employee relations suggest a wider employment canvas being covered with equal importance attached to non-union employment arrangements and white collar jobs. Armstrong (2005) observed that employee relations is to manage the relationship between employer and employees with the ultimate objectivity of achieving the optimum level of productivity in terms of goods and services, employee motivation taking preventive measures to resolve problems that adversely affect the working environment. Walton (1985) narrated that the unitary viewpoint of employee relations is the belief that management and employees share the same concerns and it is therefore in both their interests to cooperate. Perkins and Shortland (2006) advocated that employee relations is concerned with the social economic relationship that forms and



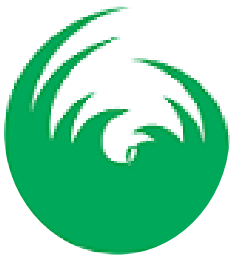
revolves around a contract between the parties to perform work in return for employment benefits such as remuneration

.According to Lewis, Thornhill & Saunders (2003), ‘employment relationship involves economic, social and political relationships where employees provide manual and mental labour in exchange for rewards by employers’. As a result of increased global competition over the last three decades, organizations have emphasized on labour efficiency and cost control (Perkins & Shortland, 2006). This has necessitated effective employee relations strategies that enable the employees to dedicate their energy to the achievement of organizational goals. Pearce and Robinson (2009) observed that ‘proactive steps should be taken in anticipation of employee needs and expectations and organizations should endeavour to satisfy their employees with better pay, supervision and stimulating work’. Employee satisfaction is related to customer satisfaction

Employee participation embraces employee involvement in organizational issues. Participative management involves encouraging employees to take part in the decision making process influencing the organization. Armstrong (2006) noted that employee participation engenders an atmosphere of trust and promotes justice in organizations. Individuals will feel that they have been dealt with legitimately if administration's choices and strategies are reasonable, predictable, straightforward, non-oppressive and appropriately think about the

perspectives and requirements of employees (Ofobruku, & Yusuf, 2016). Employee involvement and participation mechanism should be well established and part of daily work life in organizations.

Grievance resolution mechanism in organization whether through arbitration, joint consultation with union and ensuring prompt resolution of a case is very essential. Mesh 'al (2001) suggests that grievance is an unavoidable part of the dynamics of the organizational environment. People perceive situations differently and will try to persuade others to think as them. Consequently, grievance occur frequently when there are barriers to open communication, feeling of perceived threat or one that is real to your status of employment or when targets are not met by an individual. If these are not well and promptly managed, conflict becomes destructive and can have negative impact on employee productivity and the organizations' survival. Gazioglu and Tansel (2006) opine that if employers begin to understand the cause and how to react to conflicts, they thrive more in the management and prevention of future conflicts. Conflicts can also arise due to misunderstandings, poor communication and decision making, tensions or personal difficulties, breaches of trust or of the law, infringements of personal dignity or human rights, inability or unwillingness to perform allocated work and unacceptable behaviour. Conflicts can affect employee morale, reduce productivity and



eventually undermine organization performance (Ngari and Agusioma, 2016).

Concept of Job Satisfaction Job satisfaction is an extremely complex concept, influenced by various factors and their groups and is a key factor in the context of the efficient functioning of contemporary organizations. Satisfaction can be considered at both organizational and individual level. The organizational factors include remuneration, promotion opportunities, communication with superiors and benefits offered to employees. Individual factors influencing job satisfaction are primarily personal values, but age and education. Satisfaction with work is one of the main indicators of the quality of working life, taking into account its impact on the attitude of employees to work, satisfaction of specific needs of employees. An individual, who can talk to his or her colleagues and exchange not only work-related information, but also inquiries about well-being or polite conversation, builds a bond within the team. In turn, the individual has a sense of support and a friendly working environment, which contributes to a positive perception of work

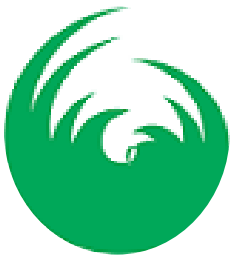
Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction as individuals' subjective valuation of different aspects of their job. Higher job satisfaction may be due to improvements in the objective aspects of the job either because of reduced expectations or because dissatisfying aspects of the job are downplayed while pleasing aspects are given greater weight. The relationship of job

satisfaction to productivity, quit and absenteeism in the work place is emphasized by a number of authors. Iaffaldano and Muchinsky (1985) consider job satisfaction, productivity and job performance. Freeman (1978), Akerlof et al.(1988) and Clark et al. (1998) and more recently Kristensen and Westgard-Nielsen (2004) and Levy-Garbous et al. (2007) indicate that job satisfaction is as good a predictor of quits and absenteeism as wages are. They point out that individuals leave low- satisfaction jobs for high-satisfaction-jobs. Thus, job satisfaction gives useful information about job turnover also.

Empirical Literature

Bulińska-Stangrecka and Bagieńska (2021) examined the role of employee relations in shaping job satisfaction as an element promoting positive mental health at work in the era of COVID-19.

The purpose of the study was to examine what factors influence job satisfaction in the context of remote work caused by a pandemic. The study analysed whether employee relations and interpersonal trust are related to the level of perceived job satisfaction. Based on an empirical study, carried out on a sample of 220 IT employees during the pandemic, an analysis of the mediating role of trust in links between employee relations and perceived job satisfaction was conducted. The study found that positive employee relations contribute to the level of job satisfaction



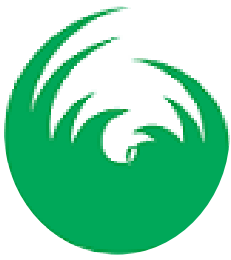
Samwel (2018) examined the effect of employee relations on employee performance and organizational performance in Tanzania. The study adopted a cross sectional survey research design and used a stratified random sampling technique to select a sample size of 387 respondents from selected small organizations in Tanzania. Data was collected using structured questionnaires and interviews and analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis and the results presented using tables. The findings of the study show that small organizations in Tanzania are aware of the benefits of maintaining good employee relations and correct remedial actions taken to minimize poor employee relations in the organization. The findings further indicate a positive significant relationship between employee relations and employee performance as well as between employee relations and organization performance. Moreover, the findings reveal the use of unfair labour practices in small organizations in Tanzania

Worlu et al (2016) examined the impact of employee relations strategy (Organizational policies, Promotion, Equity, Recognition and Mentoring) on job performance in Lagos State University, Southwest, Nigeria. A model was developed and tested using One hundred and thirty six (136) copies of valid questionnaire, which were completed by staff in the State owned university, Lagos, Nigeria. Structural Equation Modeling was adopted to test the hypotheses and relationships that might existed among variables. Results of the analysis indicated

that equity, promotion, mentoring and recognition have positive influence on employees' performance. While in the opposite direction, organizational policies have negative and insignificant effect on job performance which suggest that increase in employees' performance will require that managers pay more attention to friendly organizational policies that positively affect job satisfaction

Tansel and Gazioglu (2013) investigated the effect of employee relations and firm size on job satisfaction using the linked employer-employee survey results in Britain. They related various measures of job satisfaction to the management-employee relations via maximum likelihood ordered probit estimates. The measures of job satisfaction used are satisfaction with influence over job; satisfaction with amount of pay; satisfaction with sense of achievement and satisfaction with respect from supervisors. Main findings indicated that management-employee relationships are less satisfactory in the large firms than in the small firms. Job satisfaction levels are lower in large firms. Less satisfactory management-employee relationships in the large firms were seen to be a major source of the observed lower level of job satisfaction in them

Okeke (2010) investigated the impact of job satisfaction on employee performance in government owned institutions. The study used questionnaire to elicit response from staff of the institutions. Tables, percentage and chi-square were used for analysis. The major findings are



that promotion has a significant relationship with job satisfaction, there is relationship between salary and job satisfaction and conducive environment contribute to job satisfaction among employee in government owned enterprises. The study recommended among others that government owned enterprises should see increase/prompt payment as a motivation factor that can increase productivity in the organization, government should make the working environment conducive, so that the workers, can see their working environment as their second home and government owned enterprises should adopt management by objective in which employee should be part in decision making of the organization so that all hands will be on deck.

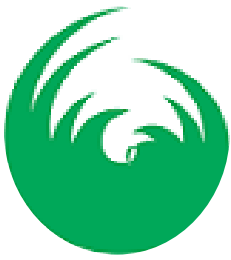
Theoretical Framework

The Expectation States Theory (EST) The main thrust of this theory assumes that individuals are in a task relationship with each other and, on the basis of the available information, formulate expectations for the actions of others in relation to specific tasks. The behavior of the individual, on the other hand, is the origin of his or her expectations. Moreover, the behaviors reinforce existing expectations. An important element of EST is the assumption that states of expectations have an episodic nature and become active when a given structure stabilizes. Changes in the environment affect the available information and, as a result, lead to changes in the states of expectation, and thus relate to a certain renegotiation of reality in response to the emerging

external condition. EST explains the issues of social influence in working groups and the role of interactions of team members on their behavior. Collective action connotes the formation of expectations about the anticipated behavior of other group members. The behavior of group members is therefore shaped based on these expectations. As a result, patterns of interchangeable behavior are established within the group. In other words, positive expectations of the individual lead to specific positive group behavior.

Therefore, having good relationship with colleagues leads to the building of positive expectations, subsequently engendering positive group attitudes which will culminate to higher satisfaction. Allowing the exchange of information and giving opportunities for interaction to build positive expectations for employees at work is a vital element in ensuring positive group processes. In the context of organization management, EST provides a theoretical framework to conceptualize the factors that contribute to job satisfaction based on information from the surrounding environment.

Performance expectations are therefore stable structures that determine the relationship between the participants of an interaction and influence the development of subsequent expectations. In accordance with EST, job satisfaction is the outcome of an individual's expectations of his or her colleagues, established on the basis of the information available in a given context. Consistent



with EST, trust in managers, especially with regard to his or her ability to carry out future tasks, fits perfectly into the dynamics of these relationships based on the performance expectation

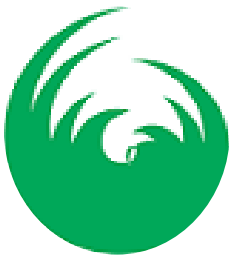
Unitarist Theory

This theory was propounded by Fox (1966). The theory postulates that an organization should have one main body of authority. This body whether in the form of a single person or small governing body manages all the decisions in the business. Unitarian leaders in the organization are mainly concerned with maintaining employee loyalty. They inspire hard work in their employees by creating a unified goal for all individuals. Businesses that employ this theory are good at motivating employees to a single goal, but are criticized for their increased disregard for trade unions and sometimes their dictator-like approaches to decision-making. Employees have no power, while managers have all the powers. This is in contrast with today's employee relations where employee involvement, engagement and participation are emphasized. Unitarist view is mainly held by the management who saw their function as that of directing and controlling the employees to attain organizational objectives Armstrong (2006). With the unitary perspective, the organization is viewed as an integrated and harmonious whole with managers and other staff sharing common interest and objectives. There is an image of the organization as a team with a common source of loyalty, one focus of effort and on accepted

leader. Conflict is perceived as disruptive and unnatural and can be explained by, for example, poor communications, personality clashes or the work of agitators. Trade unions are seen as an unnecessary evil and restrictive practices as outmoded or caused by trouble makers.

HR policies and managerial development can be seen as reflecting a unitary ideology. Horwitz suggests that the unitary perspective views company and trade union loyalty as mutually exclusive. He raises the question of HRM as a reformation of a unitarist managerial ideology. Developments in HRM, in seeking to optimize cooperation and organizational loyalty, can be seen as imposing new forms of controls. A managerial approach to facilitating organizational goals and the direct involvement of employees furthers a unitarist perspective and can mask an underlying distaste for unionism (Mullins, 2010). One major strength of unitary theory is that it seeks to integrate employer and employee interests to enhance employee commitment and loyalty (Guest and Peccei, 2001). Unitary theory can be used as a basis for stakeholder management where employees are seen as major stakeholders of the organization therefore their well-being is carefully considered in ensuring the welfare of the organization.

Pluralist Theory. This theory was also propounded by Fox (1966) and it views the organization as made up of powerful and competing subgroups with their own legitimate loyalty, objectives and leaders. These



competing subgroups are almost certain to come into conflict. From the pluralist perspective, conflict in organization is seen as inevitable and induced, in part, by the very structure of the organization. Conflict is not necessarily a bad thing but can be an agent for evolution, and internal and external change (Mullins, 2010).

Restrictive practices may be seen as a rational response from a group that regards itself as being threatened. The role of the manager will be less commanding and enforcing, and more persuading and coordinating. Fox suggests that this perspective is a more realistic frame of reference. He argued the importance of viewing work situations through the different groups involved rather than attempting a wished for unitary approach. Horn argues that these views were widely acceptable particularly to trade unions, who saw this as legitimizing their intervention into an increasing range of managerial prerogative areas. The implication is that there is more than one source of authority in the organization.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where:

N = Population size

1 = Constant

e = Margin of error (5%)

Survey research design method was used to carry out this study. Descriptive research design was used to observe and describe the behaviour of staff and managers without influencing them in any way. The population of the study consists of 350 staff and managers of the major hotels in keffi town, Nasarawa state, Nigeria. These hotels were selected based on the criteria that they have more than 10 employees in their payroll.

The researcher used stratified sampling method where the sample frame was divided into strata and a sample is taken from each stratum. This method achieves greater precision and ensures better coverage of the population and leads to more efficient statistical estimates. The stratum was made up of three categories namely: management, supervisors and line staff of the selected hotels in keffi town. Taro Yamane (1973) formula was used to estimate the sample size out of the study population.

The formula is given by:



$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Substituting into the formula we have:

$$n = \frac{350}{1 + 350(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{350}{1 + 350(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{350}{1.875}$$

$$n = 187$$

Data for the study was collected by the use of structured questionnaire. The respondents were asked to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement based on a 5-point Likert scale that ranged from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree

(5). Data was analysed by the use of ordinary least square regression (OLS) with the aid of SPSS 26.

The following model was specified in line with the research hypotheses:

$$JSAT = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 WLF + \alpha_2 CRM + \alpha_3 PAT + \xi_t$$

Where:

JSAT = Job Satisfaction

WLF = Employee welfare

CRM = Conflict Resolution Mechanism

PAT = Employee Participation

$\alpha_1 - \alpha_3$ = coefficients of job satisfaction, conflict resolution mechanism and employee participation respectively.

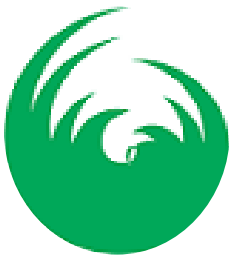
α_0 = Intercept

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$$\xi_t = \text{Random or Error Term}$$

We used the ordinary least squared regression because it allows for the estimation of the strength of the relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable and also has the ability to indicate the extent to which changes in the independent variables affect the dependent variable.

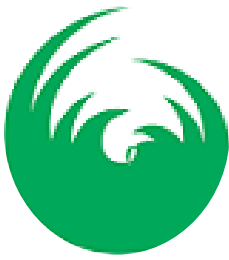
Results and Discussion

The null hypotheses formulated for the study were tested. The study adopted 5% level of significance and conclusion was taken based on the probability values (p-values). We reject the null hypotheses if p-value is less than 0.05., otherwise we accept it

Table 1: Regression Model Result

Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction			
Method: Least Squares			
Variable	Coefficient	t-value	Prob.(p)
C	8.4566	4.74324	0.01024
Employee Welfare	0.64723	2.54762	0.03437
Conflict Resolution Mechanism	0.95341	2.83460	0.03376
Employee Participation	0.46392	2.63421	0.31764
Summary Statistics			
R-squared	0.6926	F-statistic	5.3274
Adjusted R-squared	0.6125	Prob(F-statistic)	0.0477
Durbin Watson	1.9354		

Researcher's Computation Using SPSS-26 (2021)



Goodness of Fit Indicators of the Model

The overall fit and significance of the job satisfaction model indicated that the model has a good fit, as shown by the value of the F-statistic of 5.32745 which is significant at the 5.0 per cent level as the F-statistic p-value of 0.0477 is less than 0.05 probability levels. The coefficient of determination as measured by the R-square 0.6926 indicated that employee welfare, conflict resolution mechanism and employee indicated participation explain 69.26% of the total variation in job satisfaction while the random error term (ϵ) covers 31.74%.

Test of Hypotheses One:

From regression result in Table 1, the calculated t-value for the relationship between employee welfare and job satisfaction is 2.54762 and the p-value is 0.03437 at 95% confidence levels. Since the p-value is less than 0.05 level of significance, we reject the null hypothesis (H_{01}) and conclude that employee welfare has a significant effect on job satisfaction in hotels in keffi town.

Test of Hypotheses Two:

It can also be seen from regression result in Table 1 that the calculated t-value for the relationship between conflict resolution mechanism and job satisfaction is 2.83460 and the p-value computed is 0.03376 at 95% confidence levels. Since the p-value is less than 0.05 level of significance, the study rejects the null hypothesis (H_{02}) and conclude that

conflict resolution mechanism has a significant effect on job satisfaction in hotels in keffi town.

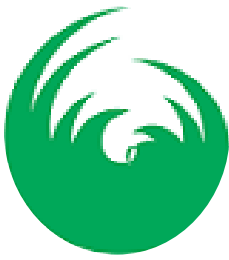
Test of Hypotheses Three:

Finally, from the regression result in Table 1, the calculated t-value for the relationship between employee participation is 2.63421 and with an associated p-value of 0.31764 at 95% confidence levels. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the study accepts the third null hypothesis (H_{03}) and concludes employee participation has no significant effect on job satisfaction in hotels in keffi town.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from the study revealed that employee welfare has a significant effect on job satisfaction in hotels in keffi town. The implication of this findings is that, employee welfare especially in terms adequate financial rewards and incentives keep the staff motivated and this is a critical factor in job satisfaction in hotels in keffi town. This finding is consistent with the finding of Okeke (2010).

It was also found that conflict resolution mechanism has a significant effect on job satisfaction in hotels in keffi town. This shows that the ability of the managers to maintain healthy working relationship among the staff is a crucial factor in ensuring job satisfaction. Where conflicts are resolved fairly and timely, this enables the staff to bond more and create a friendlier environment that fosters greater job



satisfaction. The result is in agreement with the study i. consistent with the findings of Okeke (2010).

Finally, the study found that employee participation has no significant effect on job satisfaction in hotels in keffi town. This shows that most of the staff are not actually interested in their participation in the decision making regarding the day to day running of the hotels in as much as the management rewards ii. them well and ensures favourable working environment.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The current competitive business environment requires that employee relations be seen as crucial function of management that can ensure and guarantee job satisfaction which will ultimately affect their overall performance. Favourable employee relation will go a long way in curbing or greatly curtailing unnecessary disputes which can derail the achievement of organizational goals in spite of availability of resources. Major hotels in keffi Nasarawa state have not given special attention and priority to employee relation and this has negatively affected their performance. Based on the findings of this study, we conclude that employee welfare and having in lace conflict resolution mechanism are critical factors in job satisfaction.

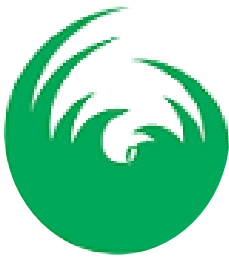
Based on the findings of this study, we offer the following recommendations;

As employee welfare has been shown to increase job satisfaction, we recommend that hotels in Keffi should ensure adequate and timely rewards in terms of salaries, allowances and other incentive are given to their staff. This will go a long way to keeping the staff satisfied and committed to their assigned duties towards achieving the goals of the hotels.

The management of the hotels should ensure at all times that conflict resolution mechanisms are not compromised at any time. As hotel is a service business, timely resolution of disputes fosters a friendly work environment which will lead to better service delivery. They should build an atmosphere devoid of rancor both among the staff and especially between staff and external customers.

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