

## Physical Work Environment and Workers' Productivity in Rivers State Civil Service

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**ABSTRACT:** Workers are the most important asset of any organisation; they play a pivotal role in the performance of any organisation. Nevertheless, the quality and quantity of work generated by workers are strongly influenced by their physical work environment as poor environmental conditions can lower workers' productivity as well as reduce their job satisfaction. Hence, every administration knows that its success is due to diligent workers with excellent productivity. This study examined the work environment and workers' productivity in Rivers State Civil Service. McGregor X and Y Theories were adopted as the theoretical framework. A survey design was used to carry out the study, while primary and secondary data were collected and analysed with the use of tables and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The sample size for this study consisted of five hundred (500) with self-administered questionnaires distributed to civil servants from five (5) selected ministries in Rivers State Civil Service; Ministry of Agriculture, Environment, Youth Development, Education, Establishment and their responses analysed to test the validity of the hypotheses formulated. The result obtained indicated that the work environment has a huge impact on workers' productivity in Rivers State Civil Service. Consequently, the researcher recommended amongst others that the management of the Rivers State Civil Service should try as much as possible to provide a conducive work environment that can increase workers' productivity.

**KEYWORD:** Physical Work environment, Organisational Culture, Workers' Productivity, Civil Service, Civil Servants

### I. Introduction

The productivity of any administration is in the hands of its workers. Any successful organisation knows that majority of its success is due to diligent workers with excellent productivity. Workers who put forth adequate effort often make a big difference in administrative productivity and a large number of scholars have studied the impact of the work environment on employees' productivity (Ferreira & Antwerpen, 2011). Work environment internal and external is important to employee productivity surroundings and all those things that impact human beings during the lifetime are collectively known as environment. A working environment is an environment where people work together for achieving organizational objectives. It means systems, processes, structures and tools and all those things which interact with employees and affect in positive or negative ways on employees performance (Ferreira & Antwerpen 2011).

Brenner (2014) asserts that the ability of workers within an organisation to share knowledge throughout the system depends on the conditions of their work environment. It is also observed that

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workers tend to be more productive in a well-facilitated work environment. Since the 1990s, the context of a work environment has changed due to changes in several factors such as the social environment, information technology and the flexible ways of organizing work processes (Hasun & Makhbul, 2015). Factors affecting the workplace environment play an important role in determining the worker's performance. Such factors of the workplace environment have an immense impact on the worker's performance, negatively or positively (Chandrasekhar, 2019). When workers are physically and emotionally fit they will have the desire to work, and their productive outcomes shall increase. Moreover, a proper workplace environment helps in reducing the number of absenteeism and thus increasing workers' performance which leads to increased productivity at the workplace (Boles, Pelletier, & Lynch, 2014).

The wealth of the nation is dependent on the socio-economic well-being of its workers. As concern for productivity, especially in the public sector, intensified it culminated in the establishment of the National Productivity Centre under the Federal Ministry of Employment, Labour and Productivity (Chete, et al. 2018). The primary duty of the National Productivity Centre, as spelt out by Decree No. 7 of 1987, is to stimulate productivity consciousness among Nigerian workers and to develop and supply the right technical solutions to productivity problems across all sectors of the national economy. Nigeria Government has instituted several welfare packages as one of the strategies to spur workers to higher productivity (Chete, et al. , 2018).

### **Statement of the problem**

Nigeria from the mid-1980s has been experiencing some kind of economic strangulation that has impoverished the nation and its citizenry. The Centre for Gender and Social Policy Studies (CGSPS), in a communiqué early 1999 observed that the general socio-economic situation in Nigeria over the years has deteriorated and consequently, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has dwindled (Remi, 2016). Unfortunately, it does appear that the government, both at the federal and state levels, have been lackadaisical in exploring ways of enhancing labour productivity in the country, workers' satisfaction on the job and other employee-related issues does not seem to be on the priority list of the government. Many private employers have also abandoned their responsibilities towards the welfare of their workers (Abbass, 2016; Olufemi, 2015). Indeed, there seems to be a lack of concern among many Nigerian employers for a review of workers' socio-economic status towards making them more productive (Taiwo, 2010). While one can concede the fact that some private-sector employers in Nigeria have been making efforts to implement incentive programs that will enhance their workers' motivation and hence increase productivity. Many of these motivational tools are not available to administrators and workers in Rivers State government. What are these logistics that must be put in place to motivate these workers, knowingly well that in the public sector, salaries are not individually negotiated?

### **Objectives of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine the correlation between work environment and employees productivity in Rivers State Civil Service (2011-2021). Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. determine the impacts of the physical work environment on the productivity of the Civil Service in Rivers State.
2. examine the influence of the organisational culture on the productivity of the Civil Service in Rivers State.

## Research Questions

The study attempts to answer the following research questions;

1. To what extent does the physical environment correlate with civil servants' productivity in Rivers State Civil Service?
2. To what extent does organisational culture correlate with workers' productivity in Rivers State Civil State?

## Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant relationship between the physical work environment and employees' productivity in Rivers State Civil Service.

H02: There is no significant relationship between organisational culture and the productivity of workers in Rivers State Civil Service.

## II. Literature Review

A conducive work environment gives pleasant knowledge to workers and enables them to realize their capabilities and behaviour. For instance, an irresponsible worker can change into a responsible worker in a conducive work environment. An unhealthy work environment gives unpleasant experiences and at the same time, affect workers' behaviour. The work environment underpins low self-actualizing performances and it leads to the development of negative traits of the employees' behaviour. An unhealthy physical work environment can turn responsible and sensible workers' behaviour into irrational and irresponsible workers as a survival strategy. The workplace environment is the sum of the interrelationship that exists within the employees and the environment in which the employee works. Brenner (2014) rightly argued that a work environment designed to suit employees' satisfaction and free flow of exchange of ideas is a better medium of motivating employees towards higher productivity. Work environment when appropriately designed motivates employees towards higher productivity.

### Concept of Physical Work Environment

Ruchi (2014) considered three elements of the work environment to include: (i) The physical environment which is characterized by ventilation and temperature; noise, amenities, infrastructure and interior; (ii) The mental environment characterized by fatigue, boredom, monotony, attitude and behaviour of supervisor and colleagues; (iii) Social environment consisting of a group of employees within an enormous ceremonial casual cluster. These workers develop an intellect of belonging to their cluster, and the standards and privileged of the cluster impact significantly on the attitude and behaviour of individual employees.

Interestingly, Ruchi (2014) postulated four characteristics of the work environment to include. apparent and open communication in essence, it addresses the workers feel that they are appropriate in the organisation. However, staff must deliberate the organisation's philosophy, mission and values. Secondly, stability of work-life. This is where there is some sort of balance between work and personal life. In general, having a sense of balance will improve job satisfaction among workers. Thirdly, impartiality: here, workers need to identify that they are being impartially rewarded established on their performance. Impartiality means that the consequences of performance are resolute by the quantity and quality of the performance. And lastly, consistency: this means predictability. This is when subordinates want to know how their supervisor will react in a given situation. According to management studies, consistency is the single most effective standard to establish with your own leadership.

### Concept of Organisational Culture

Organizational culture is a system of shared assumptions, values, and beliefs that governs how people behave in an organisation. These shared values have a strong influence on the people in the organisation and dictate how they dress, act, and perform their jobs. Every organisation develops and maintains a unique culture, which provides guidelines and boundaries for the behaviour of the members of the organisation. Organisational culture is composed of seven characteristics that range in priority from high to low. Every organisation has a distinct value for each of these characteristics, which, when combined, defines the organisation's unique culture. Members of organisations make judgments on the value their organisation places on these characteristics and then adjust their behaviour to match this perceived set of values (McLaughlin & James, 2021).

Culture is essential for understanding behaviour, social events, institutions, and processes. Robins and Judge (2016, p. 565) explained culture to be a shared meaning held by members that distinguish the organisation from other organisations. The authors went further to indicate certain characteristics of organisational culture: innovation and risk-taking; attention to detail; outcome orientation; people orientation; team orientation; aggressiveness; and stability. Culture is the setting in which these phenomena become comprehensible and meaningful. It is salient here not to overemphasise the static elements of culture: even if tradition, framework, rules, and fairly stable meanings are part of the picture, culture is not best understood as a homogeneous, cohesive, and causal force, but as something that people do; it is emergent, dynamic, situationally adaptive, and co-created in dialogue (Heijes, 2011). This is partly because individuals and groups are meaning-seeking creatures, and partly because the multiplicity of complex meanings is set in motion in specific settings and interactions. Meanings need to be negotiated and processed, not rigidly applied. For example, there is no static and uniform meaning of "managerial authority" in a workplace; the cultural context provides a framework for its negotiation, aiding interactions (Arnold, 2005).

Despite the fact that there are numerous definitions of culture, culture can be defined as a combination of values, sets, beliefs, communications, and behaviour simplification that provides people with direction. The basic idea of culture arrives through the sharing of learning processes, which is based on the proper allocation of resources. The mental ability of humans, which helps in enhancing thinking and decision-making, depends on the organisational culture. According to Ahmed and Shafiq (2014), culture is a collection of various values and behaviours that may be considered as a guide to success. This means that we can explicate culture as being a collection of beliefs, behaviours, and values that society normally contains. Simply, we can say that culture is the knowledge, explanations, values, beliefs, communication, and behaviours of many people, at the right time and right place.

In the present era, the concept of culture is used as a concept of organisation. Arnold (2005, p 625) indicates that "organisational culture is the distinctive norms, beliefs, principles, and ways of behaving that combine to give each organisation its distinct character". These two definitions suggest that organisational culture distinguishes one organisation from another. According to Stewart (2010), an organisation's norms and values have a great impact on those who are fully devoted to the organisation. According to him, norms cannot be seen, but if organisations want to increase their profits and employee productivity, norms must be considered first.

Therefore, organisational culture informs an organisation of what personality is to an individual. As mentioned earlier, organisational or corporate culture is the pattern of values, norms, beliefs, attitudes, and assumptions that may not have been articulated but shape the ways in which people in organisations behave and things get done. "Values" refer to what is believed to be important about how people and organisations behave. "Norms" are the unwritten rules of behaviour. This definition

emphasises that organisational culture is concerned with the subjective aspect of what goes on in organisations. It refers to abstractions such as values and norms that pervade the whole or part of a business and which may not be defined, discussed, or even noticed.

Organisational culture is likewise perceived as "the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one organisation from others" (Ahmed and Shafiq, 2014, p. 21). It was further explained that organisational behaviour, which is related to a practitioner's values and beliefs, is based on cultural elements and norms that influence the personality and performance of an organisation. Issues relating to organisational culture are incomplete without being perceived by the climate of the organization. Ivancevitch et al. (2008) described the organisational climate as: "a set of properties of the work environment, perceived directly or indirectly by the employees that is assumed to be a major force in influencing employee behaviour." The term "organisational climate" is sometimes confused with "organizational culture," and there has been much debate on what distinguishes them from one another. In his analysis of this issue, he suggested that "culture" refers to the deep structure of organisations, which is rooted in the values, beliefs, and assumptions held by their members. In contrast, "climate" refers to those aspects of the environment that are consciously perceived by organisational members.

It is tempting to emphasise the significance of corporate cultures for performance, growth, and success, as Martins and Martins (2003) postulated that "high formalisation in an organisation creates predictability, orderliness, and consistency." In other words, a strong culture can serve as a substitute for formalisation. This suggests that the organisation's formal rules and regulations, which act to regulate its members' behaviour, can be internalised by organisational members when they accept the organisation's culture; this takes place without the need for written documentation (Martins & Martins, 2003). Therefore, low formalisation of rules and regulations could reflect a weak organisational culture. Many of the most influential management writers and academics agree. Kanter (2008, p.44) recognises that talk about values is fashionable in corporate circles, but for "the vanguard companies we studied, values truly are a primary consideration." Pfeffer (1994) argues that the traditional sources of success – product and process technology, access to regulated markets, economies of scale, etc. – matter less today than in the past, "leaving organisational culture and capabilities, derived from how people are managed, as comparatively more vital." Knowledge is said to be the crucial factor behind sustainable advantage and success for companies, and knowledge issues are closely interlinked with organisational culture (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2001; Jonsson and Foss, 2011).

Culture is thus highly significant for how companies and other organisations function, from strategic change to everyday leadership and how managers and employees relate to and interact with customers, as well as how knowledge is created, shared, maintained, and utilized. Organizational culture is substantial as a way of understanding organisational life in all its richness and variations. The centrality of the cultural concept follows from the profound importance of shared meanings for any coordinated action, because organisations exist as systems of meanings that are shared to various degrees. A sense of common, taken-for-granted ideas, beliefs, and meanings is necessary for continuing organised activity. This makes interaction possible without constant confusion or intense interpretation and reinterpretation of meanings. For organisational practitioners—managers and others shaping organisational life—a developed capacity to think in terms of organisational culture facilitates acting wisely. Insights and reflections may be useful in relation to getting people to do the "right" things in terms of effectiveness, but also for promoting more autonomous standpoints in relation to dominant ideologies, myths, fashions, etc. We also need to learn about culture in order to



encourage and facilitate critical thinking through various taken-for-granted aspects of values, beliefs, and assumptions in industry, occupations, and organisations.

According to Robins and Judge (2016), culture enhances the stability of a social system. It helps in defining the boundaries of an organization; it guides and shapes employees' attitudes and behaviours; it conveys a sense of organisational identity; and it helps to facilitate commitment. The authors went further to highlight how to keep a culture alive through symbols, stories, language, and rituals.

### Concept of Workers' Productivity

Workers' productivity can be defined as a person's ability to perform, including the opportunity and willingness to perform as well. Willingness to perform means the desire of the workers to put as much effort towards their job as possible (Onyeizugbe, Aghara, Olohi, & Chidiogo, 2018). However, Miranda and Fernando (2019) have a different point of view regarding these workers' performance and productivity. Howell upholds that workers' performance is all about social standing. Furthermore, a reward system should be implemented based on the productivity of the workers. This is to motivate the workers in order to perform better on their tasks.

Sinha (2001), as cited in Bushiri (2014), opines that workers' productivity is dependent on the willingness and openness of the administration itself in doing their job. He also stated that by having this willingness and openness in doing their job, it could increase the workers' performance, which also leads to increased productivity.

### III. Theoretical Framework

**The paper was anchored on McGregor's X and Y Theories.** On the other hand, McGregor (1960, in Sapru, 2013), in his Theory X, hypothesised that employees inherently dislike work and responsibilities, and can, if possible, avoid them. Also, because workers dislike work, they must be coerced, controlled, or threatened with punishment to achieve organisational goals. McGregor, on the other hand, pointed out that his idea might not be feasible because workers cannot be productive in such a hostile work environment. He then reiterated in his Theory Y that employees' positive impressions of the work environment can make them view work as natural, restorative, or play. Consequently, employees can exercise self-direction and self-control, learn to accept and even seek more responsibilities, and be committed to organisational objectives. McGregor regarded Theory Y's assumptions as being more useful than the previous one. He therefore concluded that an environment where there is participative decision-making is a good alternative that would positively increase an employee's job motivation. Theory X assumes dominant individuals go for lower-order needs while theory Y assumes higher-order needs A

### IV Research Methodology

The following are the methodologies under which the study was carried out:

**Research Design:** Research design connotes a blueprint formulated to give a clear answer to a research question. The nature of this study calls for an application of survey design that will help to identify and obtain information on the characteristics of a particular problem or issue. A survey design was used because it has the advantage of producing good responses from a wide range of people and, at the same time, providing a meaningful and accurate picture of events.

**The Study's Population:** The population of this study is all the staff in the Rivers State Civil Service, which is 46,188, according to the Ministry of Finance, where these data were obtained. Although this figure is erratic, as, at the time of this study, it was 46,188 staff.

**Sample Size and Sampling Technique:** A simple random sampling technique was adopted for the study. Simple random sampling is also known as probability sampling. The questionnaires were

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administered to the workers personally after consent was granted by the permanent secretaries, respectively. The sample size for this study is 500 five hundred workers in five selected ministries: the Ministry of Agriculture, Environment, Youth Development, Education, and Establishment Ministry in the Rivers State Civil Service.

**Sources of data:** The sources of data for this study are primary data (with structured questionnaires) and secondary data from journals, books, newspaper articles, and other publications.

**Methods of Data Collection:** Primary data and secondary data were collected for the purpose of analysis through the use of questionnaires which were open-ended and self-administered to the respondents in five (5) selected ministries: Agriculture, Environment, Youth Development, Education, and Establishment. Prior to the administering of the questionnaires, a letter seeking permission to do so was sent to the Permanent Secretaries of each of the ministries.

**Methods of Data Analysis:** Data from the answered questionnaires were organised and analysed using the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient in SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). The analytical tool adopted by the researcher in analysing the data collected for the study was descriptive statistics to test the three hypotheses that were put forward in the study.

## V. Results and Discussion

**Research Question 1:** To what extent does physical work environment correlate with civil servants productivity in Rivers State Civil Service?

**Table 1.0** Mean responses of civil servants to correlation between work environment and productivity in Rivers State Civil Service. **Male farmers, N= 189; Female farmers, N= 101**

Items	Participants		Work	Productivity		Remarks
	Physical Environment					
	X	SD	Remark	X	SD	
1 Necessary for organisational growth	3.07	0.01	Accepted	3.15	0.01	Accepted
2 Health is an essential factor	3.13	0.01	Accepted	3.18	0.00	Accepted
3 Employee job satisfaction depends on this	3.04	0.02	Accepted	3.08	0.00	Accepted
4 For it to be optimum , there must be good organisational culture	3.06	0.01	Accepted	3.15	0.00	Accepted
5 Influenced by effective management leadership skills	3.35	0.03	Accepted	3.42	0.01	Accepted
<b>Grand Mean/Std dev.</b>	<b>3.13</b>	<b>0.03</b>		<b>3.20</b>	<b>0.04</b>	

From the result in table 1.0 above, in response to research question 1 in items 1,2,3, 4 & 5all the Civil Servants agreed that there is a correlation between physical work environment and productivity in Rivers State Civil Service. The mean responses showed that productivity and physical work environment are correlated. The final grand mean also shows that the majority of the respondents generally accepted the fact that physical work environment and productivity are positively inclined towards: organisational growth, employee-employer relationship, employee job satisfaction, organisational culture and management leadership skills.

**Research Question 2:** To what extent does organisational culture correlate with workers' productivity in Rivers State Civil Service?

**Table 4.0** Mean responses of Civil Servants on the correlation between organisational culture and workers' productivity in Rivers State Civil Service.

Items	Participants			Workers' Productivity		
	Organizational Culture					
	X	SD	Remark	X	SD	Remarks
1 Encourages job satisfaction	2.98	0.04	Accepted	3.27	0.01	Accepted
2 Creates opportunity for improved welfare packages	3.26	0.01	Accepted	3.05	0.01	Accepted
3 Promotes organisational profitability	2.89	0.08	Accepted	3.12	0.08	Accepted
4 Promotes team work and efficiency	3.09	0.01	Accepted	3.32	0.01	Accepted
5 Influenced by management leadership style	3.39	0.05	Accepted	3.06	0.05	Accepted
<b>Grand Mean/Std dev.</b>	<b>3.16</b>	<b>0.05</b>		<b>3.16</b>	<b>0.04</b>	

From the result in table 4 above, in response to the research question, 2 in items 1,2,3, 4, and 5, the majority of the Civil Servants agreed to a large extent that there is a correlation between organisational culture and workers' productivity in Rivers State Civil Service. The final grand mean also shows that both are positively inclined towards: job satisfaction, incentives to motivate employees, organisational profitability, teamwork and efficiency and organisational culture.

#### Hypotheses testing using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient

The previously stated hypotheses for the study are hereby tested below.

##### Test for Hypothesis 1

**Table 7.0 PPMCC: Two-Sample for Mean Scores in Hypothesis 1**

Variable	Mean Scores	Std.dev.	Obsrvn. N	Df	Pearson, r=	Z-r	Remark
<b>Work Env.</b>	3.13	0.05	356	354	0.985	3.86	Relationship is significant
<b>Productivity</b>	3.20	0.04	356				

From the result of the statistical analysis above (as indicated by the correlation coefficient,  $r = +0.985$ , the result shows that there is a very strong positive relationship between the physical work environment and productivity of Civil Servants in Rivers State Civil Service. Thus, it is logical to argue from the findings of the study that an improvement in the conditions of the work environment will in turn promote organisational productivity.

##### Test for Hypothesis 2

**Table 7.1 PPMCC: Two-Sample for Mean Scores in Hypothesis 2**

Variable	Mean Scores	Std.dev.	Obsrvn. N	Df	Pearson, r=	Z-r	Remark
<b>Work Env.</b>	3.13	0.05	356	354	0.867	2.54	Relationship is significant
<b>Productivity</b>	3.20	0.04	356				

From the result of the statistical analysis above (as indicated by the correlation coefficient,  $r = +0.867$ , the result shows that there is a very strong positive relationship between organisational culture and productivity of Civil Servants in Rivers State Civil Service. Thus, it is logical to argue



from the findings of the study that a conducive organisational culture will in turn promote organisational productivity.

## VI. Discussion of Findings

In the course of this study, it was found from responses to the first research question that physical work environment to a large extent has an effect on the Civil Servants' productivity in Rivers State Civil Service, as subscribed to by a majority of the respondents. In response to research question 1, the study revealed that providing the workers a conducive physical work environment enhances their productivity, which is in agreement with the findings of Ruchi (2014) that physical work environment creates the physical condition that can affect the health of employees, influence their satisfaction and job performance. The workers subscribed to having needed work equipment, safe work environment as what enhances their job productivity. The findings are equally in agreement with that of Naharuddin and Sadegi (2013) who in their study on the effect of workplace environment's factors towards workers' productivity, found that job aid and physical workplace environment had a significant relationship on the workers' productivity. Even so, the test statistics in testing the first hypothesis, via Pearson Correlation ( $p$ ) was given as 0.985 which is close to 1 and positive, which reveals a highly significant relationship between physical work environment and employees' productivity. Based on the result of the analysis of the null hypothesis ( $H_01$ ), there is a significant positive relationship between the physical working environment and productivity in Rivers State Civil Service.

Also in response to research question 2, it was equally found that organisational culture in the workplace impacts to a large extent on the productivity of the workers, as indicated by the majority of the respondents. Organisational culture is associated with a conducive relationship between the employees and the policies governing the organisations. The Pearson Correlation ( $r$ ) result was 0.867 which implies a highly significant positive relationship between organisational culture and employee productivity. The finding is in agreement with that of Stephen and Stephen (2016) who agreed that for employees who are making sense of their environment organisational culture serves as a vehicle of the organisational influence on the individual's identity and behaviour. To further corroborate the findings of the study, Ravasi and Schultz (2016) assert that organisational culture ensures individuals are socialised into specific norms and patterns of behaviour that helps to boost productivity.

## VII. Conclusion and Recommendations

So far so good, the findings of this study has shown statistical evidence that the welfare of employees cannot be taken for granted as this plays a very significant role in determining the extent to which the firms can achieve their organisational goals.

Based on the findings and conclusions thereof, the following recommendations were made:

1. The study strongly recommends that government and organisations pay strict attention to providing a conducive physical work environment to continuously motivate their employees to better performance and productivity. Specifically, a physically pleasant, safe, and healthy work environment and incentive package provided for workers in another part of the world should be replicated in Rivers State Civil Service.
2. The management should try as much as possible to improve the understanding of the role of organisational culture in the achievement of organisational objectives. Hence, culture is a key factor not only in achieving organisational goals, but in attracting and keeping desirable employees, creating a positive public image, and building respectful relationships with stakeholders.

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