



EFFECTS OF EMPLOYEE VOICE MANAGEMENT ON FIRM PERFORMANCE: A STUDY OF BAYELSA STATE PLASTIC COMPANY, ELEBELE, YENAGOA

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ABSTRACT

This study on effect of employee voice management on firm performance explores the implications of employee voice management on firm performance of Bayelsa State Plastic Company, Elebele, Yenagaa. Quantitative research design was employed while structured questionnaire designed in 5-point likert scale was administered on the sample of two hundred and eighty one (281), out of which, two hundred and seventy six (276) copies of the questionnaire were returned, hence, used for the analysis. Multiple regression models via Ordinary Least Square (OLS) formed the bases for estimation. The results showed that employee team voice, employee ombudsman voice and employee suggestion scheme as constructs of employee voice have significant effect on firm performance and concluded that efficient utilisation of employee voice management has the potentiality of driving high performance organisations by engendering goal-driven-attitude among the workers especially as their opinions, ideas and interests are considered. The implication of the results is that employees' tend to demonstrate higher level of work commitment especially when they perceived that their welfare and interests are considered by the management. The study recommended that organisations especially manufacturing firms that have not yet engendered employee team voice in their communication systems should do so while firms that have instituted employee team voice mechanisms should continue to respond to the yearnings of their workers especially on issues that relate to their welfare for the elicitation of higher commitment to work that result to improved firm performance.

KEYWORDS: *Effects, Employees, Voice Management, Firm Performance*

INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

The trend in business environments and the quest for improved firm performance have made organisations to place emphasis on employee voice management in fostering goal-



related behaviour amongst their workers in typical organisations. The quintessentiality of engendering employee voice management as it relates to workers welfare and well-being has its antecedent in the neo-classical era when emphasis was placed on individual workers and group relationship in the work place as opposed to scientific era, when Fredrick Taylor's scientific management entrenched the use of piece rate wage system and bonus awards to improve firm performance without any regards for workers welfare, safety, and well-being. Taylor's philosophy focused on the belief that making people work hard as they could was not as efficient as optimising the way the work was done (Belthroud and Drill, 2017). However, Taylor's philosophy on the principle of scientific management elicited several agitations and criticisms on how workers were merely used as robots without showing concern for their welfare and voice in organisations. These criticisms led to the emergence of the Neo-classical Theory or Behavioural Approach to Management.

The neo-classical theory pointed out the role of psychology and sociology in understanding of individual workers and group behaviour in an organisation. In 1927, a group of researchers led by Elton Mayo and Fritz Roethlisberger of the Harvard Business School were invited to join in the studies at the Hawthorne Works of Western Electric Company, Chicago (Hiller, 2015). The Hawthorne Experiments showed that firm performance was not the function of only physical condition of work and money wages paid to the workers but depended heavily upon the satisfaction, interests and better working conditions in their work situation. Mayo's idea was that logical factors were far less important than emotional factors in determining firm performance (Skinner, 2016). Mayo's idea gained ground in the 19th century that most organisations adopted it and there was a paradigm shift from concentrating on the job content to sociological and psychological antecedent of workers with respect to their welfare and general wellbeing. The Hawthorne study suggests that people are motivated by the need for social relationships, which subsequently gives rise to human relations approach that emphasises the imperativeness of efficient management of employee voice with regard to their welfare, concerns, interests, and so on, for the desired performance (Franklin and Duru, 2016).

In 1970, Albert Hirschman heralded the imperativeness of managing employee voice in generating the needed capability and ability by aligning employee interests, voice and concern closely with managerial goals. This, according to Albert (1970), is predicated on the



assumption that when employees perceive themselves to have opportunities to effectively communicate their concerns to management, they are likely to elicit more positive attitudes and demonstrate higher levels of job commitment that result to improved firm performance. Consequently, Dickson (2015) avers that for an organisation to achieve and sustain performance in the long-run, they ought to intermittently respond to employees' voice, especially on issues that relate to them because they are the life-wire of the organisation. Following there from, the emergence of trade unions has provided workers with a collective voice in order to make their wishes known to the management as it relates to their general working conditions (welfare). Therefore, employee voice is seen as discretionary communication of ideas, suggestions, concerns, or opinions about work-related issues with the intent to improve on the work (Anyango, Ojere and Ochieng, 2015).

Employee voice covers all types of opportunities where employees can have their say and exert some influence over work place decisions (Boxall and Purcell, 2011). Most organisations including Bayelsa State Plastic Company have attempted to utilise several dimensions of employee voice management mechanisms in work systems to include team voice, employee ombudsman voice and suggestion schemes for their employees in an attempt to improve firm performance. The extent to which the management of the identified three constructs of employee voice affects the performance of organisations is the thrust of the study.

Firm performance, according to Gabriel (2016), could be measured in terms of profitability (PR), return on equity (RoE), earnings per share (EPS), dividend yield (DiY), price-earnings ratio (PER), sales to assets (STS), return on assets (RoA), and others. More so, firm performance explains how organisations successfully appropriate their resources in meeting the demands of the changing environment. Thus, efficiency in resource allocation, utilisation and mobilisation that result to improved performance is referred to as firm performance. For an organisation to achieve better performance, every segment of such an organisation is required to work in synergy that has collective effect on the output, rather than individual output (Nuah, 2010). However, the present study focuses on profitability, market share, return on equity and earnings per share, as the measurement variables of performance. Therefore, the extent the employee team voice, employee ombudsman voice and



suggestion schemes as construct dimensions of employee voice have affected firm performance, is yet to be established, hence, this study.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The centrality of effective management of employee voice is necessary in driving high performance organisation because of its potential of engendering excellent framework of communication systems in the organisation (Ferioge and Feril, 2017). This, however, is premised on the fact that when employees' voice is aligned with the managerial goals, employees tend to exhibit more positive attitudes and demonstrate higher levels of job commitment that is goal-driven in attainment of organisational objectives. Firm performance cuts across every segment of the organisation, if such performance is to be sustained on the long run. This is imperative because employees, as the life-wire of every organisation, exert considerable efforts in appropriating resources efficiently in meeting the demands of the changing environment; as a result, their voice as it relates to their welfare, interests, conditions of service, and so on, are to be heard and responded to, for the desired performance. Bayelsa State plastic firm, Yenagoa, for instance, has devoted much time and resources in providing a sustainable framework that brings together the employees and the management through the framework of employee team voice and in deliberating issues relating to them. This practice, however, may not have translated to improved firm performance considering recurrent agitations for improvements in employees' welfare, and conditions of service in the plastic firm, which have resulted to increased labour turnover, absenteeism and leaving before the close of work and may have affected their performance; but what is not clear is the extent to which such practice has affected their performance, hence, this study.

Despite being amongst the leading plastic manufacturing firms in the South-South geopolitical region of Nigeria, the management of employee ombudsman voice and the placement of employee suggestion scheme are questioned, since employees' opinions, ideas and suggestions are relegated. A pilot study was conducted in March 2019 by the researcher. The possibility of issues relating to impairment of employee ombudsman voice and suggestion scheme could be contributing to the problems of high rate of labour turnover. In all of these issues relating to high rate of labour turnover, firm performance is challenged; but what is not clear is the magnitude and the direction of the challenge.



However, it would be difficult to ascertain the net effect(s) of employee team voice, employee ombudsman voice and employee suggestion scheme on firm performance, without empirical study, thus this study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general aim of this study is to examine the effect of employee voice management on firm performance of Bayelsa State Plastic Company, Elebele, Yenagoa. The Specific objectives are:

1. To ascertain the effect of employee team voice on firm performance of Bayelsa State Plastic Company, Elebele, Yenagoa.
2. To determine the effect of employee ombudsman voice on firm performance of Bayelsa State Plastic Company, Elebele, Yenagoa.
3. To investigate the effect of employee suggestion scheme on firm performance of Bayelsa State Plastic Company, Elebele, Yenagoa.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study holds both policy/practical and theoretical/academic implications. The results will be of essence to the management of Bayelsa State Plastic Company to appreciate the imperativeness of entrenching employee voice management as a strategy in driving high performing organisation in meeting the demands of the changing environment. This also will help the policy makers in making pertinent decisions, especially as it relates to the welfare of the workers; and this will forestall the growing incidence of high rate of labour turnover. Students, researchers, and individuals will find the study relevant as it will improve their theoretical knowledge on the effect of employee voice management on firm performance. The study will also be of immense significance to the researcher because it is one of the requirements for the award of a PhD Degree in Business Management.

Review of Related Literature

This section reviews pertinent literature that relate to employee voice management and its implications on firm performance.

Concept of employee voice

To Gabiel (2016), employee voice is concerned with speaking up on important issues and problems in an organisation by employees. This could be done by joint consultation,



employee team voice, attitude surveys, upward communication frameworks, employee suggestion scheme and employee voice representation. These voice mechanisms, according to Gabriel (2016), are specialised processes through which employees of any given organisation air their views, opinions and ideas, especially on issues that relate to them. The import of the aforementioned relates to the centrality of employee voice management in engendering goal-driven attitude among the workers, especially as their opinions, ideas and interests are considered. This consideration, however, makes the workers to be emotionally and psychologically attached to their work, which, in turn, results to improved firm performance. More so, Skinner (2016) sees employee voice as the explicit expression of workers dissatisfaction raised with line managers. In other words, employee voice is the contribution to management decision-making process through upward communication, problem solving, suggestion schemes and attitude surveys; and lastly, through mutual partnership agreements, joint consultative committees and work councils.

McCabe and Lewin (2014), in their view, summarise voice as consisting of two elements: the expression of complaints or grievances in a work context by employees to management and the participation of employees in the decision-making processes or communication where there is an opportunity for employees and managers to exchange views about issues on an individual basis and through a collective consultation. It is therefore a say employees have in matters of concern to them in their organisation. It describes a form of two-way dialogue that allows employees to influence events at work and includes the processes of involvement, participation, upward problem solving and upward communication (Williams and James, 2015). Employee voice, according to Gerupee (2017), is the means by which people communicate their views to their employer. It is the main way employees can influence matters that affect them at work. For employers, effective voice contributes toward innovation, and firm performance.

The foregoing is an avalanche of definitions of the employee voice. Consequently, this study sees employee voice as specialised framework that enables the employee to directly or indirectly influence the actions of the management. It is measured with employee team voice, employee ombudsman voice and suggestion scheme.



Employee team voice

Employee team voice is a specialised process through which a group of people represent the workers in face-to-face discussion on issues of importance (Clerity, 2014). This kind of employee team voice is often referred to as, joint consultation, a situation that brings about close interactions between the employers and employees. Michael (2017) sees it as a direct or face-to-face deliberation, as is the case with many of the current employee involvement initiatives; or it may be indirect as it occurs when trade unions represent workers on high-level consultation committees, or workers' councils, or through collective bargaining.

Employee ombudsman voice

This kind of employee voice is an official designated task who is charged with the responsibility of representing the interest of the people by investigating and addressing complaints of maladministration in an organisation (Charles, 2013). Most private firms often engage the services of ombudsman voice in drawing home their demands, especially as it affects them in work place. The ombudsman voice operates more like a channel of employee voice, relative than actual employee voice (McCabe, 2010).

Employee suggestion scheme

Suggestion schemes are the established procedures for employees to submit ideas to management with tangible recognition for those suggestions with merit (Arnold, 2015). Suggestions schemes are known to reduce feelings of frustration where employees feel they have good ideas that are not recognised in the formed channels of communication. Suggestion boxes or team leaders are used to encourage members of the team to give suggestions (Bekks, 2018). However, organisations should have a committee to vet suggestions so as to pick only what is appropriate. Participation is demonstrated when an employee plays a greater role in the decision making process by management giving employees the opportunity to influence management decisions and also to contribute to the improvement of organisational performance.



Firm performance

The aim of any manufacturing firm is not only to gain competitive advantage but to improve on its operations towards the attainment of organisational goals. Firm performance could be sustained through effective throughput system to improve their output. Veer (2012) argues that most organisations strive to strengthen their supply-chain channels to improve on their sales, thereby enhancing their performance. Improved sales through supply-chain interconnectivity is one of the measurements of performance, which, according to Veer (2012), must be entrenched for effective flow of products from the manufacturer down to the ultimate consumers. In addition, Jerill (2013) sees organisational performance as the nexus between effective cost and realised output and also relationship between output and results achieved over a period of time. However, firm performance is measured with the firm profit margin, return on equity, earnings per share, and market share.

Empirical review

Adeyemi (2017) investigates the role of employee voice and its implications of firm effectiveness. The study aimed at ascertaining the effect of employee voice on firm effectiveness of manufacturing firms in Lagos State. Descriptive research design was employed such that structured questionnaire was administered on the sample of the study. The data collected were analysed with percentages and Chi-square statistical tool. The findings reveal that employee voice management enhances organisational effectiveness; and the study concludes that organisations should always respond to the voice of the employees, especially as it relates to them because it would not only stir-up their commitment on the work but create long-lasting affinity between employees and employers. From the finding and conclusion drawn, the study recommends that firms should create a framework of communication systems that allows the employees to air their opinions, ideas and so on, in order to engender goal-related attitude from the workers. However, the analytical tool used was not appropriate in the findings regarding the implications of employee voice on firm effectiveness; and also the independent variable was not decomposed to measurable constructs.

In addition, Shack and McGraw (2017) examined the effect of employee voice on business sustainability. The study was aimed at exploring the implications of employee voice on business sustainability in Indonesia. The study employed quantitative design and



structured questionnaire was also administered on the sample drawn from the population of the study. Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the internal reliability of the instruments; while data collected were analysed with structural equation model. The result reveals that employee voice has a significant and positive effect on business sustainability in Indonesia. Thus, the study concluded that effective application of employee voice in typical organisation has the potential of driving high performance of organisation in sustaining their performance in the long-run. They recommended that firms should adopt and ensure effective implementation of employee voice in achieving the desired performance in the organisation.

The meaning and application of employee voice mechanisms on organisation was examined by Anyango, Ojera and Ochieng (2015). The study was designed to explore the meaning and application of employee voice in the management of organisation. The study was necessitated by the need for organisations to apply employee voice mechanisms in their day-to-day operations. Survey research design was used and structured questionnaire was also administered on the sample of two hundred and fifty two (252) respondents drawn from the population of the study. Simple percentage was used to analyse the data. From the results, it was revealed that the application of employee voice strategy result to improved performance. Consequently, the study recommended that organisations should come-up with unified communication platforms through which employees could easily contribute their own idea and opinions to the running of the organisation. However, every researchable topic must have two variables, that is, independent and dependent variables; but the topic has no dependent variable, which makes it defective.

Furthermore, a study on employee voice, partnership and firm performance was investigated by Stewart and Adrian (2013). The study aimed at exploring how employee voice and partnership contribute to improved performance in organisation. Correlation research design was used; and questionnaire designed on 5-point Likert scale was also administered on the sample of the study. The data collected were analysed with product moment correlation. From the result, it revealed that employee voice and partnership enhances firm performance and concluded that employee voice creates that psychological affinity between the employee and the firm, as such, make them put in their best on the work. The study recommended that firms should engender employee voice mechanisms to



generating the needed work-related-attitudes that is goal-driven in achieving the objectives of the study. The study topic has three variables, which is not proper and the design used only establishes the degree of relationship between studied variables.

Effect of employee voice and engagement: its connections and consequences were explored by Chris, Kerstin and Mark (2013). The study examined the relationship between employee voice and employee engagement. Quantitative research design was employed and structured questionnaire was employed on the sample of the study. Diagnostic analyses were conducted with five fit indices to determine how the model fitted our data: χ^2 , goodness of fit index (GFI), comparative fit index (CFI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and standardised root mean square residual (SRMR) and confirmatory factor analyses. Employee perceptions of voice behaviour aimed at improving the functioning of the work group are found to have both a direct impact and an indirect impact on levels of employee engagement. Analysis of data from two organisations confirms that the direct connection between perceptions of voice behaviour and engagement is mediated by both employee trust in senior management and the employee-line manager relationship.

Seril (2013) studied implication of employee voice on competitive advantage of manufacturing firms in Brazil. The study aimed at examining the effect of employee voice on achieving competitive advantage among manufacturing firms in Brazil. Descriptive research design used, questionnaire administered on the sample drawn from the population of the study. Data collected were analysed chi-square. The study found that employee voice has a significant positive effect on competitive advantage and concluded that firms can achieve competitive advantage if employee voice is adequately utilised. The study recommended that organisations especially manufacturing firms should create sustainable communication framework that will encourage upward communication systems in the work place. This will enable the employees to always contribute in their own ideas and opinions necessary for improved performance. However, the research methodology employed was not proper; chi-square is used to establish fit-between variables under investigation and the variables were not operationalised in the statement of the problem.



Theoretical framework

The underpinning theory of this study is anchored on social exchange theory propounded by Blau (1964). The theory believes that employees engage in reciprocal relationships that can develop into trusting, loyal and mutual commitments, if certain 'rules of exchange' are followed. The theory says that employees are motivated within the employment relationship to demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviours when they perceive that their employer values them and their own contributions. Organisational practices send overt and implicit signals to employees about the extent to which they are valued and trusted, giving rise to feelings of obligation on the part of employees, who then reciprocate through demonstrating positive behaviours.

In these terms, it is assumed that if employees perceive their work environment to be one in which they can share their opinions, ideas and concerns, they will in turn be more likely to demonstrate higher levels of commitment to work. The particular exchange relationships considered are two-fold: first those with senior management and second those with the employees' immediate supervisor or line manager. Blau (1964) argues that if employees have trustful relationships with their senior managers, and believe they are supported by their line manager, they will likely respond with positive behaviour, and hence their levels of commitment will rise. The theory assumes that employees will put in greater efforts in the work place when they perceive that their ideas and opinions are incorporated by their employers. That the best way to motivate employees for greater work performance is to show concern for them in terms of their interests and concerns in a work place. Therefore, the theory fits in to the present study because it laid credence on the mutuality of relationship that exists between the employees and the employers as a result of aligning their opinions and ideas into the managerial policies of the organisation.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The research design employed quantitative research design. The research design was built on mathematical models that captured the relationship among modelled variables. The data collected via structured questionnaire was analysed with the classical linear regression model, such that Ordinary Least Square (OLS) formed the basis for the estimation. The study



used multiple regression models to ascertain the effect of employee team voice, employee ombudsman voice and employee suggestion scheme as constructs of employee voice on firm performance of Bayelsa State Plastic Company, Elebele, Yenagoa.

Population of the study

The population of the study was nine hundred and fifty (950) consisted of operation managers, and machine operators, personnel officers, accountants, and quality control officers for senior staff; while junior staff members are made up of plant operators, clerical assistants, store keepers, computer typist, cleaners, messengers, security men, etc., of Bayelsa State Plastic Company, Elebele, Yenagoa.

Sample size determination

The sample size for this study will be determined using Taro Yemini as shown

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} \text{ ----- equation 1}$$

Where: n= sample size, N = population of the study, e = level of significance (0.05)

$$n = \frac{950}{1 + 950(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{950}{3.375}$$

$$n = 281.$$

Therefore, the sample size is 281. Two hundred and eighty one (281) copies of structured questionnaires were administered on the respondents, out of which, two hundred and seventy six (276) copies of questionnaire were returned, hence used for the analyses.

Sources of data

The study used primary source of data. The data was collected through structured questionnaire administered on the respondents.

Reliability of the instrument

A pilot study was conducted on the respondents in order to determine the reliability of the research instrument. The test-retest method was used such that after the administration of



the instrument, two weeks later, the same instrument was administered on them. The correlation of the results yielded Cronbach's alpha of 0.87 via SPSS, suggesting that the instrument was reliable.

Analytical techniques

The analytical technique employed was multiple regression models via Ordinary Least Square (OLS).

Model specification

Theoretically, the relationship according to Euler (1987) states that: $Y=f(X_1, X_2, X_3, \dots, X_n)$. These explanatory variables represent the scaled response values of employee team voice (X_1), employee ombudsman voice (X_2), employee suggestion scheme (X_3), while Y represents firm performance. Generally, the above equation is additive. In order to use the equation to predict the implications of X_1 on FP, X_2 on FP, X_3 on FP, and the sum of X_1 , X_2 , and X_3 , on Firm Performance (FP). Therefore, the general function becomes:

$$FP = f(ETV, EOVS, ESS) \quad 1$$

Mathematically, the relationship is expressed as:

$$FP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 ETV + \beta_2 EOVS + \beta_3 ESS + \mu \quad 2$$

Where:

FP = Firm Performance

ETV = Employee Team Voice

EOVS = Employee Ombudsman Voice

ESS = Employee Suggestion Scheme

β_0 = The Regression Intercept (constant term)

β_1 - β_3 = Coefficients of the Explanatory Variables

μ = Residual or Disturbance term, which represents the composite effect of exogenous variables outside the model which were not explicitly identified in the model.



RESULTS

Table 1: Descriptive statistics

	FP	ETV	EOV	ESS
Mean	28.9824	4.2983	9.3876	11.3002
Maximum	45.10	34.00	15.00	18.01
Minimum	22.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Std. Dev.	8.11243	4.84521	3.77636	2.54201
Skewness	-.4320	.3211	-2.453	.42531
Kurtosis	-1.2553	-1.5341	-1.7852	-.6542
Observations	276	276	276	276

Source: Researcher's Compilation from SPSS Version 0.20

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of firm performance, employee team voice, employee ombudsman voice and employee suggestion scheme, respectively. The results showed average (mean) of 28.9824, 4.2983, 9.3876 and 11.3002 for firm performance, employee team voice, employee ombudsman voice and employee suggestion scheme. The result of the standard deviation indicated the measures of dispersion in the values. It revealed the standard deviation of 8.11243, 4.84521, 3.77636 and 2.54201 for firm performance, employee team voice, employee ombudsman voice, and employee suggestion scheme while skewness measures the degree of asymmetry of distribution of the values around its mean. The skewness of a normal distribution is zero. While positive skewness implies that the distribution has a long right tail and negative skewness implies that the distribution has a long left tail. From Table 1 firm performance and employee ombudsman voice have negative skewness while employee team voice and employee suggestion scheme have positive skewness, respectively. Kurtosis measures the flatness of the distribution of the values. If the kurtosis is greater than three, the distribution is said to be peaked or leptokurtic as compared to the normal and when less than three, such distribution is said to be flat or platykurtic relative to others.



Table 2: Correlation results

		Firm Performance	ETV	EOV	ESS
Pearson Correlation	Firm Performance	1.000	.676	.552	.712
	ETV	.676	1.000	.666	-.381
	EOV	.552	.666	1.000	.098
	ESS	.712	-.381	.098	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Firm Performance	.	.000	.000	.140
	ETV	.000	.	.000	.000
	EOV	.000	.000	.	.104
	ESS	.140	.000	.104	.
N	Firm Performance	276	276	276	276
	ETV	276	276	276	276
	EOV	276	276	276	276
	ESS	276	276	276	276

Source: *Researcher's Compilation from SPSS Version 0.20*

The correlation analysis in Table 2 revealed that all the predictor variables of employee team voice, employee ombudsman voice and employee suggestion voice have positive signs and are significantly correlated with firm performance and it implies that a unit increase in any of them as a predictor variable will result, to a significant increase on firm performance of Bayelsa State Plastic Company, Elebele, Yenagoa.

Table 3: Regression diagnosis

	Unstandardised		Standardised		P.value
	Coefficients		Coefficient		
Variables	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
C	46.352	.722		67.242	.000
ETV	43.223	.079	-1.100	-42.299	.040
EOV	39.164	.072	.074	5.331	.021
ESS	4.746	.086	-.343	13.430	.000
R ² =	0.771				
DW	1.805				

Source: *Researcher's Compilation from SPSS Version 0.20*

$$FP = 46.352 + 5.223X_{ETV} + 0.164X_{EOV} + 4.746X_{ESS}$$

Table 3 shows the regression results of the explanatory variables obtained via Ordinary Least Square (OLS) estimation. The three predictor variables of X_{ETV} , X_{EOV} , and X_{ESS} represent employee team voice, employee ombudsman voice and employee suggestion



scheme. The result showed the coefficient of the constant term of 46.352 and shows where the line intercept the Y axis and statistically significant at 5% level of significance. This implies that holding these explanatory variables constant, the firm performance of Bayelsa State Plastic Company will increase by 46% significantly. The possible increase is due to extraneous factors outside the modelled variables. Also, the R^2 value of 0.771 indicates that 77% total variations in the firm performance are explained by the explanatory variables. The result of the computed Durbin-Watson was 1.805. At 5% level of significance with three explanatory variables and 267 observations, the tabulated DW for DI and DU are 1.702 and 1.805, respectively.

Test of Hypotheses

The regression results in Table 3 were used to test the formulated hypotheses of the study. In testing the hypotheses, the decision rule would be to accept the alternate hypothesis and reject null hypothesis, if the p-value is less than 0.05 or accept the null hypothesis and reject the alternate, if the p-value is greater than 0.05.

Test of Hypothesis One

H_{01} : Employee team voice does not have a significant effect on firm performance of Bayelsa State Plastic Company, Elebele, Yenagoa.

H_{a1} : Employee team voice has a significant effect on firm performance of Bayelsa State Plastic Company, Elebele, Yenagoa

Based on the result in Table 3, the computed p-value (0.040) is lesser than the α level of 0.05 ($0.040 < 0.05$), the study rejects the null hypothesis that Employee team voice does not have a significant effect on firm performance of Bayelsa State Plastic Company, Elebele, Yenagoa and accept its alternate, that employee team voice has a significant effect on firm performance of Bayelsa State Plastic Company, Elebele, Yenagoa. Adjudging from the regression results in Table 3, employee team voice has a significant and positive effect on firm performance.

Test of Hypothesis Two

H_{02} : Employee ombudsman voice does not have a significant effect on firm performance of Bayelsa State Plastic Company, Elebele, Yenagoa.



H_{a2}: Employee ombudsman voice has a significant effect on firm performance of Bayelsa State Plastic Company, Elebele, Yenagoa.

From Table 3, the flagged p-value (0.021) is lesser than the α level of 0.05 ($0.021 < 0.05$), the study therefore rejects the null hypothesis that Employee ombudsman voice does not have a significant effect on firm performance of Bayelsa State Plastic Company, Elebele, Yenagoa, and accept its alternate that employee ombudsman voice has a significant effect on firm performance of Bayelsa State Plastic Company, Elebele, Yenagoa. The regression results in Table 3 provide empirical evidence that any increase on the level at which this firm engages the services of employee ombudsman voice will result to a significant increase on firm performance.

Test of Hypothesis Three

H₀₃: Employee suggestion scheme does not have a significant effect on firm performance of Bayelsa State Plastic Company, Elebele, Yenagoa

H_{a3}: Employee suggestion scheme has a significant effect on firm performance of Bayelsa State Plastic Company, Elebele, Yenagoa

Relying on the regression results in Table 3, the computed p-value (0.000) is lesser than the α level of 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$), the study rejects the null hypothesis that employee suggestion scheme does not have a significant effect on firm performance and accept its alternate that employee suggestion scheme has a significant effect on firm performance of Bayelsa State Plastic Company, Elebele, Yenagoa. From Table 3, it was shown that employee suggestion scheme has a significant effect on firm performance.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Discussion of employee team voice on firm performance

The results on the test of hypothesis one as presented in Table 3 showed that employee team voice has a significant effect on performance of Bayelsa State Plastic Company, Elebele, Yenagoa. This was shown by the estimated value of the coefficient of 43.223, which implies that as the firm continues to engage employee team voice, it will bring about a significant increase of 43% on firm performance. Aside from the estimated coefficient, the result showed the p-value of 0.040, which was lesser than α level of significance (0.05), which resulted to the acceptance of the alternate hypothesis and rejection of the null hypothesis.



The significant and positive effect of employee team voice on firm performance demystifies the positive perception developed by employee considering the fact that their voice as it relate to their welfare were considered by the management, as a result, they tend to demonstrate higher levels of commitment on the work, which in turn, result to improved firm performance. The empirical evidence points to the fact that employee team voice has positive effect on firm performance of Bayelsa State Plastic Company, Elebele, Yenagoa. This finding is consistent with the findings of Muoka and Frankly (2016) that employee team voice has a significant effect on performance.

Discussion of employee ombudsman voice on firm performance

More so, the result on the test of hypothesis two as presented in Table 3 shows that employee ombudsman voice has a significant effect on performance of Bayelsa State Plastic Company, Elebele, Yenagoa. This was evidenced given the estimated value of the employee ombudsman voice coefficient of 39.164 as shown in Table 3. This implies that per unit increase on the rate at which Bayelsa State Plastic Company utilises employee ombudsman voice, it will bring about an increase of 39% significantly on firm performance. Furthermore, the regression result also shown that p-value (0.021) was lesser than α level of significance 0.05, which led to the acceptance of alternate hypothesis and the rejection of null hypothesis. This result was supported by the findings of Adeoye (2012), that the use of ombudsman voice enhances firm sustainability.

Discussion of employee suggestion scheme on firm performance

The result of hypothesis three as presented in Table 3 showed that employee suggestion scheme has a significant effect on performance of Bayelsa State Plastic Company, Elebele, Yenagoa. This was shown by the estimated value of employee suggestion scheme coefficient of 4.746. The positive sign on the coefficient suggests that the more the firm provides and continues to responds on those issues of concerns kept in the suggestion boxes; it will bring about a proportionate increase by 5% significantly on firm performance. This is not unconnected to the fact that suggestions schemes are known to reduce feelings of frustration where employees feel they have good ideas that are not recognised in the formed channels of communication. On the other hand, the result showed that the p-value 0.000 was lesser than α level of 0.05, which led to the acceptance of alternate hypothesis and the rejection of null hypothesis. This finding is also consistent with the findings of



Obasana (2014) and Ndife (2014) whose studies revealed that the provision of suggestion boxes enables employees' air their views and opinions to the management.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the avalanche of literature, empirical reviews and the findings, the study logically concludes that employee voice management affects firm performance. The import of the findings is that any unit increase on employee team voice, employee ombudsman voice and employee suggestion scheme will bring about a significant increase in firm performance and vice versa. This study, however, provided empirical evidence that employee voice management derives largely from the need for firms to engender work-related attitude amidst their workers by aligning their voice into the managerial policies of the firm. The imperative of the aforementioned is that it forestall counter-productive attitude of the workers in ensuring goal-driven attitudes amongst them.

Another implication of the findings of this study is that any firm that responds to yearnings of their workers especially as it relates to their welfare tends to elicit psychological affinity between the workers and the management. Such psychological attachment to work would make them more committed in discharging their duties toward the attainment of organisational goals. From the findings, the study made the following recommendations:

- i) From the results, it was revealed that employee team voice has a positive and significant effect on firm performance and therefore recommends that organisations especially manufacturing firms that have not yet engendered employee team voice in their communication systems should do so while firms that have instituted employee team voice mechanisms should continue to respond to the yearnings of their workers especially on issues that relate to their welfare for the elicitation of positive attitude among the workers in the organisation.
- ii) The management of this firm should continue to explore the opportunities of engendering employee ombudsman voice in creating a sustainable framework of upward communication systems between the employees and the management.



This is imperative because when employees perceive that their opinions and ideas were aligned into the managerial policies of the organisation, it will motivate them to put in their very best to the attainment of organisation goals.

- iii) The result showed that the employee suggestion scheme has a positive and significant effect on firm performance, though weak. This suggests that the utilisation of employee suggestion scheme is not optimal therefore recommends that the management should not relegate the full implementation of employee suggestion scheme in generating its potentials, since it reduces the feelings of frustration especially when employees feel they have good ideas that are not recognised through formal channel of communication.

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