



PERCEIVED EFFECT OF IMPROVING LABOUR CONDITION AND PARAMILITARY TRAINING ON STAFF EFFICIENCY IN KAINJI LAKE NATIONAL PARK, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed perceived effect of improving labour conditions and paramilitary training on staff efficiency in Kainji Lake National Park, Nigeria through personal observation and interview with the aid of a semi-structured questionnaire administered to fifty-two (52) staff of the Park. Majority (98%) of park staff agreed that improving working conditions is a necessary tool for employees' commitment and loyalty in the service and 77% agreed that park authority play an important role towards improving working conditions and making on the job training accessible for the staffs. Most (75%) respondents acknowledged that the new salary (the most important working condition for job efficiency in the study area) is expressively satisfactory while majority (71.15%) also show their enthusiasm towards mode of dressing (use of paramilitary uniform) as they agreed that it bestowed more respect and honour to them in the society. Other areas of improved practices that are considerably satisfactory are training and development, promotion process and relationship with managers. However, only few respondents were pleased with current situation of safety at work, retirement plan and medical insurance though it is perceived from the study that medical insurance and relationship with managers are not too vital for job efficiency in the study area. Respondents further agreed that recent paramilitary training adopted in the National Park Service increases the employees' morale since paramilitary training will improve employee physical fitness and confidence (4.23 ± 1.26) as well as individual and organizational competences (4.06 ± 1.03). From the study, there is high (70%) consensus that improving working conditions and paramilitary training has positive effect on job efficiency in the study area hence; there is improvement in the organization achievement.

Keywords: Employee, Job Efficiency, Job Satisfaction, Labour Condition, Paramilitary

INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that National Park Service is striving for success. In order to do so, this organization has to obtain and utilize her human resources effectively. Achievement of objectives and good returns on investment could only be attained if human resources aspects of the human enterprise are properly developed through conducive labour condition, training and manpower development (Atiomo, 2000). In so doing, Park

Service need to pay special attention to all the core functions of human resource management as this plays an important role in the organizational goals which include guarding protected areas from poaching and illegal wildlife exploitation.

Poaching and illegal trade in wildlife is a growing crisis across the globe and an increasing interest to the intelligence community (Lotter *et al.*, 2016). Although wildlife laws exist as a global conservation tool for protection of species, most remain unenforced, due to limited human, financial

and material resources required to monitor illegal activities and enforce existing laws. Rules and measures to enforce them are at the heart of conservation. Wildlife laws by themselves cannot deal with all known anthropogenic threats because most of these threats especially poaching has become an organized, lucrative and a capital intensive business, particularly those of high-target species, which is becoming increasingly sophisticated and determined and poachers adopting aggressive tactics to fulfill their missions (Goodall, 2011a). Complementary actions are therefore needed to back up legislation. In the last two decades, there has been growing interest in adopting a competence-based approach for protected area staff (Appleton, 2015), since deployment of insufficiently trained Rangers has at times resulted in the failure of operations, and in Rangers having been killed or seriously injured. Anti-poaching, particularly in the defense of high-target species, even when steered by an intelligence-led approach, is sometimes a largely paramilitary-style operation. In addition to the expansion of the paramilitary Ranger force, the Government is to assist Rangers with anti-poaching equipment to guard the protected areas against poachers. To address these need for improved capacity building of Rangers involved in anti-poaching, National Parks Service then pursued an impressive range of strategies aimed at addressing the problem by adopting militarized response: For effective, efficient, and to ensure the safety of individual Rangers as well as the team were trained in appropriate law enforcement, paramilitary and surveillance related disciplines. On completion of the training, anti-poaching field Rangers must have achieved the recommended standards and be able to demonstrate a high level of competence in the core disciplines for anti-poaching field Rangers to be adequately competent for the job they are being asked to do.

However, not every organization considers the necessity for a well-defined and sustained training

and development for staff in order to upgrade their performance. An organization may have employees of ability and determination with appropriate equipment and managerial support yet productivity fails below expected standard. By and large, the missing factors in many cases are improve labour condition and adequate skills which are acquired through manpower training and development.

This study will reveal the advantage of improving labour conditions, staff training and development and their implication for management in Kainji Lake National Park, Nigeria. The research will pave way for improving human resources needed for the competitive performance of organizations operating in the same line of mandate as the National Park Service in Nigeria and Africa in general.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study area

Kainji Lake National Park (KLNP) is located approximately 560km north of Lagos, and 385km southwest of Abuja, Federal Capital of Nigeria. It covers a total area of 5,340.82 km². The two sectors of KLNP lie approximately between latitudes 9° 40'N and 10° 30'N and longitudes 3° 30'E and 5° 50'E. It is made up of two non-contiguous sectors; the Borgu Sector and the Zugurma Sector. The Borgu Sector of KLNP (Bs-KLNP) is situated on the land area shared between Borgu Local Government Area (LGA) in Niger State and Kaiama as well as Baruten LGAs, Kwara State. It is bordered on the east by the Kainji Lake, popular for the National Electric Power Authority's (now Power Holding Company of Nigeria) Hydro-electricity Generation Station and supply of freshwater fish. Its western border is contiguous with inter-national boundary of Nigeria and the Republic of Benin. The Zugurma Sector (Zs-KLNP) is situated in the land area shared between Magama and Mashegu LGAs of Niger State. The tributary of Kontagora River on the Northwest side and River Manyara on the north borders the Zugurma Sector (Ayeni, 2007).

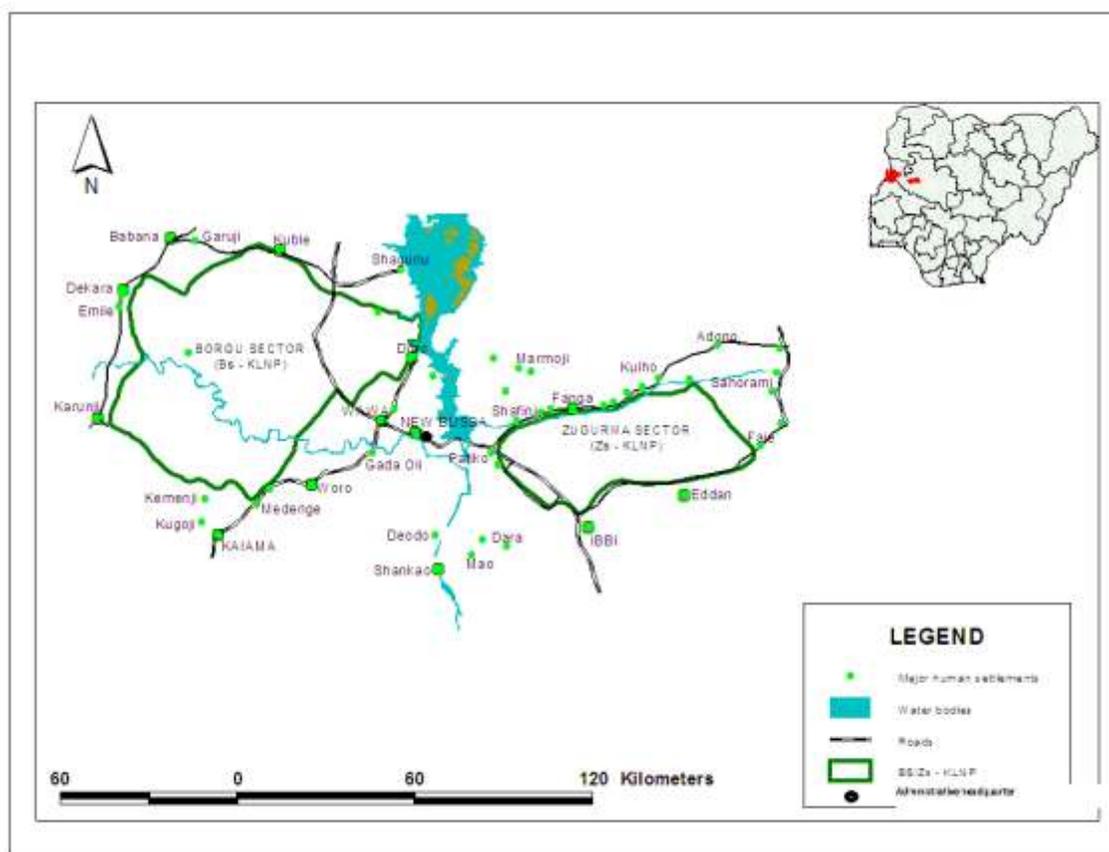


Figure 1: Kainji Lake National Park Showing its Administrative Headquarter and Surrounding Villages.

Source: Ijeomah et al., 2013

Method of data collection

Preliminary investigation

In order to get a view of the working condition of the staff, prior to data collection, a preliminary visit was conducted to have ideas regarding the labour condition through the personal observation and interview with the staff of Kainji Lake National Park.

During the survey, views were exchange with the people about the objectives. The visit helped to realize the existing working condition in the study area.

Research instruments

To obtain information, questionnaire was prepared to correspond all the aspects of this study. Interviewing method was adopted to collect information of staffs'. Randomness was strictly ensured for better output.

Data were obtained using questionnaire.

Sample population (number of staff in the study area) = 378

Sample size = 56 (15% of the sample size)

Number of questionnaire returned = (52)

Response rate = (92.86%)

Data Processing and Analysis

Available data were processed and analyzed using Special Package for Social Science (SPSS 17) and were represented in tabular and graphical form for easy interpretation.

RESULTS

Demographic characteristics of respondents

The demographic data shows that 77% of the respondents are male and 23% are female with majority (46%) fall within the ages of 31-40years while only 4% were <20years see table 4.1. It was also revealed that most respondents (44%) have had between 5-10 years working experience. It was

further evident from the table that there is high of level of educational qualification in the study area as 26% and 74% had secondary and tertiary

education (8% postgraduate, 14% university graduate, 18% Higher National Diploma and 34% National Diploma) respectively.

Table 1:Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	40	77
	Female	12	23
Age	Less than 20	2	4
	21- 30	12	23
	31- 40	24	46
	41-50	10	19
	50 above	4	8
Departments	Ecology	25	48
	Work & Maintenance	6	11
	Finance and Admin	16	31
	Res., Monit & Evaluation	5	10
Years in service	Less than 5	10	19
	5- 10	23	44
	10 above	19	37
Qualification	Postgraduate	4	8
	BSc.	7	14
	HND	9	18
	ND	17	34
	SSCE	13	26
	LSFC	-	-

Improving working conditions as a necessary tool for employees’ efficiency

From the figure 2, majority (98%) of park staff agreed that improving working conditions is a necessary tool for employees’ commitment and loyalty in the service.

The role of park authority in improving working condition of their employees

Figure 3 shows that 77% of park staff agreed that park authority play an important role towards improving working conditions and making on job training accessible for their staff.

Improving working conditions and Employees' satisfaction

Result on improving working conditions and employees’ satisfaction showed that majority (75%) of the respondents acknowledged that the new salary wages is significantly satisfactory. 71.15% of respondents all their enthusiasm towards paramilitary uniform as they agreed that it bestowed more respect and honour to them in the society. Other areas of improved practices that are considerably satisfactory are training and development (51.92%), promotion process (50%) and relationship with managers (40.39%). However, only few respondents were pleased with current situation of safety at work, retirement plan and medical insurance.



Figure 2: Improving working conditions as a necessary tool for employees' efficiency

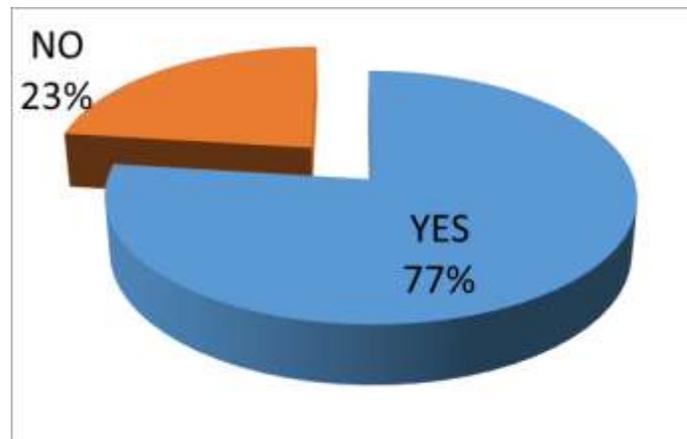


Figure 3: The role of park authority in improving working condition of their employees

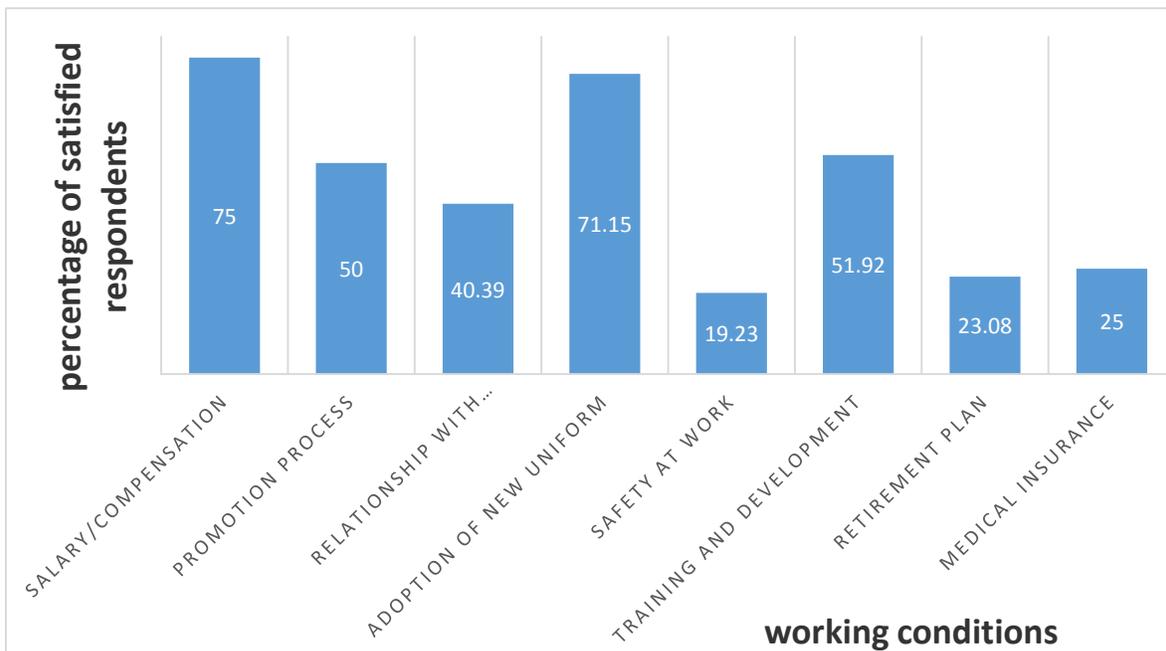


Figure 4: Improving working conditions and Employees' satisfaction

Employees’ perception of importance of improving conditions to job efficiency

From table 2, It is evident that salary/compensation is the most important working condition for job efficiency. Promotion process, safety at work and

paramilitary uniform are ranked second, third and fourth respectively. It is perceived from the study that medical insurance and relationship with managers are not too vital for job efficiency in the study area.

Table 2: Employees’ perception of importance of improving working conditions to job efficiency

Variables	Means (±SD)	Ranking
Salary/compensation	3.94±2.45	1 st
Promotion process	3.89±0.54	2 nd
Relationship with manager	2.89±0.77	8 th
Dressing (paramilitary uniform)	3.53±0.63	4 th
Safety at the workplace	3.64±0.78	3 rd
Training and development	3.30±0.81	6 th
Retirement plan	3.35±0.82	5 th
Medical insurance	3.19±0.85	7 th

Employees' perception of paramilitary training

From the study, respondents agreed that recent paramilitary training adopted in the National Park Service increases the employee morale since paramilitary training will improve employee physical fitness and confidence (4.23±1.26) as well as level individual and organizational competences (4.06±1.03).

It has also helps to reconcile the gap between what should happen and what is happening (4.05±1.17). The respondents are of opinion that inefficiency will not be consequence of improved paramilitary and security training in the work place (2.64±1.17) (see Table 3).

Table 3: Employees' perception of paramilitary training

Variable	Means (±SD)	Decision
It help to reconcile the gap between what should happen and what is happening	4.05±1.17	Agreed
Increase the employee morale since paramilitary training will improve employee physical fitness and confidence	4.23±1.26	Agreed
Low turnover come as a result of improved paramilitary and security training in the work place	2.64±1.17	Disagreed
training help improve change management by increasing the understand	3.83±1.20	Agreed
It increases the level of individual and organizational competences	4.06±1.03	Agreed
Security training and education may also help the organization to develop a learning environment	3.72±1.21	Agreed

Cut off point: 3.20

Perceived effect of improving working conditions and paramilitary training on staff efficiency in the study area

on the staff efficiency while only 30% are of perception that the improved working conditions has negate the efficiency in the establishment.

The study 70% agreed that improving working conditions and paramilitary training highly effective

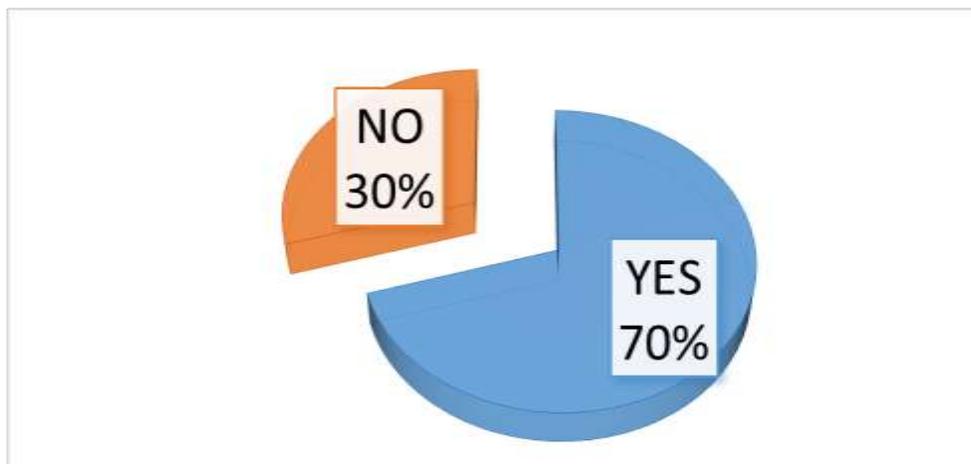


Figure 5: Perceived effect of improving working conditions and paramilitary training on staff efficiency in the study area

Perceived significance of employees’ attitude to job efficiency in the Park

work, attendance promptness, willingness to perform duties, personal performance, acceptability of work completed, accepting responsibility, overall effectiveness and technical competence in that order (see table 4.4).

From the study, some important attitude of employees’ play significant role in job efficiency in the study area. These attitudes include quality of

Table 4: Perceived significance of employees’ attitude to job efficiency in the Park.

Variable	MEANS (±SD)	Decision
Personal performance	3.51±0.96	Significant
Accepting responsibility	3.30±0.95	Significant
Quality of work	3.79±1.13	Significant
Willingness to perform duties	3.60±0.94	Significant
Technical competence	3.26±1.02	Significant
Overall effectiveness	3.27±1.11	Significant
Adaptability	3.09±1.08	Insignificant
Dependability	2.68±1.12	Insignificant
Acceptability of work completed	3.36±0.91	Significant
Attendance promptness	3.67±1.08	Significant

Cut off point: 3.20

DISCUSSION

From the study, park staff agreed that improving working conditions is a necessary tool for employees' commitment and loyalty in the service. This substantiated Coomber and Barriball (2007), who claimed that improving working condition usually lead to job satisfaction which eventually resulted to higher productivity.

Park staff also established that park authority play an important role towards improving their working conditions and making on job training accessible. This is in consistent with the findings of Ampofo-Boateng (1997) who noted that the organizational empowerment should involve creating values for employees to do their job independently without constant intervention of management. Another report from Siebern-Thomas (2005) also found out that employees' are satisfied in organizations where there is access to training.

From the study, it is evident that salary/compensation is the most important working condition for job efficiency thus contributing significantly to their job satisfaction though many were not pleased with their safety at work. This contends with SHRM (2011) who reported that compensation has often remained one of the top five job satisfaction factors and most important to employees; more than job security and relationship with immediate supervisor. This also corroborates the findings of Lai (2011) that efficient compensation systems result in organizational growth and expansion and exhibit a positive relationship between employee satisfaction and performance.

Respondents' positive opinion of paramilitary training for effectiveness and efficiency underlined the need for continuous access to structured training that includes law enforcement and paramilitary components, up-to-date intelligence and equipment generally reserved for law enforcement and military use. This military tactics and practices have been used to "modernize" natural environments to bring them more fully into the purview of the state and its strategic security interests (Lackenbauer and Farish, 2007; Peluso and Vandergeest, 2011). Kulkarni (2013) also confirmed that training and development programmes improve employee's

performance at work place, it updates employee's knowledge and enhances their personal skills and as well helps in avoiding managerial obsolescence. Employees' attitudes such as quality of work, attendance promptness, willingness to perform duties, personal performance, acceptability of work completed, accepting responsibility, overall effectiveness and technical competence play an important role in their job efficiency. Osezua (2009) argued that the issues of indiscipline and misconduct are vexed questions in the society, and when they exist in an organization, they bring about inefficiency and low productivity. Therefore, it is pertinent to set high expectation to the staff.

CONCLUSION

This study shown employees high level of agreement with improving working conditions as a necessary tool for their commitment and loyalty in the service. Salary/compensation, mode of dressing (paramilitary uniform), training and development, promotion process, and relationship with managers/supervisor are the major satisfactory area of improvement in the study area.

It is further revealed that higher level of job satisfaction and better performance of employees is attached to good salary/compensation and promotional practices though, majority of the respondents also agreed to the fact that paramilitary training widens their security knowledge, physical fitness and ability for more efficient, dynamic and effective work place.

Finally, there is high consensus that improving working conditions and paramilitary training has positive effect on job efficiency in the study area hence there is improvement in the organization achievement. However, in order to sustain achieving organization goals through employees' efficiency and make its fullest effect in increasing productivity in National Park Service. It will be necessary to carry out regular staff performance appraisals such as policies, procedures and specifically assessment criteria and when necessary negotiate with the authorities so that immediate action can be taken to address employee's' needs. In addition, park management should implement a system regarding training and development for all

categories of staffs' and ensure fair opportunity in

selection for training and career development.

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