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GLOBALIZATION AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS DURING THE PANDEMIC PERIOD

¹Christiana Olalounpe, AJAYI, ²Ngozi Fidelia OCHEI, ³Ademola Segun ADERIBIGBE, ⁴Rachael Adeoluwa AMOJO

¹Lecturer, ²Lecturer, ³Lecturer, ⁴Research Student,
Department of Industrial Relations and Human Resource Management
Joseph Ayo Babalola University, Ikeji Arakeji, Osun State, Nigeria

Abstract

The study examined the impact of globalization on industrial relations during COVID'19 pandemic in International Brewery, Plc, Ilesa. The study adopted descriptive survey research design and the total population was 92 employees in the study area. The study used simple random technique to determine sample size of 72 employees; Taro Yamane was used to determine the sample size. The source of data in the study was primary source while linear regression analysis was used to analyze the data gathered. The finding revealed that globalization has helped in deployment of competent expert in their companies even during COVID'19 pandemic and contribute to improvement of virtual training for the employees in the company. The findings of the study also revealed that globalization has significant effect on industrial relations during COVID'19 pandemic. Also, it was revealed that ICT has positive effects on the industrial relations during Covid'19 pandemic. The study recommended that company should continue to intensify, re-strategize the use of ICT and improve on it to handle any unforeseen situation like the COVID'19 pandemic.

Index Terms: Industry, Relations, Globalization, ICT, Pandemic, Covid-19,

1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization has been known to simplify industrial relations. This is because through globalization manual industrial activities are being replaced by machine that helps in enhancing accuracy, pace, efficiency and effectiveness of industrial workers. Omoruyi (2017) opined that globalization is an effective tool that helps in simplifying industrial activities. Thus, through globalization manual inputs of data is replaced by computer base programming that effectively aid the way industrial operation is being carried out. Organisational objectives could be easily achieved if there is harmonious interaction between the union of workers and employer (Adeniji, 2018; Arimie, 2019)

These relationships may be nearly difficult to carry out during the COVID-19 pandemic as a result of the new normal that makes social distancing compulsory; hence the need for the globalization tools to come to our aid. Therefore, with globalization tools such as Information technology, computer, social media and others, industries could still maintain their relations and operations during unforeseen COVID'19 pandemic. Many multi-national companies in the world and Nigeria have to go in line with global trend by deploying zoom and other information technology tools to continue to maintain industrial relations and be in touch with clients and staff respectively. Thus, this reveals the fact that there is an existence of relationship between globalization and industrial relations.

The recent Covid-19 pandemic experience in the whole world has continued to reshape the way business operations are being carried out. Omoruyi (2019) opined that the Covid'19 pandemic has rearranged the ways industrial setting relates to their clients and employees. Employees, clients and customers have to abide by the new rules of social distancing, hand washing, compulsory use of face mask and avoiding overcrowding in offices and other places. Substantial numbers of organizations have asked their employees to work from home in order to curtail the circle of spread of the virus. This impedes the smooth functioning of the industrial relations and ability of the industries to carry out their normal services becomes a mirage (Ashiru & Kabiru, 2020). This study intends to add to this research by considering the effect of globalization on industrial relations during COVID -19 pandemic The research gap to be filled by the study is in the area of empirical and methodology

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 GLOBALIZATION

One of the ultimate goals of globalization is the application of computer tools to simplify industrial activities. The use of internet for example has helped industries to carry out their activities online and aided industry to keep abreast of the global trend. According to Okeowo (2017), globalization in industrial relations is the application of computer components to monitor office relationship. Globalization can be defined as a process of increasing global connectivity, integration and interdependence in the economic, social, technological, cultural, political and institutional spheres. Increase in competition in global markets has caused the demand for more specialized and better quality items. This has led to a higher volatility in product markets and shorter product life cycles which, in turn, requires companies to respond quickly to changes in market demand. In manufacturing companies, new technologies enhances greater flexibility in the production process and resolve any difficulties in information and harmonization which was a bottleneck inhibiting the enterprise production capacity in different locations around the world (Macdonald, 2017). Due to the keen competition in manufacturing companies, business owners are now focusing on the demands of international markets which contribute to the growth and improvement in the industrial operations.

2.2 INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Industrial relation refers to the combination of interactions that take place between the employees and employer in an organization (Englama, 2017). He opined that the major bottleneck in all organizations was in establishing and maintaining a dynamic and harmonious relationship. To achieve this, group dynamics, policy making by consultation, diffusion of authority, delegation, vertical and horizontal communication, have to be ushered in. Industrial relations as the whole web of human interactions at work which is predicated upon and arises out of the contract of employment (Fajana. 2016). Both definitions recognized that industrial relations is concerned with the systems, processes and procedures used by workers union and employers to determine the reward for effort and other conditions of employment, to protect the interests of the employed and their employers. Industrial Relations according to (Omoruyi, 2020) are not restricted to what happens between management and workers in public and private enterprises, nor to the implementation of labour laws and provision of collective agreements it include what operate at global level.

2.3 EFFECTS OF GLOBALIZATION ON LABOUR MARKET

In terms of the labour market, the most influential effects of globalization include flexibility of labour markets; increasing labour migration; rise in non-standard forms of employment between developed and developing countries; changes in work content and working conditions; skills mismatch, multi-skilling and the need for lifelong learning. Employment issues are critical to every country; however, countries have approached these issues in different ways and employment standards thus vary widely across countries. ILO (2020) in their research partly attributes the differences between countries to the stage of their development at a given point in time. Nevertheless, employment standards continue to play a key role in determining a country's competitive advantage in terms of labour market development. Due to growing competitiveness, many countries are obliged to relax their employment protection mechanisms in order to increase their labour market flexibility (OECD, 2019). Several countries propose labour market reforms as a way of coping with the challenges of flexibility while providing an adequate level of job and employment security. As a result of intensified competition,

companies are now being required to use initiative to deliver the right product at the right price and at time (MacDonald, 1997). Hence, company management should also focus on promoting enterprise efficiency, both in terms of labour market flexibility and labour productivity.

Another area of enterprise activity to be affected by globalization concerns is the organization of work. To achieve the flexibility and productive efficiency required, there is need to respond quickly and effectively to market changes, the need arises to reorganize work; for example, to put greater emphasis on team-based activities or to improve connections across business units within a company. All of these changes aim to increase workers' commitment to the company and its business goals, as well as to establish closer relationships between managers and workers based on consultation and cooperation (Ivanov, 2020). The European Trade Union Institute for Research, Education and Health and Safety (ETUI-REHS) argues in its 2007 benchmarking working report that while globalization and rapid changes in economy demand that workers become proactive, adaptable, multi-skilled, resilience and competent, these demands put additional pressure on workers, thus exacerbating their difficulties at a time when working conditions are deteriorating and wages are compressed. The result of these changes will be at an unbearable price, notably a growth in ill-health associated with a decrease in quality of life and unfair costs for individuals and society.

2.4 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Okwuise, Ukwandi and Ugherughe (2022) examined the impact of globalization on industrial realtions in selected trade union in Asaba. One hundred and fifty copies of questionnaire was used to retrieve data from the respondents, they were all validly returned and used for the study. SPSS was used for analysis of the collected data. The study concluded that improvement of globalization will cause enhancement on the trade union actions in the study area. Upon the findings, the study recommended that there should be economic reformation to be carried out by the government at the central level to promote the performance of trade union representatives and their members respectively.

Agu, Udoka and Okoroafor (2022) investigated impact of globalization on the Nigerian manufacturing sector. The analysis of the study was done using Auto regressive Distributed Lag for the data gathered from KOF Swiss Economic Institute and World Bank Development between 1981-2020. The study showed that globalization had great impacted on Nigeria economy, and that there are still a lot of opportunity yet to be harnessed.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted both qualitative and quantitative research design. Primary data was adopted to gather information needed. The total population was 92 employees in the company. The study used simple random technique to determine sample size of 72 employees that was selected as respondent and Taro Yamane was used to determine the sample size. Self administered questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents while linear regression analysis was used to analyse the data gathered. All the 72 copies of questionnaire administered were retrieved completely and were analyzed using frequency tables, percentages, mean and standard deviation.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Interpretation of Data

From table below, statement of item I, 72.2% and 22.2% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that the use of ICT was intensified by industries during COVID-19 while 4.2% of the respondents were undecided on this view. The mean and standard deviation value obtained (1.33 and 0.58) confirmed that the ICT has significant effect on industrial relations during COVID-19 pandemic and this indicated that the use of ICT was intensified by industries during COVID-19 Pandemic.

Statement of item II, 55.6% and 43.1% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that ICT assisted the employees during COVID-19 pandemic while 1.4% of the respondents were undecided to this opinion. The mean and standard deviation value obtained (1.45 and 0.53) confirmed that the test statement was significant. This indicated that ICT assisted the employee in performing their roles during COVID-19 Pandemic.

Statement of item III, 61.1% and 36.1% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that ICT help industries to perform their operation during COVID-19 while 2.8% of the respondents were undecided to this opinion. The mean and standard deviation value obtained of 1.41 and 0.55 confirmed that the test statement was significant. This indicated that ICT aid the company's workers to perform their operation during COVID'19.

Statement of item IV, 34.7% and 45.8% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that industry were safe from collapsing by reinforcing the ICT during covid'19 while 2.8% and 2.8% of the respondents were disagreed and strongly disagreed to this opinion. The mean and standard deviation value obtained of 1.93 and 0.92 confirmed that the test statement was significant. This indicated that company was safe from collapsing due to the reinforcement of ICT during Covid'19.

Statement of item V, 58.3% and 25.0% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that the use of ICT make industries to be effective and efficient during Covid'19 while 16.7% of the respondents were undecided to this view. The mean and standard deviation value obtained of 1.58 and 0.76 confirmed that the test statement was significant. This indicated that the reinforcement of ICT make industries to be effective and efficient during Covid'19 Pandemic.

Statement of item VI, 55.6% and 43.1% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that the reinforcement of ICT make the company recovered quickly after COVID-19 while 1.4% of the respondents were undecided on this view. The mean and standard deviation value obtained of 1.46 and 0.53 confirmed that the test statement was significant. This indicated that reinforcement of ICT helped the company to recover quickly after COVID-19.

Statement of item VII, 61.1% and 36.1% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that the reinforcement of ICT assisted the employees to work from home during COVID-19 while 2.8% of the respondents were undecided to this view. The mean and standard deviation value obtained of 1.42 and 0.55 respectively confirmed that the statement was significant. This indicated that employees were able to work from home during COVID-19 due to reinforcement of ICT.

Table 1: Effect of ICT on industrial relations during COVID'19 pandemic

	STATEMENT	Strongly Agree Freq/(%)	Agree Freq/(%)	Undecided Freq/(%)	Disagree Freq/(%)	Strongly Disagree Freq/(%)	MEAN	STD DEV.	REMARK
1	The use of ICT was intensify by my company during Covid'19 pandemic	52 (72.2)	16 (22.2)	4 (5.6)	- -	- -	1.3333	.58140	Sig.
2	Reinforcement of ICT helps the employees to perform their role during Covid'19 pandemic	40 (55.6)	31 (43.1)	1 (1.4)	- -	- -	1.4583	0.52908	Sig.
3	ICT helps industries to continue their operations during Covid'19 pandemic	44 (61.1)	26 (36.1)	2 (2.8)	- -	- -	1.4167	0.55029	Sig.
4	Industries were safe from collapsing by the reinforcement of ICT during Covid'19 pandemic	25 (34.7)	33 (45.8)	10 (13.9)	2 (2.8)	2 (2.8)	1.9306	0.92426	Sig.
5	The reinforcement of ICT makemy company effective and efficient during Covid'19 pandemic	42 (58.3)	18 (25.0)	12 (16.7)	- -	- -	1.5833	0.76453	Sig.
6	Reinforcement of ICT helpedmy company to recover quickly after Covid'19 pandemic	40 (55.6)	31 (43.1)	1 (1.4)	- -	- -	1.4583	0.52908	Sig.
7	Employee were able to work from home during Covid'19 pandemic due to reinforcement of ICT	44 (61.1)	26 (36.1)	2 (2.8)	- -	- -	1.4167	0.55029	Sig.

Source: Field Survey, (2021)

Table 2:
Test of Hypothesis

Hypothesis

H₀: ICT does not have significant effect on industrial relations during COVID-19 pandemic in International Brewery Plc, Ilesa.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.193 ^a	0.037	0.023	0.48559

a. Predictors: (Constant), Result3

ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	0.638	1	0.638	2.708	0.104 ^a
	Residual	16.506	70	0.236		
	Total	17.144	71			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Result3

b. Dependent Variable: Industrial relations

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.879	0.221		17.566	0.000
	Result3	-0.206	0.125	-0.193	-1.646	0.104

a. Dependent Variable: Industrial relations

Table above reveals the significant effect of ICT on industrial relations during Covid'19 pandemic in International Brewery Plc, Ilesa. The result revealed that ICT issues affect the industrial relations at 0.05 level of significance ($t= 17.566$, $p<0.05$). The results revealed that ICT was positively affected by the industrial relations during COVID'19 era in International Brewery Plc, Ilesa. Statistically, the null hypothesis is rejected meaning that ICT affected industrial relations during COVID'19 pandemic in International Brewery Plc, Ilesa.

4.2 DISCUSSION

The finding shown that there was reduction in economic activities at that time and world of work activities has been profoundly affected by the CONVID-19 pandemic. The study showed that Industries were safe from collapsing through the reinforcement of ICT during COVID'19 pandemic and helps the employee to be effective and efficient in their operations. The study also revealed how labour policies of work from home and virtual work came into being and heavy reliance on digitalization that improve and sustain productivity. This study corroborated the work of Yaya, Out and Labonté (2020) which stated that lockdown measure was taken which led to work from home policy.

5. Conclusion

The study concluded that globalization enhanced industrial relations and helped in sustainability of operation through information communication technology (ICT) during COVID'19 pandemic. The study revealed that the reinforcement of ICT by International Brewery safe them a lot and helped in quick recovery of their loss during and after lock down caused by COVID'19 pandemic.

5.1 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made;

- The company should continue to reinforce and intensify use of ICT just like the way they handled it during COVID'19 and emphasize its continuous usage after the pandemic
- The management should harness the benefits attached to globalization to enhance the industrial relationship, build up soft-skill that could aid employee performance.

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