

APPLICATION OF THE EXPECTANCY THEORY AND LABOUR LAWS AS CATALYSTS FOR OPTIMAL PERFORMANCE IN WORKPLACES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Labour leaders, as workers generally, are nowadays facing more challenges in the course of performing their expected roles at workplaces. One of the notable challenges faced by the labour could be traced to the application of the Labour Act which prescribes the principal or overriding purpose of establishing rules and regulations governing workplaces. Therefore, the study examined certain aspects of the Nigerian labour act in relation to optimum performance at workplaces. It is assumed that competence correlates performance. Whereas if the lack of competence in the area of application of labour Act could not be easily detected, an average labour/worker in organised industries would have performance at low ebb. In conceptualising performance therefore, the study examined some extant provisions of laws labour act, followed by the study of the expectancy theory model if same could be applied to impart knowledge for the immediacy of labour act towards optimum performance by the workers at the workplace level. The population for the study consisted one-third of all the registered unionised industries attributed to the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC). The main research instruments were two: Labour Act Tools (LAT) scale and Union Expectancy Theory Model (VETM) scale. Self-developed scales, using the essential provisions of the labour act, existing rules and regulations, were pilot tested using split-half method and they gave the reliability coefficient $r = 0.75$ for the LAT scale, and $r = 0.67$ for the VETM scale. The study revealed that labour Acts and other extant labour laws as examined in the study were potent factors in enhancing the effectiveness of the labour in performing at workplaces. Further, the outcome recommended the application of the expectancy theory model, which could timeously motivate labour to acquire knowledge in the area of labour law towards optimum performance in their overriding purpose of unionised representative activities.

Keywords: Labour, organised labour, labour Acts/laws/existing rules and regulations, expectancy theory model, performance.

1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Initially, the agitation for industrial organisation set-up which led to the birth of trade unionism did not recognise labour as an essential factor of production unlike land, capital and entrepreneur which were duly recognised (Calvin & Gergner; 2009). Explaining further Udu & Agu (1999) point out that at the very beginning, classical philosophers such as Adam Smith, Mathus, and Richard did not favour the fact that labour as a distinct factor of production was as important as other factors such as land, capital and entrepreneur. However, many writers, in the field of industrial management, especially the social economists, such as George (1988), Hamlin (2002), Hargreaves (2004), and Diaz (2007) attest to the fact that without labour other factors of production would not give appreciable and expected performance in the industries. Webb and Webb (1920) cited in Dunlop (1971) point to the fact that challenges towards performance also rested on worker/labour's social and psychological attributes. Similarly, Follet (2009) and Kenneth (2009), with the similar idea that for an industry to perform, its workers and leader's social and psychological attributes to development are essential. In support of the above assertion, social reformers such as Sidney and Beatrice Webb and Karl Marx, cited in Dunlop (1958) are of the opinion that workers' social and psychological attributes tend generally to influence performance at the workplace.

Dunlop (1958) analysing what could lead to performance in industries explains that the combination of what constitutes the external environment and the level of advancement of the workers, such as the worker's advancement in labour's rules and regulations, which he termed technological characters determine the level of performance at the workplace. Dunlop further opines that the external environment and technological characters of workers assist industries in developing a web of rules governing actors in industries toward better performance at workplaces.

Further, Dunlop (1971) suggests that information based on the education and the study of the external environment and the technological advancement for the workers would reinforce performance in industries. Concluding, Dunlop (1971) emphasizes that external environment and technological advancement of workers yield three advantages among many. These advantages are: better employee's organisation; high productivity from workers; and better locus and distribution of power between the workers and the owners (or their representatives) of industries in the areas of industrial management such as industrial democracy, collective bargaining and workers' participation in the industry's management.

In a similar vein, Ury, Brett & Goldberg (1988), Fin (1991), Omole (1992), Hamlin (2002), WEF (2018) are of the opinion that the poor attendance to the social challenges such as labour law, existing rules and regulations facing the union leaders at workplaces could negatively impact performance. Likewise, on government's rules and regulations, Emiola (2002) observes that there is poor performance generally at industrial level in the area of interpreting of existing rules and regulations because of the low level of education of the majority of union leaders, on the vital issues such as those relating to wages' determination, safety at workplaces, provisions of adequate plant appliances and premises, and the provision of reasonable competence, as reflected in Factories Act cap 126. Emiola (2002) explains that government measures in the form of rules and regulations are intervention instruments such as labour laws, enactments, codifications and the constitution that dictate and influence trade union leaders' performance. At workplaces in Nigeria, Emiola (2002) opines that government measures influence performance. Invariably, many union leaders' performance could be viewed from the prevailing situation as dictated by the

government's statutory organs such as labour laws and procedures. Contributing further on performance, Diaz (2007) points out that what determines performance frequently appears to be the reactions to conditions of change in the labour statutory reforms in every country. Diaz (2007) supported the earlier opinion of Fashoyin (2002) that the 1976 Nigeria Military's labour statutory reforms of *interventionism and guided democratic policies* at industrial sector changed the direction and influenced leaders' performance at workplaces in Nigeria based on government's measures.

To avoid dismal performance by the trade labour in the area of following the rules, a pertinent question may be raised and addressed. That is, *when do we know that trade union leaders are performing?* The solution to the above question could be traced to the provisions of Section 7(1)(d) of the Trade Union Act (Amendment) 2005, the principal or overriding purpose of establishing a trade union which is for the purpose of the regulation of terms and conditions of employment of workers. And if there is ignorance of labour law could the theory of expectancy be applied to fill in the gap? How do we know that labour is performing? In furtherance of this main purpose, the trade union leaders as representatives of the working class citizens have the duty to carry out the following functions among others before they could be judged to be performing as revealed in Box 1.1 below:

Box 1.1

Essential Role of Trade Union Leaders Based on the Principal or Overriding Purpose of Establishing Trade Union and its Act

- Negotiation with the management and/or owners of the industries
- Participation in designing policy matters at industries
- Participation in the formulation and execution the objectives of workplaces
- Consultation with the management and/or owners of industries over welfare and general matters affecting workers
- Representation of the workers at the management level
- Representation of the workers at the government level
- Responsible for the day-to-day activities towards the production of goods or services at workplaces
- Serve as the medium for disseminating information between workplaces and the public

Box 1.2**The Expected Performance Activities Based on Principal Purpose**

- Labour to work and agitate for material benefits of workers
- Labour to function as members, and engage in the process of protecting the employment condition of workers
- Labour to work and agitate for protecting the employment terms of workers
- Labour to encourage the owners and the management of workplaces to treat the workers with dignity and respect
- Payment of commensurate wages and salaries to workers is also part of the labour's function
- Ensuring that owners of industries provide a safe system in the workplaces is also part of the labour functions
- The commitment of the management and owners of industries to the provision of basic trainings
- Labour are to provide leadership, and encourage various unions under registered federated unions, to provide basic trainings for their members
- Labour are to task the owners of industries to provide benefits such as insurance benefit, ill-health benefit, and old age health scheme to the workers
- Labour are to take part in collective bargaining, as informed by their statutory power of recognition of trade union's formation
- Labour is to perform by using the right to recognition in furtherance of the union's members' welfare and their dependents
- Labours' right to negotiate with employers over wages and other conditions of service
- Labours' right to enforce strikes or resistance to lockouts in furtherance of particular goals in industrial conflict
- Labour is to provide the working class citizens, a sense of belonging through avenues such as industrial democracy and the provision of capital towards the formation of ownership at industries

Source: The Trade Union Act (Amendment) 2005.

The Boxes 1.1 and 1.2 analyse the fact that labour's optimum performance is definitive; in the sense that for a worker to perform, he is expected to be very vast in labour Act, laws, rules, and regulations. Hence, any deficiency as a result of incompetence in the areas of labour act and rules would affect the labour optimum performance.

Conceptualising Expectancy Model

As various studies revealed, there is a nexus between competency and performance. The essence of expectancy theory is to quickly aid learning towards performance. The concept of expectancy was formulated by Vroom (1964). Similarly Campbell & Greggs (2009) are of the opinion that the Vroom's (1964) theory of expectancy is the probability that action or motivational force or effort, such as knowledge of labour Act by workers, would lead to performance. Vroom states that experience enhances the actors of a particular sect (such as industrial union), which will consequently lead to a particular outcome (performance) of the actors. Campbell & Greggs (2009) are of the view that expectancy is the fact that higher efforts will result in better performance when

performance is influenced by factors such as possession of appropriate skills for performing the job, availability of right resources, availability of crucial information and getting the required support for performing the expected roles at workplaces. On its own, instrumentality known as probability is the fact that if you perform well, a valid outcome known as the expected performance or optimum performance by the trade union leaders will be achieved. Hence, the above figure, 1.1 and 1.2 explain, that labour are guided to know that performance at workplaces cannot be met in isolation. Hence, the figure, 1.1 and 1.2 are pointers to the fact that labour should try to understand each workplace's key needs especially in terms of social factors such as rules guiding organisations towards performance.

Further, the expectancy models as revealed in figures 2 and 3 below point to the fact that rules governing the workplace are forces of consideration towards performance. When performance is negative, it is as a result of low consideration for rules, laws and acts governing workplaces. To avoid this, the labour try as much as possible to put in place much effort so as to exert themselves with learning involving social consideration such as keeping at breast in act, codes and laws governing rules of workplace level in order to achieve a positive performance such as in the area of promotion, productivity and better conditions of service.

The advantages of the expectancy theory are many. One, it affords generally the workers self-development which in turn stand the labour in a better stead towards contribution in decision-making. This leads to maximum sense of belonging in the world of work instead of the management only dictating what should constitute performance appraisals. Two, the theory does not only stress that it is only what is real, actual discussions and policy guidelines that do constitute performance; but that performance could also be achieved through other social factors based on expectations and perception. Three, it focuses on consideration, which suggests that performance does not depend solely on the task but also on human consideration such as rules and laws that enhance development of workers for the optimal performance to be achieved at workplaces.

Further, the significance of the expectancy model to this study is that the labour should identify, embrace and develop in the different areas of industrial laws in order to perform at workplaces. The knowledge of these factors will enhance the union and labour leaders towards an effective management with the rank-and-file workers on the one hand, and with the owners of the industries on the other. Expectancy model assists in areas such as setting goals and listing priorities, using time productivity and affording the skillful trade union leaders to recognise their roles within the overall organisation, as revealed in the illustrations of figures 2 and 3 below.

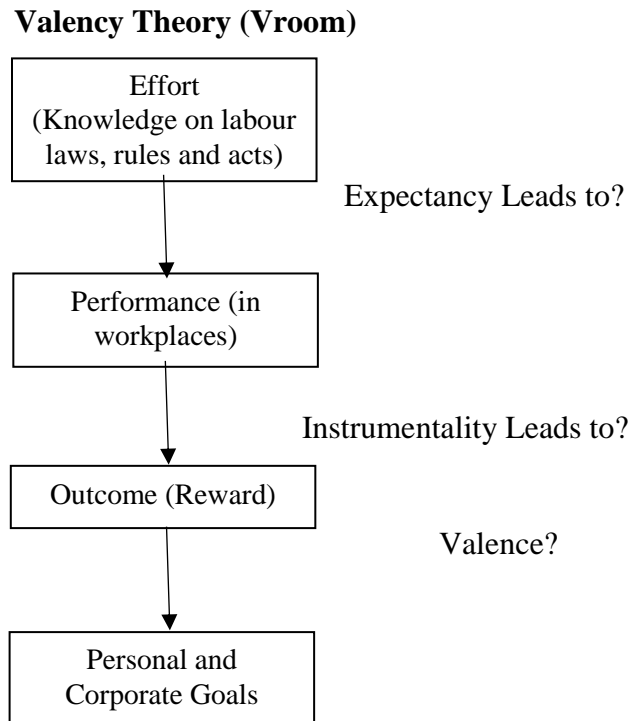


Fig. 2: The Expectancy Theory Model

Source: Adapted from Vroom, V. 1964. Work and Motivation.

Valence (value): whether the labour role performance worth rewards

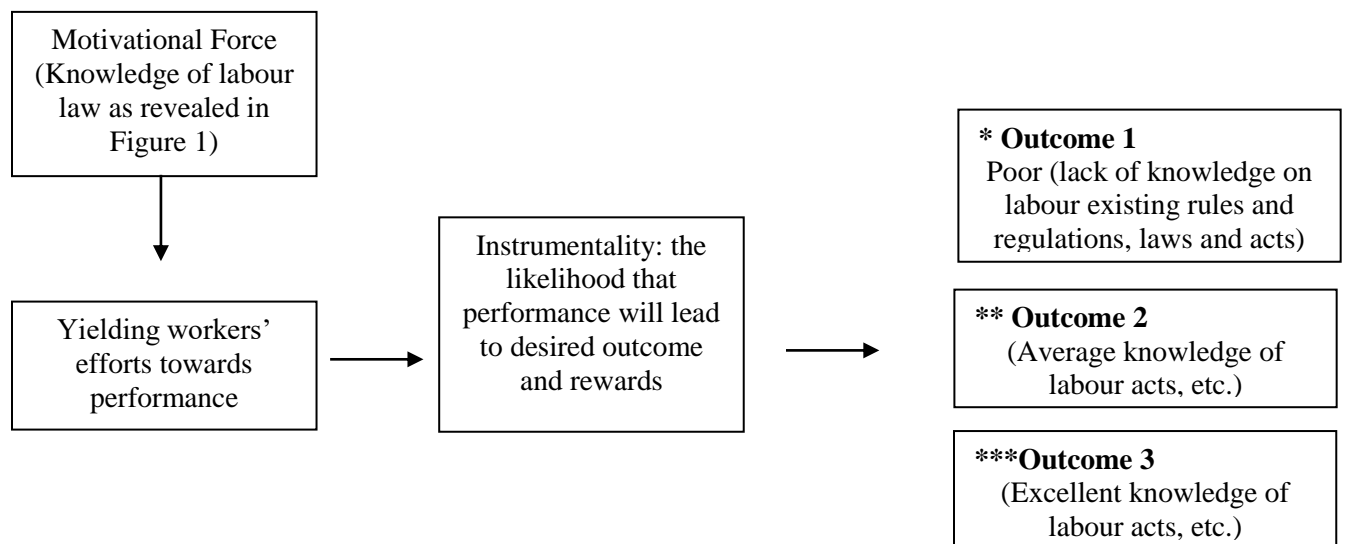


Fig. 3: Explaining further of the idea of the Expectancy Model of Fig. 2

Source: Based on Fig 2's further illustrations. Adapted from Vroom, V. 1964. Work and Motivation.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Many workers at the workplace level have not been performing with respect to the overriding purpose of establishing a trade union, for they lack adequate knowledge, skills and attitude, which are supposed to advance their performance. The result of this knowledge and skills affect their performance in labour activities especially in the organized labour unions. The problem is that most labour leaders at present in Nigeria are not adequately trained and neither knowledgeable about labour activities and unionism. Therefore, the study set out to ascertain the extent of which the labour acts and rules are known, experienced and conversant with by the labour leaders and workers at the organised trade union levels. Two, the study is set to ascertain the degree of acceptability of the Vroom Model in detecting the workers' gaps in defiance of the workers' competency towards performance. Hence, this study determined the effectiveness of the application of the Vroom model towards optimum performance. Assuming there is the lacking in the act and rules by the labour at the workplace, hindering their performance, it could be succinctly put whether the Vroom model could be applied in providing the remedy of putting in place necessary knowledge be imparted in the labour with respect to the existing rules and regulations towards optimum performance at the workplace. It is against this background that this study investigated the effect of the social factor of the existing rules and regulations, laws, and acts under labour activities as a determinant of labour performance using some registered industrial unions affiliated to the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) in Nigeria.

3. METHODOLOGY

An ex-post facto type of descriptive research design was applied to the study. The population for the study was restricted to the trade unions of the selected Industrial Unions. The respondents therefore were drawn from the national executive, trade union committee members, members of the national working committee, the zonal executive members, and the state of the ten industrial unions. A total of 1,060 respondents constituted the sample size of the study. The sample was selected using a multi-stage sampling procedure. Also, a purposive sampling technique was used to select only unionized industries in Nigeria. the questionnaire developed on the instrument formed existing rules and regulations was based on "The Trade Dispute Amendment) Act, 2005; labour law Cap 98, law of Federation of Nigeria (LFN), 1990, Trade Dispute Act Cap 43 of LFN; Factor Act Cap 126, LFN and the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended". The self-developed scales: the Labour Act Tools scale (LAT scale) and the Vroom Expectancy Theory Model scale (VETM scale) were pilot-tested using the split-half method and they gave the reliability coefficient, $r = 0.75$ and $r = 0.67$ respectively.

4. ANALYSIS OF DATA AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

H0₁: There is no significant relationship between the Labor Act's provisions and labor performance at workplaces in Nigeria.

Table 1.0: Contingency table showing the correlation between the Labour Act's provisions (of Fig. 1) and labour performance.

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	R	P	Remark
Existing rules and regulations	1060	13.9570	2.51644	.624**	.000	Sig. (Substantial)
Trade Union Performance						

**** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level**

Table 1.0 shows that there is a significant relationship between trade union leaders' performance and the influence of existing rules and regulations ($r = .624^{**}$, $N = 1060$, $p < .05$). The finding reveals that existing rules and regulations significantly determine the trade labor union leaders' performance at workplaces. The result of the descriptive statistics, with the existing rules and regulations has a mean of 13.9570 which confirms the stated objectives of the FGN (1990), the Trade Union Act, Cap 432 (1990), and the works of Emiola (2002), Fashoyin (2002) and Foner (2008) that the government policies, orders, and regulations influence trade union leaders' performance at workplaces. Similarly, the government always influences performance through its decisions (of the Regulatory Labor Act) on the affairs of industrial unions in Nigeria.

Key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted to further ascertain the influence of existing rules and regulations as determinants of trade union leaders' performance. Reports obtained from the various key informant interviews reveal that the government of Nigeria still has appreciable control over the administration of industrial unions through various rules, regulations, and constant enactments by various organs of power in Nigeria.

A male key informant and well-experienced in labor matters added thus:

Nigeria, in a somehow similar way to Britain, does not allow free industrial democracy. Workers are still experiencing teleguided and guided democracy at industries. At every workplace, the government both at federal and state intervene to dictate the tune through various measures.

The findings also reveal that many trade union leaders are not value-free in the hands of the management and the government. A male key informant corroborates the view by saying that:

The government dictates many industrial policies in Nigeria. This ultimately leads the government, and in most cases workplace management, to always have a say in decision-making more than decisions coming from the unions.

It is also noted that the ruling party in a nation often influences the performance of trade union leaders through its political and economic policies. Another key informant expressed his views:

The ruling party at the national level and the various ruling parties at the state level often influence the performance at the industrial level through various regulations, enactments and orders. This is possible since the constitution does not allow separate parties for working-class citizens. Also, the influence of the government would have been less assuming an independent political candidate is allowed in Nigeria, to sponsor bills towards an independent industrial activity in Nigeria.

H0₂: Vroom expectancy theory model as motivational forces when taken together in imparting labor act's provisions in labor would not significantly influence the performance at the workplace.

Table 2.0: Effects of using the Vroom model in imparting Labour Act provisions and labour performance

Source	DF	SS	Mg S	F(observed)	P	Pooled St. Dev.
Factor	3	225.2	7254	23.6	0000	68.27
Error	78	2782	322			
Total	81	2664				

At 0.05 level of significance; F3 Table value 3.34. Based on Fig. 1, imparting performance into labor via the Vroom Expectancy Model's provisions of effort towards performance, outcome (i.e. reward), and value (i.e. personal and corporate goals).

Table 2.0 revealed the aggregate effect of the Vroom expectancy theory model, on the optimum performance of the labor at the workplace. At 0.05 level of significance, $F_{3, 78} = 3.34$ of theoretical $F_{3, 78}$ is less than the observed F value of 23.6 of the null hypotheses. Therefore, the hypothesis that the Vroom Expectancy Theory Model would not significantly influence the performance of labor at the workplace is rejected. Hence, the alternative hypothesis is accepted, that the combination of forces/motivation of competency of the Vroom model (forces such as efforts, training, expectation, goals to achieve personally, goals to achieve for the corporate organisation and the reward to follow) would influence the performance of labour at workplace. This corroborates Omole (1992), Hamlin (2002) and WEF (2018), whereby the authors among others asserted that apart from the training needs, other factors and forces such as knowledge, skills and aptitude of attitude for an individual to perform efficiently and enhance productivity at various organizations.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study asserts the fact that apart from training and re-training, acquisition of knowledge in the areas of labor acts, labor law, and labor existing rules and regulations can be employed to constantly strengthen labor towards better performance at workplaces. In the ability to detect the weaknesses of the labor's industrial knowledge of labor laws and acts, it is advisable to employ the Vroom theory model since this model is apt at encouraging the labor to acquire more knowledge, for their effective leadership in such areas as, negotiation with the management, representation of the workers at the governmental level, serve as the medium in disseminating information between workplaces and the public, as so forth.

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