**The Application of Expectancy Theory Model as a Catalyst for Labour Act Towards Optimum Performance at Workplaces in Nigeria**

**Abstract**

Labour leaders and workers generally face more challenges in performing their expected roles at the workplaces. An aspect of those notable challenges could be traced to the application of the Labour Act, which prescribes the principal purpose of establishing rules and regulations governing workplaces. Therefore, the study examined aspects of the Nigerian labour Act in relation to the optimum performance. The population for the study consisted of one-third of all the registered unionised industries attributed to the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) in Nigeria. 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 selected industrial union in Nigeria.The main research instruments were two: Labour Act Tools (LAT) scale and the 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 effectiveness of the labour in performing at workplaces. Based on the outcomes of the analysis of data and discussion of findings, recommendation of the application of the expectancy theory model to acquiring knowledge in all areas of labour laws towards optimum performance at workplaces. The general implication of the study reveals that the labour cannot perform in isolation without the knowledge of labour laws, and in addition to further motivations of that can be enhanced by expectancy model. This is to assist in achieving the overriding purpose of unionised representative activities.

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

**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 workplace.

Dunlop (1958), analyses what could lead to performance in industries explains the combination of what constitute external environment and the level of advancement of the workers. The worker’s advancement in labour’s rules and regulations, which he termed technological characters, determine the level of performance at 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 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. The third advantage which focuses on 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 matters such as labour law, existing rules and regulations at workplaces could negatively impact performance. Likewise, on government’s rules and regulations, Emiola (2002), observes that there is a 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. Some essential matters with respect to the existing rules and regulations are of 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, all as reflected in Factories Act cap 126. Emiola (2002) explains that government measures in form of rules and regulations could be regarded as 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. Meaning, many union leaders’ performance could be viewed from the prevailing situations 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 appeared to be the reactions to conditions of change in the labour statutory reforms in every country. Diaz (2007) supported 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, as of that chequered listing of the labour movement in Nigeria.

To avoid dismal performance by the trade labour in the area of governing 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. This Act is the principal or overriding purpose of establishing trade union, the Act which is for the purpose of the regulation of terms and conditions of employment of worker. And if an average labour is ignorant of the labour law, could the theory of expectancy be applied to fill in the gap in motivating labour towards future advantages? How do we know that labour are performing? In furtherance of this main purpose, the trade union leaders known as ‘labour’ generally and 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 table below:

**Table 1: Essential Roles of Trade Union Leaders Based on the Principal or Overriding Purpose of Establishing Trade Union Act**

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

**Sources: The Trade Union Act (Amendment) 2005.**

**Table 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 are to perform by using the right to recognition in furtherance of the union’s members welfare and their dependents
* Labours’ right to negotiation 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 are to provide the working class citizens, a sense of belonging through avenues such as industrial democracy and the provision of capital towards formation of ownership at industries

Sources: The Trade Union Act (Amendment) 2005.

The table 1 and 2 summarised the fact that labour’s optimum performance is definitive. This is in the sense that for a worker to perform, he is expected to be very vast in labour Act, laws, rules regulations and other measures. Hence, any of deficiency as a result of incompetency in the areas of labour act and rules would affect the labour optimum performance.

Other sources of employment law in Nigeria, as reflected in Lambo, Agumuo, Opayinka & Osigwe, are the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) (“the Constitution”), the labour Act, chapter L1, laws of the Federation of Nigeria (LFN) 2004 (the “labour Act”), the Federal laws enacted by the National Assembly (Nigeria’s national legislative houses) and the state laws enacted by the House of Assembly (the state legislative authority) of each state that relate to labour and employment, pension, and workplace compensation, including the following: Employees’ Compensation Act 2010, HIV and AIDS (Anti-Discrimination) Act 2014, Immigration Act 2015, Industrial Training Fund Act, Chapter 19, LFN 2004 (as amended), National Health Insurance Authority Act 2022, National Housing Fund Act, chapter N45, LFN 2004 (as amended), Pension Reform Act 2014, Trade Dispute Act, Chapter T8, LFN 2004 Trade Union Act Chapter T14, LFN (2004) as amended by the Trade Union (Amendment) Act 2005 (the “TUA”), National Minimum Wage (Amendment) Act 2024, National Industrial Court Act 2006, Factories Act, Chapter F1, LFN 2004, Finance Act 2021, Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act 2018, Lagos State Special Peoples law 20011, Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development Act 2010, Guidelines for the Release of Staff in the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry 2019 (the “Staff Release Guidelines”) Regulations 1969 (as amended) made pursuant to the Petroleum Act, Cap P10, LFN (now the Petroleum Industry Act 2010) (the “Petroleum Act”), Nigeria Data Protection Regulation 2019 issued by the National Information Technology Development Agency, Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023 (the “NDPA”), Business Facilitation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2022, Decisions of the Nigerian Courts – case laws, and International Conventions, treaties and protocols relating to labour, employment, workplace, industrial relations or matters connected therewith that have been ratified by Nigeria.

**Conceptualising Expectancy Model**

As various studies revealed, there is a nexus between competency and performance. An essential point of expectancy theory is to quickly aid learning towards performance. The concept of expectancy was formulated by Vroom (1964). Jeremy & Maike (2024), supporting the views of Zajda (2023), point to the fact that an individual’s behaviour is motivated by anticipated results and potential success. Further, Jeremy & Maike (2024), assert that expectancy theory model would help clients say workers at workplaces, to overcome challenges and achieve goals that will eventually boost their motivation and increase their likelihood of initiating and sustaining goal-directed behaviours. 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 table 1 and 2 explain that labour is guided to know that performance at workplaces cannot be met in isolation. Hence, the table 1 and 2 are pointer 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 1 and 2 below point to the fact that rules governing 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 the breast acts, codes and laws governing rules at 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 maxim of ‘sense of belonging’ in the world of works 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 perceptions. Three, it focuses on consideration, which suggests that performance does not depend solely on the task whereby labour should be seen as a commodity but also on human consideration such as rules and laws that enhance development and later reward on the part of workers after they have achieved optimal performance at workplaces.

Further, 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 education, worker education and labour leaders’ effective and efficient toward management with the rank and file of workers on the one hand, and with the owners of the industries on the other hand. The Expectancy model assists in many 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 1 and 2 below.

**Fig. 1: The Expectancy Theory Model**

**Valency Theory (Vroom)**

Efforts (i.e. capacity building known as Valency

(Knowledge on labour laws, rules and acts)

This is what labour is expected to know towards performance and rewards)

Expectancy Leads to?

Performance (in workplaces)

(Instrumentality here means the application of laws, rules and acts

Instrumentality Leads to?

Outcome:

Reward: leads to better performance. Performance leads to reward

Valence?

Valence – knowledge (or value) acquired towards achieving: Personal and Corporate Goals

Source: The researcher’s initiative being adapted from Vroom, V. 1964. Work and Motivation.

**Fig. 2: Explaining further of the idea of the Expectancy Model of Fig. 1**

**Valence (value): whether the labour**

**role performance**

**worth rewards**

Motivational Force (Knowledge of labour law as revealed in table 1 & 2)

**\* Outcome 1**

Poor (lack of knowledge on labour existing rules and regulations, laws and acts)

**\*\* Outcome 2**

(Average knowledge of labour acts, etc.)

Instrumentality: the likelihood that application laws etc will lead to desired outcome and rewards

Yielding workers’ efforts towards performance

**\*\*\*Outcome 3**

(Excellent knowledge of labour acts, etc.)

Source: The researcher’s initiative based on Fig 1 further illustrations. Adapted from Vroom, V. 1964. Work and Motivation.

**Statement of the Problem**

Many a worker at the workplace level have not been performing as expected of the overriding purpose of establishing trade union. The sole reason being they lack adequate knowledge, skills and attitude that are supposed to advance their performance. The result of this knowledge and skills affect their performance in labour activities especially in the organised labour unions. The problem is that most labour leaders at presently in Nigeria are not adequately trained and neither knowledgeable about the labour activities, labour education, union education and worker education. 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 level. 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 Vroom model towards optimum performance. Assuming there is the lacking in the acts and rules by the labour at the workplace, hindering their performance, could it be succinctly put whether the Vroom model could be applied in providing the remedy for putting in place necessary knowledge towards optimum performance at workplace? It is against this background that this study investigated the effect of the social factor of the existing rules and regulations, laws and act under labour activities as a determinant of labour performance using some registered industrial unions affiliated to Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) in Nigeria.

**Objective of the Study**

The broad objective of the study is to affirm whether expectancy theory model could improve the application of the labour rules performance at the workplace in Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. Investigate into the influence of existing rules and acts on the labour performance at workplace
2. Examine the extent of which the expectancy theory model could aid towards providing the knowledge of labour existing rules and act for labour optimum performance at workplace.

**Hypotheses**

The following research hypotheses were formulated to find solutions to the challenges facing labour/workers’ performance at workplaces in Nigeria at 0.05 level of significance.

**H01:** There is no significant relationship between labour acts’ provisions and labour performance at workplaces in Nigeria.

**H02:** Vroom expectancy theory model as motivational forces when taken together in imparting labour acts’ provisions in labour would not significantly influence the performance at workplace.

**Methodology**

*Ex-post facto* type of the descriptive research design was applied for 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 multi-stage sampling procedure. Also, a purposive sampling techniques was used to select only unionised 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 o.f 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: Labour Act Tools scale (LAT scale) and Vroom Expectancy Theorem Model scale (VETM scale) were pilot tested using split-half method and they gave the reliability coefficient, r = 0.75 and r = 0.67 respectively

**Result and Discussion:**

**H01:** There is no significant relationship between labour act’s provisions and labour performance at workplaces in Nigeria.

**Table 3: Contingency table showing the correlation between the labour Act’s provisions (Table 1) and labour performance.**

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

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

Table 3 shows that there is 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 determines the trade labour union leaders’ role performance at workplaces. The result of the descriptive statistics, with the existing rules and regulations has reliability, r=.624, which is substantial, 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, that the government always influence performance through its decisions (of regulatory labour act) on the affairs of industrial union in Nigeria.

Key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted to further ascertain the influence of existing rules and regulations as determinant 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 labour matter 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 states intervene so as to dictate the tune*

*through various measures.*

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

*Government dictates many industrial policies in*

*Nigeria. This ultimately leads the government,*

*and in most cases the workplaces’ management,*

*to always having a say in decision-makings*

*more than decisions coming from the unions.*

Further, as earlier opined by Emiola (2002), 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 levels often influence the*

*performance at industrial level through various regulations,*

*enactments and orders. This is possible since the constitution*

*does not allow separate party for working class citizens. Also,*

*the influence of the government would have been less assuming*

*an independent political candidate is allowed in Nigeria, so as to*

*sponsor bills towards an independent industrial activity in Nigeria.*

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

**Table 4: Effects of using Vroom model in imparting labour act provisions and labour performance**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Source | DF | SS | MS | 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 Table 1 and 2, imparting performance into labour via Vroom Expectancy Model’s provisions of effort towards performance, outcome (i.e. reward) and value (i.e. personal and corporate goals).**

Table 4 revealed the aggregate effect of the Vroom expectancy theory model, towards optimum performance of the labour at workplace. At 0.05 level of significance, F3, 78 = 3.34 of theoretical F3, 78 is less than observed F value of 23.6 of the null hypothesis. Therefore, the hypothesis that Vroom Expectancy Theory Model would not significantly influence the performance of labour at workplace is rejected. Hence, the alternative hypothesis is accepted, that the combination of forces/motivation of competency of 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 enhance productivity at various organisations.

**Conclusion and Recommendation:**

The study asserts the fact that apart from training and re-training, acquisition of knowledge in the areas of labour acts, labour law, labour existing rules and regulations can be employed to constantly strengthening labour towards better performance at workplaces. In the ability to detect the weaknesses of the labour’s industrial knowledge of labour laws and acts, it is advisable to employ the Vroom theory model since this model is apt at encouraging the labour 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.

**Suggested for further research,** the study focused on Vroom expectancy theory model as a force or motivation that can be used to impart knowledge in the area of labour laws acts towards overriding purpose of achieving performance at workplaces; yet, other theoretical models such as social learning, behavioural theory and transformational theory can be employed conducting research to find out whether each of the theoretical models can justify the effective performance by labour at various organisations.

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