

# Influence Of Socio-Demographic And Managerial Factors On Employees Grievance Filing In Commercial Banks In Nigeria

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**Abstract:** *A harmonious working environment is important for optimal employee and organisational performance. However, no human relationships and interactions could be devoid of dissatisfaction and discontentment. Providing effective measures of identifying and addressing these grievances is an important and topical issue for human resources managers in a rapidly changing world. It is against this backdrop that this study examined socio-demographic and managerial factors influencing grievance filing behaviour among employees in selected leading Nigerian banks. The study utilised a descriptive survey design to examine this important issue. A nationally representative sample was drawn from three banks: First Bank, UBA and Zenith Bank. Data was generated using an anonymous online survey and analysis was based on 241 completely filled surveys. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages and inferential statistics of regression models. Findings showed that gender ( $b=0.756^*$ ) and educational level ( $b=-0.521^*$ ) significantly influence grievance filing behaviour. Further, managerial factors, such as supervisor's grievance handling mood ( $r=0.299^{**}$ ), handling grievance filing with confidentiality ( $r=0.291^*$ ) and supervisors' neutral attitude towards employees' grievance ( $r=0.019^*$ ) also significantly influence grievance filing behaviour among participants. Based on the finding of the study, it is concluded that there was a need for the banking organisations surveyed and every organisation in general to establish a prompt and effective grievance handling mechanism that offers peaceful ways of handling and resolving employees' grievances. Major recommendations were made including training and retraining managers or supervisor so as to enhance their capabilities in successfully managing and resolving grievances and complaints.*

**Keywords:** *Employee grievance, turnover, management response, organizational policy*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Given the many forms of diversity that exist in most multinational organizations, employee's dissatisfaction and conflict remains an inevitable aspect of industrial relation (Holt & Devore, 2005). Grievance has been defined any dissatisfaction regarding work and workplace filed by employee formally to his immediate supervisor (Rose, 2004). Considering that employee grievance is common and normal in every organisation, managers are predominantly concerned with the best mechanism to be adopted in effectively managing it. This is important as failure to manage grievance results in conflicts which have adverse effect on the

organisational productivity (Garima, 2017). conflicts. Grievance could be described as a state of dissatisfaction or discontent on the part of either labour or management. It is a negative feeling which commonly finds expression in various forms ranging from complaint to strike action or destructive reactions. Effective grievance handling is an essential part of cultivating good employee relations and running a fair, successful, and productive workplace (Daud, Yahya, Isa & Noor, 2011). Therefore, establishing a grievance practice that will give employees the opportunity of filing their complaints is one of the steps an organization takes to ensure a meaningful productivity and improved labour-management relationship. Grievance procedures are usually established in

line with the principle of “due process”. This guarantees the application of procedural justice and ethical decision making in an organization (Tan, 1994).

Often seen as a system of communication between workers and managers, grievance handling procedures provides an opportunity for employees to make complaints, inform managers about malpractices whilst at the same time curbing absenteeism, strikes and other incidents that may lead to poor business operations (Ivancevich, 2001). For instance, Randolph and Blanchard (2007) stated that protests are symptoms of absence of feedback and recognition, unfair standards, lack of proper compensation and benefits. In the same vein, Kochan (2004) also identified promotion, work conditions and treatment by supervisor as other possible causes of employee grievances. Grievance procedures are the laid down mechanisms through which workers’ grievances are dealt with or resolved. Different organizations apply different grievance handling procedures as organizations have different management structure and resources available. Organizations usually engage in an ‘open door policy’ as this has proved to be an effective way of minimizing grievances. This encourages upward communication within an organization. With this system, an employee can express their grievances at any time to a manager or superior. It is however important to stress that grievance procedure is intended to serve the needs of both employers and employees (Jones, 2004). According to Cristina & Aure (2011), effective grievances procedure ensures amiable work environment that redresses grievances to mutual satisfaction of both managers and employees at large. It helps the management to frame its policies and procedures to be acceptable to the employees. It is a medium for the employees to express their feelings of discontent and dissatisfaction openly and formally of which it promotes employees job performance (Lewis, et al., 2007).

Daud et al., (2011) noted that the most applied styles in managing employee grievances include integrating, compromising and dominating. Besides, Meyer (1994) argues that another style applied in handling employee grievance is the obliging style. To them, the style involves low concern for self. In addition, they show that another style used in managing an employee’s grievance is avoiding style. In the same vein, studies have further shown that if styles used in managing employee grievance, are well applied, they are significant remedy to the dissatisfactions shown by employees at their respective workplaces. To Ivancevich (2001), the use of appropriate style in managing employee grievance enables the supervisor to take every grievance seriously, gather all information available on the grievance, after weighing all the facts, and provide an answer to the employee who is filling the grievance. Effective management of employee’s grievance will enable the supervisor to resolve the grievance on a mutual understanding and move on to other matters.

Employees are the backbone of any organization and there is need to treat them well and keep them in good spirit. If an employee has grievance against the management of a company due to one reason or the other, the employee will not be motivated to carry out his duty as required by the company. Regardless of the nature of the job or how well paid the employee is, if the employee is being treated unfairly then there is a possibility of grievances towards the company which

will make the employee lose motivation, the work environment becomes depressing and these will make the efficiency of the employee drop. This will also make a negative impact on the productivity of the company. One of the ways employee show grievances is by going on industrial strike and when this happens the production of the company has to halt; as a result of this we can see how employee satisfaction is paramount. Workplace grievances is inevitable because if grievances do not exist in an organization that means the relationship between employees and management is poor, it is when the grievances are not well handled that can lead to industrial strike, violence and resignation which will have negative impact on the organization as a result of labor turnover. An organization that wishes to prevent disruption in productivity or losing their valuable employees should establish a well-grounded grievance handling management system. Industrial/organizational psychologists have generally neglected the study of employee grievances compared to other variables such as job performance, job satisfaction, absenteeism, and turnover (Muchinsky 2000). In a bid to contribute to research efforts aimed at understanding grievance filing procedure and its determinants, this study explored grievance handling procedures in selected leading Nigerian commercial banks.

## II. METHODOLOGY

This study utilized the descriptive survey research design as it is the most appropriate design for the study objectives. The design is used when a study aims at investigating variables and their relationships as they naturally occur without attempting to manipulate any variable. The population comprised employees in selected commercial banks in Nigeria. A nationally representative sample from this population was selected using a multi-stage sampling technique. The first stage involved a purposive selection of three banks (first bank, zenith bank and United bank of Africa), being the most successful banks in Nigeria. The second stage also involve a purposive selection of 50% (of the work force from the zonal branch office at Lagos, Kano and Enugu) each for the selected banks. The third (final) stage was a random sampling of 100 respondent from the selected work force of each bank. Data were collected with an anonymous structured questionnaire which was administered electronically. These electronic questionnaires were administered to a sample of 300 employees of three commercial banks in Nigeria. Although 100 employees were sampled from each bank, 241 were duly filled: 80 each from Zenith and First Bank and 81 from UBA. The sample frame and characteristics of participants are reported in table 1. Generated data were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages as well as inferential statistics of regression models.

III. RESULTS

		Zenith Bank	First Bank	UBA	Percentages
Sex	Male staff	58	65	59	75.6%
	Female staff	22	15	22	24.4%
Educational level	Bachelor/HND	50	53	48	62.6%
	Master	28	25	30	34.4%
	Doctoral	2	2	3	3%
	Others	0	0	0	0%
Length of Employment	0-5 years	10	9	8	11.2%
	6-10 years	50	48	51	61.8%
	11-15 years	20	23	22	27%
	16 and above	0	0	0	0%
Ages	20-30	39	38	37	47.3%
	31-40	38	37	38	46.9%
	41-50	3	5	6	5.8%
	51-60	0	0	0	0%
	60 above	0	0	0	0%
Employment Status	Permanent	70	74	78	92.1%
	Contract	10	6	3	7.9%

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Participants

As indicated in the table above, gender distribution of participants showed that 182 (75.6%) of the respondents were male while 59 (24.4%) of the respondents were female. This means that male employees constituted the largest proportion of the study participants. In terms of educational level, the findings of the study showed that B.Sc./HND holders represented the largest proportion of the participants at 62.6%. The distribution of this category across the three banks are 50, 53 and 48 in Zenith Bank First Bank and UBA respectively. Employees with masters degree accounted for 34.4% of the participants and distributed across the three banks as 28, 25 and 30 employees in Zenith Bank First Bank and UBA respectively. Employees with doctoral degree in Zenith bank are 2, 2 in first bank and 3 in UBA making a total of 3% of the total sample. In terms of years of experience, findings of the study showed that participants between the 0-5 years are 10 in Zenith bank, 9 in first bank and 8 in UBA, also those between the length of 6-10 years are 50 in Zenith bank, 48 in first Bank and 51 in UBA, while those between 11-15 years are 20 in Zenith bank, 23 in first Bank and 22 in UBA respectively. The age of those between the ages of 20-30 are 39 in Zenith bank, 38 in first Bank and 37 in UBA representing 47.3% of the total respondents, also those between the ages 31-40 are 38 in Zenith bank, 37 in first bank and 38 in UBA bringing to 46.9% while those between the ages of 41-50 are 3 in Zenith Bank, 5 in First Bank and 6 in UBA Bank making 5.8%. The findings also showed that in Zenith bank there are 70 permanent staffs, 74 in first bank and 78 in UBA bank making 92.1%. While those employee on contract basis are 10 in Zenith bank, 6 in first Bank and 3 in UBA bank. Therefore, the finding showed that majority of the respondents are permanent staff of the banks which constituents 92.1% of the total respondents.

Individual Characteristics	Grievance Behavior	Grievance Ways		
		Formal Organization	Arbitration	Supervisor
Gender	0.756*	-.315	-.013	.332
Educational Level	-0.718**	.152	-.363	.071
Length of Employment	-0.048	-0.041*	.059	.024

Age	-0.169	.178	0.139*	-.306
Employment Status	0.162	-.209	.175	.073
Employee Factor				
Aware of Laws	0.0417***	-.725	0.207**	.561
Work Intensity Related Grievance Experience	0.298	0.149*	-.595	.377
Wage Level Related Grievance Experience	-0.521*	-0.131*	-.247	.399
Leadership Related Grievance Experience	0.0165	-.445	-.459	-0.854*
Manager Factor				
Grievance Handling Moods	0.259*	0.019*	.080	-.095
Grievance Handling Skills	-0.238	.178	.309	0.407***
Grievance Handling Speed	0.234	.009	-.096	.075
Grievance Mechanism				
Easy Access	-0.011	0.269**	-0.330**	.042
Friendly Handling Approach	0.299**	-.136	0.338*	-.124
Complete and Sufficient Information	-0.379	-.030	-.117	.131
Efficiency and Effectiveness	-0.120	-.125	-.100	0.221*
Others Factors				
Grievance Issues	0.291*	-.118	-.117	0.231*
Confidential Method of Communication	-0.140	-0.414***	0.442	.158***
Union Roles	-0.188	-.242	.828*	-.294
Constant	2.323	1.901	-3.694	-2.059

Table 2: Logistic Regression Results

Table 2 show the results of the logistic regression. Because the dependent variable is dichotomous variable, general linear regression processing is not available. In this model, there are two dependent variables, one is grievance behaviour, and another is grievance ways. In the first model, grievance behaviour was examined. Findings showed that gender has a positive relationship with grievance ( $b = 0.756^*$ ), this indicates that when an event that dissatisfies an employee occurs, male employees will tend to file grievance immediately compared to female employees. The findings also showed that educational level has a negative effect on grievance ( $b = -0.718^{**}$ ), just as wage level related grievance experience ( $b = -0.521^*$ ). Managerial factors, such as supervisor's grievance handling mood, was found to have positive effect on grievance behaviour. The results showed that the more neutral the supervisor handles the grievance, the more the employee trusts the leader to deal with the issue causing the grievance based on facts. Similarly, when supervisors handle grievances using a friendly approach, the more likely employees are to file grievance ( $r = 0.299^{**}$ ). Again, handling grievance filing with confidentiality on the part of supervisors also increase employees' grievance filing behaviour ( $r = 0.291^*$ ).

The second model is concerned with analysis of relating to three grievance ways. The results showed that work related grievance experience ( $r=0.149^*$ ), supervisors' neutral attitude ( $r=0.019^*$ ) and easy access to formal mechanism ( $r=0.269^{**}$ ) will prompt employee to choose formal organization institution to process their grievance issues. On the other hand, wage level related grievance experience ( $r=-0.131^*$ ) and direct communication method ( $r=-0.414^{***}$ ) have a negative effect on grievance behaviour. As regards arbitration grievance way, age ( $r=0.139^*$ ), awareness of laws ( $r=0.207^{**}$ ), friendly handling approach ( $r=0.338^*$ ) and union role ( $r=.828^*$ ) all have positive influence. Findings also showed that employees who have a poor interpersonal relationship with their managers will not choose a supervisor to resolve their grievance ( $r=-0.854^*$ ). Further, when a manager has good grievance handling skill, employees are more likely to depend on them for resolving the issues of their grievance ( $r=0.407^{***}$ ).

#### IV. DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

The result from the first model on grievance filing behaviour showed that gender influence grievance behaviour as male employees are more likely to file, compared to female employees. This finding may be attributable to the socio-cultural norm of patriarchy which is prominent in Nigeria. This sociocultural norm discourages women from demonstrating agency but being compliant, even when they are dissatisfied. This may also be reinforced by gender stereotype which also portrays women as being compliant and less forceful whereas men are adventurous and seek to exact their masculinity in expressing their dissatisfaction and in this case, grievance with conditions in the workplace they may not be comfortable with. Similarly, the entrenched norm of gender inequality in the workplace and the society at large also plays a significant role in affecting the intention and willingness of female employees to file grievance. This is because human resources practices affect hiring, training, pay and promotion of women. This finding of this study supports the findings of previous researchers (Blau & DeVaro, 2007; King et al., 2012; Konrad, Cannings, and Goldberg, 2010; Starmarski & Hing, 2015; Takawira, 2018) that have also shown that gender influence workplace behaviour. It supports the findings of

The result of the study also showed that managerial factors influenced employees' grievance filing. Specifically, the manager's grievance handling mood was found to positively influence grievance filing. When supervisors approach employees' grievance filing with enthusiasm and attach the required level of importance to it, employees will be more likely to raise issues that they are dissatisfied with. On the other hand, when managers treat employees' grievance with disdain or with contempt, the confidence of employees to file grievance, at least, to the manager, will be affected. In the same vein, managers need to treat grievance filing with neutrality without taking sides with the organisation and dismissing or treating employees' grievance with levity. The issue of confidentiality in handling grievance filings is also important. In some instances, grievance might be filed with the intention that the issue will be treated with utmost confidentiality. When such confidentiality is not assured by

the manager, it could affect the extent to which other employees will be willing to file their grievances. These findings of the study also support literature on human resources that have identified the role of the managers in influencing employees' behaviour and this include grievance filing (Álvarez-Pérez & Carballo-Penela, 2015; Kim, Egan, Kim & Kim, 2013; Obasan, 2011; Rusu, AvasilcăI, & Huțu, 2016).

#### V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The results of this study showed various factors influencing grievance filing behaviour among bank employees in Nigeria. Based on the outcome of the study, there is a need for the banking organisations surveyed and every organisation in general to establish a prompt and effective grievance handling mechanism that offers peaceful ways of handling and resolving employees' grievances. It is equally important for organisations to take fast action when grievances arise by identifying and resolving the grievances so as to avoid hurting employees' performance. In addition, there is need to train and retrain managers or supervisor so as to enhance their capabilities in successfully managing and resolving grievances and complaints. Equally important is the need for organisations to acknowledge and treat every grievance as genuine and true feelings of the employees involved based on individual differences. Dismissing grievances on the ground that they are not popular or shared by other employees must be discouraged. Further, organisations should also have proper filings and documentations of grievances following strict confidentiality guidelines. The essence of this documentation is to develop a database of grievances that would be beneficial in planning and improving employees' experience. This database would also be beneficial in identifying recurrent causes of grievances and planning how to address them permanently. It is also important to ensure that grievances are quickly resolved and not allowed to fester for so long. When grievances are not addressed, they may result to crisis and a toxic work environment which impairs employee and organisational productivity.

Generally, based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following specific recommendations are important for organisations to adopt in order to improve its managerial process towards grievance and diversity management:

- ✓ Management should ensure that its grievance management procedure is flexible and prompt in order to accommodate the tendencies of change which are occasioned by internal and external organizational factors.
- ✓ Management should never undermine any grievance case presented to them by the employee, since it may impact negatively on the employee morale and commitment to the organization.
- ✓ Training and continuous retraining is required by both the management and employee in order to equip them with the contemporary skill needed to cope with these organizational demands.
- ✓ Grievance handling procedure must make use of facts and experiences of employees to make informed judgment and decisions on any grievance presented filed by



employees.

- ✓ Organisations should ensure continuous research and knowledge sharing in the area of organizational grievance handling especially as it concerns finding out more improved and preventives strategies to reduce employee litigations.

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