

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION OF BANKS IN RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the influence of emotional intelligence on employee recognition of banks in Rivers State. The study revealed that emotional intelligence, manager self-management, manager social awareness influence trust, employee recognition and perceived organisational support of the deposit money banks in Rivers State. Conclusively, the study affirmed that adoption and development of emotional intelligence by managers of banks will contribute substantially towards enhanced or positive organisational climate. It was recommended, among other things, that bank managers endeavor to improve in their self-awareness and self-management skills to facilitate a positive climate where employees feel valued, receive essential support and get emotionally and psychologically energised to contribute their best towards the attainment of desired organisational outcomes.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Employee Recognition, Organisational Support, Banks

INTRODUCTION

Maamari & Majdalani (2017) assert that organisational climate plays an important role in the success and effectiveness of any organisation. This assertion is not far from the observation of Watkin and Hubbard that high-performing organisations have climates with particular measurable characteristics which are shown to directly account for up to 30% variance in key business performance measures. Litwin and Stringer (Maamari & Messarra, 2012) viewed organisational climate as "a set of measurable properties of the work environment, perceived directly or indirectly by people who live and work in this environment and assumed to influence their motivation and behaviour." As for Forehand & Von Haller (Nolan & Küpers, 2009: 72), organisational climate is a 'set of characteristics that describe an organisation and that (a) distinguish one organisation from another (b) are relatively enduring over a period of time and (c) influence the behaviour of people in the organisation.' These measurable properties and characteristics of the work environment are comparatively enduring excellence of the in-house atmosphere that is experienced by its employees and which influences their performance and can be described in terms of the values of a specific set of behaviours in the firm. According to Shukla & Mishra (2006), it consists of employee expectations, values of the organisation, norms of the organisation, policies and procedures, work environment and work motivation. A positive organisational climate would facilitate good relationship between the manager and the employee, preventing all barriers for work motivation and work

performance. In such positive organisational climate, individuals are motivated, satisfied, have high expectations, and are committed toward their company and its mission (Maamari & Majdalani, 2017). If an organization lacks in good organisational climate or good working environment, there could be trouble in making the employee work and may increase the turnover of the organization (Githinji in James, 2018).

Schneider (Mittal, 2016) describes organisational climate as the global or summary perception of the norms and practices of an organisation. Schein (1985) simply defines organisational climate as the way the organization is perceived by employees. This implies that the way in which members of a given organization feel or view the activities within the organisation, as to whether it is good or bad place to work, friendly or unfriendly determine their responsive behaviour. Organisations that are successful in the 21st century business world are likely to be those that take a more proactive approach to the development of favourable or positive organisational climate, hence it is imperative for managers to know the art of managing organisational climate, and must develop and maintain a favourable organisational climate to enhance organisational effectiveness. As Nolan & Kupers (2009) and Ehrhart & Schneider (2016) emphasized, it is employees acting in ways consistent with the climate (the pervading emotional ecology created by the manager in their units) that ultimately produces the outcome of interest such as engagement, customer satisfaction, reduced accident rates, and financial performance.

Concept of Emotional Intelligence

Management scholars, for decades, have recommended that executives follow Weber's advice to keep emotions out of the work place and to practice what Ashforth and Humphrey (1995) referred to as "administrative rationality" (Humphrey *et al.*, 2008). That is because, even among philosophers, the pursuit of reason had an elevated status to that of emotion, which only lurks at the background, referring to it as a threat to reason (Solomon, 2008). The consideration of the place of emotion was thus inconsequential and played an inferior role. Solomon (2008: 3) states that 'one of the most enduring metaphors of reason and emotion has been the metaphor of master and slave, with the wisdom of reason firmly in control and the dangerous impulses of emotion safely suppressed, channeled, or (ideally) in harmony with reason.' Stressing on the inferiority of emotions, he further states, 'there is the inferior role of emotion - the idea that emotion is as such more primitive, less intelligent, more bestial, less dependable, and more dangerous than reason, and thus needs to be controlled by reason. Consequently, Küpers and Weibler (2005) observed that emotional dimensions became neglected topics in organisational studies and in economic research in general (Küpers & Weibler, 2008). In keeping emotions out of the work place at the time, Psychologists and organisational managers gave no considerations to feelings of individuals, even workers in the organisation. In this stance, they missed on the information emotions provide. Clore (1994) argues that the primary function of emotion is to provide information. That is in line with Goleman's (2005) assertion that emotions are impulses to act. Drawing from his argument, Clore (1994:104) posits that 'emotion supply information through

distinctive facial and vocal expressions and to oneself through distinctive thoughts and feelings'. He, therefore, contends that whether 'the experience of emotion is functional and dysfunctional depends on what it does to the information value of the accompanying affective experience'. Therefore, whether psychologists and, or, organisational managers paid no attention to emotions did not stop emotional events from occurring, nor did it stop the accompanying 'private affective experience' (Clore, 1994) in the individual worker.

The private affective consequences of an emotional event in the workplace or from the personal life of a worker may be feelings of resignation, conflict, anxiety, sadness, fear and the like. When these feelings become part of his everyday experience, performance will be affected based on his decisions and judgments. As Wagner (1989) expressed, psychologists or organisational managers' explicit refusal to give cognisance to emotion does not keep representations of emotional events from being actuated in the memory and having had affective consequences (Clore, 1994) to organisations. Ashkanasy (2003) nailed this point when he asserted that recognising the existing emotions within organisations is essential. Organisations that are interested in maintaining a "healthy emotional environment" will cause less suffering and will obtain more efficiency and a more productive behaviour (Grama & Boşone, 2009).

However, the subject of emotions became matured, emerging as an explicit and increasingly polished research area during the 1980s, which Barsade & Gibson (2007) referred to as "affective revolution", with earlier findings vivifying the field (Stearns, 2008). Humphrey *et al.* (2008), Goleman (2005), Fisher & Ashkanasy (2000), and Lord & Kanfer (2004) acknowledged the substantial advances that have been made in the last two decades in understanding the structure and role of affect (commonly known as emotion) in human behaviour, with Industrial/Organisational psychologists and other applied researchers recognizing the relevance of such advances for understanding workplace behaviour. More specifically, Barsade *et al.* (2003) affirmed that in the ensuing affective revolution academics and managers alike have begun to appreciate how an organisational lens that integrates employee affect provides a perspective missing from earlier views (Barsade & Gibson, 2007).

Employee Recognition

Recognition is a formal or informal way of giving positive feedback based on results or performance (Robbins, 2019). Andriotis (2017) talks of employee recognition as the acknowledgment of a company's staff for exemplary performance. He argues that essentially, the goal of employee recognition in the workplace is to reinforce particular behaviours, practices, or activities that result in better performance and positive business results. Marciano (2010) sees employee recognition as when employees feel acknowledged and appreciated for their contributions. Recognition is the transfer of positive emotions and feelings from one person to another (Saunders, 2019). This means that recognition should be given with, genuineness and authenticity with the receiver perceiving (feeling) love and concern (positive emotions). For instance, a manager observes great work going-on on the plant floor or witnesses a positive demonstration of

company values in the office and feels amazed at heart, reaches out to the employees conceived and express an appreciation for what he observed.

The manager in that situation has had an emotional reaction to some outstanding action or behaviour. His communication of those felt positive emotions, of the great work done by the staff, in a way that the staff feels the same positive emotions transferred to him, is what recognition is about. This makes the employees feel that they matter to the organisation and that makes them happier and willing to put in their best effort toward improving organizational bottom-line. Kouzes & Posner (1999) observe that recognition is a very simple principle of human performance: people like to be recognised for doing their best. More important, they maintain, encouragement increases the chance that people will actually achieve higher levels of performance. Such recognition makes the worker feel more invested in the organisation and improves his engagement. According to Adkins (2016), engaged employees are involved in, enthusiastic about and committed to their work. A Gallup extensive research (Adkins, 2016) shows that employee engagement is strongly connected to business outcomes essential to an organisation's financial success, such as productivity, profitability and customer engagement. When employees are engaged, they willingly support the innovation, growth and revenue that their companies need.

Kouzes & Posner (1999) further contend that there exist a *chemistry* (emphasis theirs) between great leaders and those who follow them. According to them, the fostered cooperative environment, by virtue of the manager's affection and appreciation of work of their subordinates, encourages the hearts of the subordinates. That makes them feel better about themselves and lifts up their self-esteem, because of the awakening of their vitality and enthusiasm. In turn, it stimulates the subordinates to work harder and more effectively towards organisational goal accomplishment, whereas a demotivated environment has been identified to produce low or courage-less employees who hardly practice their skills, lack innovativeness and not fully committed to the extent an organisation needs (Amoatema & Kyeremeh, 2016).

Buckingham (2011) and Robbins (2019) argue that it is recognition, and not money, that is the ultimate trigger for activating an employee's strength. This is because financial incentives can actually backfire when it comes to motivating employees. According to an analysis of 51 experiments, (financial) incentives may reduce an employee's natural inclination to complete a task and derive pleasure from doing so (Robbins, 2019). Buckingham (2011) reasons that great managers are not only aware that employees respond well to recognition, they also refine and extend this insight. He advises that to excel as a manager, one must be able to match the employee to the audience he values. One employee's audience might be his peers: the best way to praise him would be to stand him in front of his coworkers and publicly celebrate his achievement. Another's favourite audience might be the manager himself. In that case, the most powerful recognition would be a one-on-one conversation where the manager tells him quietly why he is such a valuable member of the team. Still another employee might define himself by his expertise. For that employee, the most prized form of recognition would be some type of professional or technical award. Yet another might value feedback only from

customers, in which case a picture of the employee with his best customer or a letter to such employee from the customer would be the best form of recognition. This underscores the importance of targeting recognition with the audience the employee values most. In working to attain organisational goals, there must be put in place expected, measurable standards of excellence. Emotionally intelligent managers ensure that their subordinates are not in the dark about what they are expected to achieve. By clearly defining the values and principles for which employees are held accountable and by linking performance to those standards, managers establish a benchmark for achievement (Kouzes & Posner, 1999).

Empirical Review

In a paper on the relationship between leader's Emotional Intelligence and organizational commitment of their subordinates, Long and Kowang (2015) choose two types of organisations: a multi-national company and a locally owned company - to conduct a comparative study. The correlational analysis was conducted on these 2 companies and indicated a statistically significant and a positive relationship between the 4 dimensions of Emotional Intelligence and Organisational Commitment.

Hosain (2019) studied the impact of emotional intelligence on turnover intentions of front-line bank employees of Bangladesh: The role of leadership. The paper sought to identify the relationship between emotional intelligence and turnover intentions of frontline bank employees in Bangladesh and also included leadership influence as a moderator to test the relationship between the two. The study, with a valid sample size of 927, used convenient sampling technique. The results indicated that emotional intelligence has a strong and positive relationship with turnover intentions, and that, employees with high emotional intelligence have a higher turnover intention. Also, the results depicted that higher leadership influence can have a strong influence on the relationship, that is, leaders with high higher influence can reduce the turnover intention of the employees. Also, Abdulkarim (2013) looked at the relationship between a leader's self-perceived level of emotional intelligence and organisational climate, as perceived by organisational members. The purpose of this quantitative, correlational study was to determine whether a relationship existed between a leader's self-perceived level of emotional intelligence and the overall organisational climate, as perceived by organisational members in a nonprofit setting. The research question focused on whether a leader's level of emotional intelligence correlated with a healthy organisational climate. The Emotional Intelligence Quotient Inventory (EQ-I) was administered to 29 leaders from various nonprofit organisations from the United States and the Palestinian territories. The Organisational Climate Questionnaire (OCQ) was administered to 96 organisational members to determine organisational climate. Data obtained from the aforementioned instruments were analysed using Pearson correlations and multiple regressions. The study revealed no significant relationship between the emotional intelligence of leaders and organisational climate as perceived by organisational members. The results of the study

indicate that individuals working in nonprofit organisations are perhaps influenced and/or motivated differently than

Yoder (2003, in Abdulkarim, 2013) conducted a study to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational climate. One hundred leaders of a large urban community college completed the MSCEIT, which assessed their emotional intelligence. The leaders were then asked to participate in an appreciative inquiry session using the Appreciative

Inquiry 4-D Cycle. Participants were asked to take the MSCEIT in order to have a common experience of the concept of emotional intelligence and to be more mindful of emotional intelligence for the appreciative inquiry sessions. The results of the study suggested that when leaders employ emotionally intelligent leadership, they create a climate in which individuals are empowered.

Cherniss strongly holds that emotional intelligence can contribute to positive affect and attitudes at work. A Gallup organization study of two million employees at seven hundred companies finding suggests that how long an employee stays at a company and how productive he or she is there is determined by his or her relationship with his or her immediate supervisor (Okpara & Edwin, 2015). To quantify this effect further, Cherniss, cited in (Okpara & Edwin, 2015) reported of another study by Spherion, a staffing and consulting firm in Florida U.S.A. and Lou Harris Associates, They found that 11 percent of the employees who rated their bosses as excellent said that they were likely to look for a different job in the next year. However, 40 percent of those who rated their bosses as poor said they were likely to leave. This means that people with good bosses are four times less likely to leave than are those with poor bosses.

According to Six Seconds (2013), The Emotional Intelligence Network, conducted a study at AMADORI, a supplier of poultry products to McDonalds in Europe. The published study showed that leaders with stronger emotional capabilities create higher performance and found that individual manager's emotional intelligence scores predict 47% of the variation in manager's performance scores. Also, that emotional intelligence predicts 76% of the variation in organisational engagement. Additionally, that plants with higher organisational engagement achieved higher bottom-line results. Again, that during the project, employee turnover also dropped by 63%. Indicating that there is a strong link between the individual leader's emotional intelligence, the impact on organisational climate, and how that drives performance, the paper suggests that increasing self-awareness, self-management, and self-direction would enable managers more capable of building a workplace climate, or environment, where employees are effective. Since the workplace climate is a driving force in how employees engage in their daily activities, Six Seconds (2003) advises that if we want business success, we need to equip leaders with the skills to make an environment where employees can work effectively.

Mittal (2016) studied the Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Organisational Climate. Their intention was to gain an insight into the development of favorable, congenial or positive organisational climate on the basis of emotional intelligence competencies. Their

findings led them to conclude that employees in Indian insurance sector, perceived that the focus on emotional intelligence competencies in business organisations will be favorable for the creation and sustenance of positive organisational climate with effective leadership, better stress management, open and clear communication and high level of trust among employees. This is also a clear indication of impact of emotional intelligence on building a favourable organisational climate.

Self-aware managers create an environment (climate) where the employees **go above and beyond,** or even **give their all for the success of the organisation.** In a study on The Impact of Managers' Self-awareness, Positivity and Psychological Ownership on Organisational Citizenship Behaviour, Zamahani & Rezaei (2014) found that there is a direct positive relationship between self-awareness and organisational citizenship behaviour at 99 percent confidence level. The findings also shed light on the importance of specific leaders' behaviours for creating trust on followers and enhancing their performance.

Eustace & Martins (2014) studied the role of leadership in shaping organisational climate. The results also showed a strong positive relationship between inspirational leadership and organisational climate.

Findikli *et al.*, (2010) examined the relationship between psychological empowerment and trust in organisation and supervisor. To find out the relationship among study variables, a research group was formed among the employees of three companies operating in the field of infertility treatment in medical industry and supplying hormones for follicular development in Istanbul. First, variables of trust in organisation and supervisor were dealt with regarding demographic factors. They investigated that there is no significant difference in terms of position, experience and age, whereas, given trust in supervisor, there is a significant difference in terms of gender and education. Then, relationships between the variables had been focused on. The findings revealed that there is a strong and positive relationship between trust in supervisor and the subordinate perceptions of psychological empowerment in terms of meaning and competence factors. Accordingly, trust factor, as an intervening variable, is thought to have an effect on the perceptions of psychological empowerment.

CONCLUSION

The study identify manager emotional intelligence influences employee recognition. In view of these outcomes, the following conclusions are affirmed:

- (i) The development and advancement of self-awareness in middle level managers will drive the knowledgeable of their own capacities and emotional dispositions and will facilitate a more positive climate where trust is enhanced and workers are recognised and supported by the organisation
- (ii) The advancement of self-management within the middle level managers offers control and effective coordination of managers feelings and emotional tendencies in a way that fosters trust within the organisation and advances recognition and support systems for the workers within the organisation.

- (iii) The drive for middle level managers social-awareness facilitates an improved level of understanding and consciousness of others and of ones positioning within a wider network of activities within the organisation – thus, enhancing the managers sense of responsibility for others and thereby impacting on the trust, recognition and development of support systems for the workers

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