

SELF AWARENESS AND ORGANISATIONAL CLIMATE OF BANKS IN RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the influence of manager self awareness on organisational climate of deposit money banks in Rivers State. The relationship between manager self awareness and organisational climate results revealed that manager self-awareness, manager influence trust, employee recognition and perceived organisational support of the 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: Manager Self Awareness, Organisational Climate, Organisational Support

INTRODUCTION

Emotional Intelligence is so critical to organisational success, assert Bradberry & Greaves (2009), that it accounts for 58 percent of performance in all types of jobs. They argue that it is the single biggest predictor of performance in the workplace and the strongest driver of leadership and personal excellence. In line with that assertion, the IHHP Research (2019) indicates that 80% of the defining characteristics of what distinguish exceptional and unexceptional leadership is emotional intelligence. According to Goleman (1998), 'when senior managers at one company had a critical mass of EI capabilities, their divisions outperformed yearly earnings goals by 20%.'

Since Likert (1967), Litwin & Stringer (1968), Stringer (2002), Goleman (2002), Ayers (2005), Momeni (2009) and Maamari & Majdalani (2017) are in agreement that influencing organisational climate is believed to be a function of leadership, and that it is the emotional intelligence of the leader that influences employees' perception, morale, emotions, and behaviours (organisational climate), it is important to study the influence of manager's emotional intelligence on organisational climate. This is essentially because, as observed by Drucker (1986:3), 'the manager is the dynamic life-giving element in every business. Without his *leadership* (italics mine) the "resources of production" remain resources and never production' - and the human resource is the most important of the resource of production (UK Essays, 2018). Drucker (1986:3) further argues that 'the quality and performance of managers determine the success of the business, and indeed, determine its survival'. This work, therefore, focuses on the manager emotional intelligence and organisational climate they create in deposit money banks in River State.

Self-Awareness

This includes emotional self-awareness, accurate self-assessment and self-confidence. This keystone of emotional intelligence - self-awareness – an on-going attention to one's internal states (Goleman, 1995), is also the foundational and crucial set of competencies needed to excel in the other clusters of emotional intelligence: self-management, social awareness and relationship management domains of EI (Boyatzis, and Mckee, 2002; Goleman, 2005; Goleman, Bradberry & Greaves, 2009; Okpara & Edwin, 2015). According to Goleman (2019), self-awareness means having a deep understanding of one's emotions, strengths, weaknesses, needs, and drives. He maintains that people with strong self-awareness are neither overly critical nor unrealistically hopeful, but honest, both to themselves and to others. In the same vein, those poor at recognizing emotions will

be poor at managing them, and will be less able to also recognize emotions in other people. As for Bradberry & Greaves (2009), self-awareness is one's ability to accurately perceive own emotions in the moment and understand his tendencies across situations. Such keen understanding of one's tendencies helps one to make sense of his emotions and enables a person know how he reacts to specific events, challenges, and people. Highlighting the importance of self-awareness, Yeung contends that "if emotional intelligence were a journey, then self-awareness would be the skill of map reading. It tells you where you are at the moment, the current mood or emotion you may be experiencing. And it shows you where you want to get to a goal, or perhaps an emotion or mood that may help you to achieve your goal" (Okpara & Edwin, 2015: 55).

Bradberry & Greaves (2009) opine that the only way to genuinely understand your emotions is to spend enough time thinking through them to figure out where they come from and why they are there. They argue that emotions always serve a purpose, and that because they are reactions to one's life experience, they always come from somewhere. The self-aware person therefore cuts to the core of their feelings in always seeking to understand why he reacts to a particular situation. Situations that create strong emotions will always require more thought, and these prolonged periods of self-reflection often keep one from doing something that he will regret.

Advantage of self-Awareness

Situation	Self-Aware Leaders Ask Themselves
Should I listen to others? vs Should I listen to myself?	What is the group's body language telling me? Are there healthy debates happening or does that need to be instigated? If I skipped a meeting or let someone else run a meeting, would the momentum carry at the same pace or in the same direction? What would be the impact of my steamrolling this point? Will it help move the group forward or am I just on a power trip?
Do I go with the flow? vs Do I push back?	Why am I so obsessed with this point? Why isn't anyone else? Is the mission critical or am I just personally passionate about it? Will not doing this not severely damage my team's chances for success? Or is it something that I want? Can I compromise?
Is this working? vs Why isn't this working?	Do different people view success in different terms? Has the definition of success been put in writing? Do all agree? Is my success negatively affecting someone's work? Should I care about all groups equally? Does the working team see progress the same as the leadership?

Source: Gallagha and Costal (2012:15).

In the organisational setting, managers who are self-aware are attuned to their inner signals. They recognize, for instance, how their feelings affect themselves and their job performance. Instead of letting anger build into an outburst, they spot it as it crescendos and can see both what's causing it and how to do something constructive about it. According to Goleman *et al.* (2002), managers who lack this emotional self-awareness, on the other hand, might lose their temper, but have no understanding of why their emotions push them around.

Emotional self-awareness enables managers observe the ripple effect of their emotions. Bradberry & Greaves (2009) gave the analogy of a stone cast into the water. According to them, the stone's swift plummet pierces the water's surface, sending ripples in all directions. The emotions managers display are like the stones cast on water that sends ripples (effects) on various organisational members. Since emotions drive behaviour, it is important managers understand their effects on the

people. If a manager loses his cool and berates an employee in front of the rest of the team, it may seem that the manager's target is the only one whose feelings get bruised as the lashing happens, but the ripple effect from the manager's explosion affects all who witnessed it.

As the rest of the team members wander back to their desks, the others, too, feel the manager's wrath. They go back to work with a pit in their stomachs, each one wondering when his or her turn will come up (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009). That outward display of a lack of emotional self-awareness has become counter-productive: the employees will be cautious of what they do, with no one taking risks or initiative for fear a mistake invites his turn for another lashing by the manager. As Agbo (2019) argues, having awareness includes understanding others and promoting their strengths. If a manager lacks such awareness, this may encourage subordinates to take actions that are antithetical to the overall vision of the organisation or team. Bradberry & Greaves (2009) therefore suggest that to fully understand the ripple effects of managers' emotions, they will need to spend some time reflecting upon their behaviour. They will also need to ask other people how they are affected by their emotions. The more managers understand how their emotions ripple outward, the better equipped they will be to choose the type of ripples (environment or climate) that they want to create.

Concept of Organisational Climate

Schneider *et al.* (n.d.) and Ashkanasy & Jackson (2001) noted that the study of climate has its historical roots in Gestalt psychology, social anthropology and organisational theory. The Gestalt tradition emphasized that climate is a composite of many perceptions and experiences. According to this paradigm, organisational climate should be viewed as a gestalt, based on patterns of experiences and behaviours of people in an organisation as perceived by its members. Within the gestalt of organisational climate, individual elements of perception are integrated into a whole that represents more than the sum of its parts (Gerber, 2014). Ashkanasy & Jackson (2001) are in agreement with Schneider & Barbera (2014) and Shintri & Bharamanaikar (2017), that the concept and framework of organisational climate have evolved over a long period of time with the earliest available reference on the concept/framework of organisational climate being traced to Lewin (1939), who with his colleagues coined the term 'climate' to describe the attitudes, feelings, and social processes of organisations (Ashkanasy & Jackson, 2001).

While there have been differences in definitions of the construct, organisational climate research has implicitly or explicitly adhered to the notion that it is a summary perception derived from a body of inter-connected experiences with organisational policies, practices and procedures and observations of what is rewarded, supported and expected in the organisation, with these summary perceptions becoming meaningful and shared based on the natural interactions of people with each other (Schneider, González-Romá, Ostrof, Cheri & West, n.d.).

The climate of an organisation can be analysed validly at three different levels (Field & Abelson in Gerber, 2014), viz: individual level (psychological climate), group level (group climate) and organisational level (organisational climate). These levels of analysis are supported by Schneider *et al.* (2013). However, some researchers like Yammarino and Dansereau (2011 in Gerber, 2014) lump climate and culture research together and add a fourth level of analysis, namely society or country level, which would technically only be used for the analysis of culture, for example, national culture. This work therefore is based on the gestalt of climate generated at the organisational level – organisational climate.

Organisational climates can work to facilitate or impair work relationships. Thus, the climate of an organisation is one of the key influencing forces which affect the individual employee's perceptions, feelings and actions, as well as their interpersonal relationships (Nolan & Küpers, 2009). While there is continued scholarly debate about the exact definition of organisational climate for the purposes of scientific study, DAS (2017), Schneider *et al.* (2013) see organisational climate as the shared perceptions of and the meaning attached to the policies, practices, and procedures employees experience and the behaviours they observe getting rewarded and that are supported and expected.

As for Hellriegel & Slocum (2005), organisational climate refers to a set of attributes which can be perceived about a particular organisation and/or its subsystems, and that may be induced from the way that organisation and/or its subsystems deal with their members and environment. Armstrong (2001) posits that climate refers to those aspects of the environment that are consciously perceived by organisational members. According to him, these perceptions are describable sensations or realisations experienced by an individual, and by extension, the global climate of the organisation. Organisational climate is 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 behavior (Litwin & Stringer, 1968).

According to Forehand and Gilmer (1964), climate consists of a set of characteristics that describe an organisation, distinguishes it from other organisations, are relatively enduring over time and influence the behaviour of people in it. Stated plainly, an employee answering the question "What is it like to work here?" will offer a description of organisational climate (Baker, 1992 cited in Ayers, 2005). From these definitions, organisational climate could be said of as the perception and interpretation, what Wikipedia describes as 'collective appraisal', of the characteristics of an organisation, by its members, which shape or influence their attitude and motivate their actions in the organisation. These characteristics are relatively stable and distinguish one organisation from another.

For the purpose of this study, however, we adopt the definition of organizational climate by Moran and Volkwein (1992). According to them, 'organisational climate is a relatively enduring characteristic of an organisation which distinguishes it from other organisations: (a) and embodies members collective perceptions about their organisation with respect to such dimensions as autonomy, trust, cohesiveness, support, recognition, innovation, and fairness: (b) is produced by member interaction; (c) serves as a basis for interpreting the situation; (d) reflects the prevalent norms, values and attitudes of the organisations culture; and (e) acts as a source of influence for shaping behaviour.'

Momeni (Maamari, & Majdalani, 2017) argue that it is mostly the leader's emotional behaviour and style that affects the organisational climate. Knowing that climate comes from top management, emotionally intelligent managers create positive climate that will motivate and engage the employees towards positive organisational outcomes. Since climate is a perception, managers do well to find out factors that motivate or unmotivated their employees. This becomes imperative because organisational climate serves as the guidelines for dealing with people, and has a major influence on motivation and productivity of individuals as well as total work group (Lavanya, 2011). As Veyrat (2016) posits, 'sometimes simple actions have reactions far beyond what you think and can be an organisational climate degradation factor as much as a factor of improvement.

Theoretical Framework

It is in line with academic and philosophical discourse to have a theory base in issues as important as doctoral thesis. In this regard therefore, three theories have been presented hereunder as reference basis for this work, viz: social exchange theory, human relations theory and the reinforcement theory. However, because manager emotional intelligence and the organisational climate they create center on social exchanges, the social exchange theory is the central theoretical foundation for this work.

Social Exchange Theory

This baseline social theory is considered by Alexander (1990) as a social-psychological theory (Ahiauzu & Asawo, 2016). The social exchange theory, as theorized by Blau (1964), conceptualises social relationships in terms of exchange processes; that mutual bonds emerge in social interactions, as persons who incur obligations reciprocate. Blau (1964) defined social exchange as 'the voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring and typically do

in fact bring from others' (Paille', Grima & Bernardeau, 2013). According to him, it is characterised by unspecified personal obligations and trust as well as intrinsic – in conjunction with extrinsic-rewards and therefore, occupying the middle ground between pure calculation of advantage and pure love. From Blau's (1964) exposition, social exchange is neither an action from a party to gain calculated advantage nor is it an expression emanating from pure love by a party.

It is rather a conditional fairness, expressed in less formal and less legalistic social relations (Diekmann, 2014; Ahiauzu & Asawo, 2016). Gouldner (1960) indicates that once it has been established as a norm governing the relationship between two individuals, reciprocity requires the individuals to abide by two key principles. First, individuals must assist those who have previously given them assistance. Second, individuals should not do anything that might harm those who have previously given them assistance (Cropanzano *et al.*, 2017; Murdvee, 2009; Paille', 2013). It is this reciprocal behaviour, norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), therefore evokes obligations toward others on the basis of their past behaviour and which can be applied to either kind or harmful actions. Lodewijkx (2008) explains that the norm of reciprocity regulates the exchanges of goods and services between people in ongoing group or individual relationships. It dictates that people should help those who have helped them, that people should not harm those who have helped them, and that legitimate penalties may be imposed on those who fail to reciprocate. According to him, reciprocity calls for positive reactions to favorable treatment and for negative reactions to unfavorable treatment.

Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) aver that social exchange theory (SET) is among the most influential conceptual paradigms for understanding workplace behaviour. It involves a series of mutually benefiting interactions of purposive actors that generate obligations (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Ahiauzu & Asawo, 2016). According to Blau (1964), these interactions are usually seen as interdependent and contingent on the actions of another person and, as Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) concur, the interactions have the potential to generate high-quality relationships (under certain circumstances) that evolve over time into trusting, loyal, and mutual commitments. Based on the social exchange theory, the manager and the employee or subordinate are in a social exchange relationship, at the heart of which is the norm of reciprocity.

Thus, if a manager initiates a positive action towards his subordinate, the subordinate will in turn respond with a positive behaviour. If that circle continues, a norm of reciprocity is established and trust engendered between manager and subordinate. In perceiving that the organisation, represented by the manager means well for him (by way of advice, support, positive attitudes, signs of recognition, cordial forms of behavior such as mutual aid and benevolent attitudes such as empathy) and values his effort, the subordinate will have trust in his manager and the ensuing virtuous spiral of exchanges (Paille' *et al.*, 2013) will benefit the organisation by way of positive engagement and eventual improved bottom line.

Reinforcement Theory

This theoretical foundation is anchored on Skinner's (1938) reinforcement theory, otherwise known as operant conditioning (McLeod, 2018). It is one of the earliest theories of work motivation that focused on determinants of behaviour (Donovan, 2001). It states that individual's behaviour is a function of its consequences (Management Study Guide, 2013). What that means is that individuals tend to repeat behaviour with positive consequences, but avoid behaviour with negative consequences. As Catania (1973) and Epstein (1978) put it, if we can show that a response increases in frequency because (and only because) it is followed by a particular stimulus, we call that stimulus a reinforcer, and its presentation, reinforcement.

Funder (Redmond, 2016) noted Skinner as one of the Behaviourist who was interested in changing or shaping the behaviour of people and sought to explain behaviour from observable phenomena that could be measured and experimented with, in contrast with the introspective techniques of humanism and psychoanalysis - the tendency to explain behaviour from the mysterious workings of

the mind. In demonstrating that Psychology can only be a science, just as the other natural sciences, by means of measured and experimented observable phenomena, Skinner designed a box with a lever inside that released food when pressed. He placed a hungry rat into the box to see if the rat could figure out how to get to the food. When the rat was first placed into the box, it fumbled around until it inadvertently hit the lever and the food was produced. Through several trials, the rat learned to go straight for the lever to produce the food when it was hungry. Therefore, Skinner tested positive reinforcement, and concluded it does produce desired behaviours (McLeod, 2007, in Redmond, 2016)

In his experiments, Skinner identified three types of responses, or operants that can follow behaviour (McLeod, 2018), viz:

- i. Neutral operants which are responses from the environment that neither increases nor decrease the probability of a behaviours being repeated.
- ii. Reinforcers: These are responses from the environment that increase the probability of a behaviour being repeated. Reinforcers can be either positive or negative.
- iii. Punishers: Responses from the environment that decrease the likelihood of a behaviour being repeated. Punishment weakens behaviour.

This work is based on Reinforcement as an operant condition. The types of reinforcements are positive and negative reinforcements. While both influence or modify behaviour, we emphasise here on positive reinforcement.

Positive reinforcement involves giving a positive response when an individual shows positive and required behaviour, such as immediately recognising or praising an employee for coming early to work. This will increase the probability of repeating the behaviour or other outstanding behaviour occurring again. Such recognition is a positive reinforce. Positive reinforcement stimulates occurrence of a behaviour. It must be noted that the more spontaneous is the giving of recognition, the greater reinforcement value it has (Management Study Guide, 2013)

Negative reinforcement is the removal of an unpleasant reinforcer to strengthen behaviour. Negative reinforcement uses the reward system. A person is rewarded for desired behaviour by having something unpleasant removed. This removal is the reward. For example, in the workplace a person may find it undesirable to be monitored closely. If a person is doing their job to the highest standard, they may not be monitored as closely anymore. This removal of the monitoring is the reward for consistently doing their job well. Another example of negative reinforcement could be a new employee at a fast food chain having to clean the public bathrooms as part of their job as a new hire. By performing this and other tasks well, eventually this unpleasant task could be removed as a way to keep this person interested and motivated to do well as they advance in job title and salary (Redmond, 2016).

In relation to the kind of work environment an emotionally intelligent manager creates, both positive and negative reinforcement can be used to increase an accepted and positive behaviour. An instance is when a manager employs recognition, cordial forms of behavior such as mutual aid or benevolent attitudes such as empathy to encourage an employee and reach his heart for continued desirable behaviour. Specifically in the case of recognition it may include praise, simple thank you & well done chat, a hand-written card, or a small gift. In this, the manager ensures that the specific reason for the recognition or appreciation is explained to the recipient to stimulate positive behaviour sustenance.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study and conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are made:

- (i) Deposit money banks in Nigeria should train their managers to acquire the competencies associated with self-awareness. Bank managers should endeavor to improve in their self-awareness skills to enable them know how to handle issues of self and avoid actions that could make the organisational climate uncondusive for optimum performance..

- (ii) Organisational managers and leaders should endeavor to make extra effort and sacrifices in understanding and managing themselves in ways that create or generate an atmosphere devoid of fear, rancor and unhealthy competitions between and among members of staff, as well as customers as the case may be.
- (iii) Executive development programs should be designed to drive the social awareness and cognition of managers so as to improve the consciousness of individuals and an understanding of the implications of their actions within the workplace.
- (iv) The culture of the organisation should be patterned and elaborated in such a way that members of the organisation understand the underlying implications of their actions on others and the imperatives of behaviour considerations when dealing or working with other members within the network of the organisation.

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